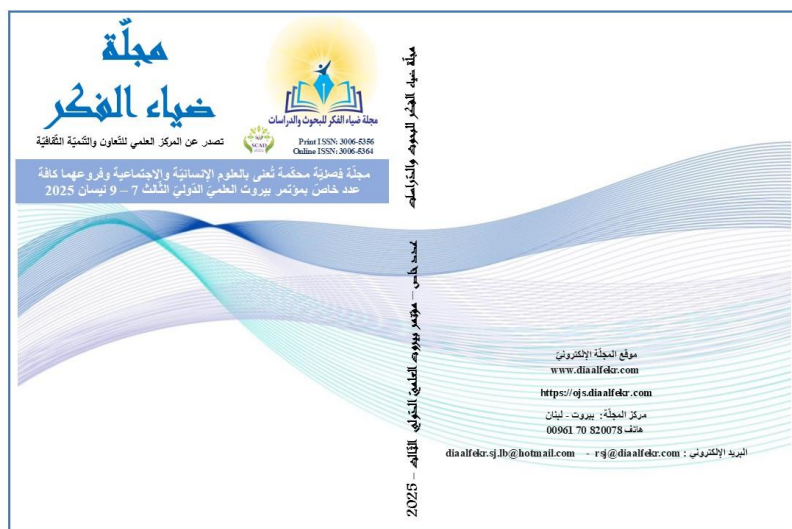




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Abstract:

English is one of the most important languages in the world. It is the global language of business and is spoken by millions of people around the world. However, English can be one of the most difficult languages to learn. The English language is full of rules and exceptions to the rules that make it difficult to master.

In Iraq, English language instruction is highly valued since the Ministry of Education takes notice of it! Teaching English as a foreign language and incorporating it into the school curriculum is very important.

From this perspective, this research was conducted with the aim of identifying the obstacles that prevent mastery of learning the English language in secondary schools.

Our research relied on a descriptive research methodology based on analysis, using the descriptive methodology to provide the optimal analysis of the problem by creating a questionnaire consisting of 25 questions divided into three scales (always, sometimes, and never), and choosing a research sample consisting of 60 female students from (Saad Al-Mosul) High School for Girls who were randomly selected.

The research came out through the research sample with several results, including that students are unable to speak fluently in the English language due to their lack of familiarity with English vocabulary, as well as the scarcity of audio and visual means necessary for learning and mastering the English language. Middle school students face a high degree of obstacles and challenges in learning and mastering English language skills.

The research also presented several recommendations to raise the educational level of students while learning the English language, the most important of which are providing modern and advanced audio labs, involving English language teachers in development courses and workshops, and reconsidering English language learning curricula.

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Keywords: English language, Difficulties in learning English, English language teachers, English Second Language (ESL) Teacher.

الملخص:

اللغة الإنجليزية من أهم لغات العالم. إنها لغة الأعمال العالمية، ويتحدث بها ملايين الأشخاص حول العالم. ومع ذلك، قد تكون من أصعب اللغات تعلمًا، فهي مليئة بالقواعد والاستثناءات التي تجعل إتقانها أمرًا صعبًا. في العراق، يحظى تعليم اللغة الإنجليزية باهتمام كبير، إذ توليه وزارة التربية الأهمية القصوى، حيث يُعد تدريس اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية وتضمينها في المناهج الدراسية أمرًا بالغ الأهمية. ومن هذا المنظور، تم إجراء هذا البحث بهدف التعرف على المعوقات التي تحول دون إتقان تعلم اللغة الإنجليزية في المدارس الثانوية. اعتمد بحثنا على المنهج الوصفي القائم على التحليل، مستخدمين المنهج الوصفي لتوفير التحليل الأمثل للمشكلة من خلال بناء استبانة مكونة من ٢٥ سؤالاً مقسمة على ثلاثة مقاييس (دائمًا، أحيانًا، وأبداً)، واختيار عينة بحث مكونة من ٦٠ طالبة من ثانوية (سعد الموصل) للبنات تم اختيارهن عشوائيًا. وخرج البحث من خلال عينة البحث بعدة نتائج منها أن الطلبة غير قادرين على التحدث بطلاقة باللغة الإنجليزية بسبب عدم إلمامهم بالمفردات الإنجليزية، وكذلك ندرة الوسائل السمعية والبصرية اللازمة لتعلم وإتقان اللغة الإنجليزية. وأن طلبة المرحلة الإعدادية يواجهون درجة عالية من العراقيل والتحديات في تعلم وإتقان مهارات اللغة الإنجليزية. كما تم خلال البحث تقديم عدة توصيات لرفع المستوى التعليمي للطلبة أثناء تعلمهم اللغة الإنجليزية، أهمها توفير مختبرات صوتية حديثة ومتطورة، وإشراك معلمي اللغة الإنجليزية في دورات وورش عمل تطويرية، وإعادة النظر في مناهج تعلم اللغة الإنجليزية. الكلمات المفتاحية: اللغة الإنجليزية، صعوبات تعلم اللغة الإنجليزية، مدرسي اللغة الإنجليزية، مدرسي اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة ثانية.

Introduction:

English language is the most widely spoken language in Iraq, and like other nations, teaching English is highly valued there. The Ministry of Education puts a lot of effort into teaching English as a foreign language by incorporating it into the curriculum. The twentieth century, the first decade of the twenty-first century, and recent years have seen several technical and cognitive advancements and changes in addition to scientific ones, giving teachers additional tasks, obligations, and duties.

The role of the teacher is no longer dependent solely on giving information but rather has become something systematic and capable of development. From this standpoint, many difficulties and challenges have emerged in teaching students how to deliver information by following specific strategies by the teacher, which keep pace with this development in light of the spread of electronic culture and electronic education, which has had implications. The phenomenon of low levels of students despite the availability of these methods with quick solutions.

Steven (1977) explained that (the complex circumstances that the teaching process goes through, with the presence of different types of students, teachers, goals, content, methods, accompanying materials, educational techniques, and level of achievement, make it difficult to imagine that only one method can achieve the maximum degree of success in all educational circumstances).

Al Tubi (1988) conducted a study that outlined the challenges associated with teaching and studying English. The study clarified that the curriculum being taught is based only on teaching grammar. The study recommended emphasizing the necessity of teaching the language as a necessary language of communication in this era, so what is the benefit when a student graduates from middle school and is heading to the university stage, and is unable to compose a single English sentence, was filled with hesitation and fear.

Lado (1964) showed that interaction is an essential link between the culture of the mother tongue and the process of acquiring and teaching a foreign language. The culture that develops from this interaction comes next, and it is an important reflection of both the teaching strategies that work for the content of the school curricula and the educational system itself. However, it covers a wide range of subjects.

In (2013), Melor Suklaima performed an additional study that showed the challenges students face in learning English, including issues with vocabulary, grammar, and speaking the language. The findings showed that the student's ignorance of English language rules was the cause of their grammatical problems.

Classroom interactions and motivation and the teacher-student relationship have not been ignored. Motivation is an incomplete strategy to get students to study or perform better without considering the use of motivation in the classroom, such as awards for high grades. It is strongly associated with the concepts of reinforcement, which suggest that student's actions are controlled by the effects they meet—the reasons underlying behavior” (Guay et al., 2010:712).

Many researchers see motivation, which defines the degree of active, individual involvement in L2 learning, as one of the key factors determining success in learning a second or foreign language. (Oxford & Shearin, 1994:12-28).

From this point of view, it can be said that teachers will learn how students' expectations affect motivation because they will see motivation as something that is created by both teachers and students. Teachers will understand the qualities of learning environments that support students' motivation, such as maximizing students' strengths and interests and providing options that encourage risk-taking. Skills, getting better over time, and avoiding comparison and completeness.

If students want to try, they must think they can succeed because their standards of success affect their willingness to participate in learning activities. Some students have demonstrated that individuals who have greater confidence in their ability to succeed are more successful than those who don't. For a student to feel successful, they must also see their development.

Our research included four axes:

The first axis dealt with: Research problem, importance of research, research goals, research methodology and research hypothesis.

The second axis included: Research limitations, research terms.

In the third axis, the methodology and procedures were discussed.

The fourth axis also included: Results, Conclusions, Recommendations, and Suggestions.

Finally, the research included a questionnaire for students and a list of references.

Keywords: 1. What is the English language. 2. Difficulties in learning English. 3. English language teachers. 4. English Second Language (ESL) Teacher

The first axis:

1-1. Research problem

The research problem lies in identifying the obstacles and challenges associated with learning the English language that middle school students face, as these obstacles negatively impact educational levels and their comprehension and mastery of the English language.

1-2. Importance of research

The importance of this research focuses on studying the negative consequences of the obstacles and problems facing both students and teachers, which prevent students from learning and mastering the English language.

1-3. Research goals

The study aims to identify the obstacles, challenges and problems associated with learning English, ways to overcome them and develop the necessary solutions for the success of the educational process in the field of learning and mastering the English language.

To achieve the study objectives and gain the teachers' perspectives, the researcher selected female students from Mosul Dam Secondary School for Girls in the city of Mosul as a model.

1-4. Research methodology

The research methodology was based on description and analysis, meaning that it adopted the descriptive approach as a basis for providing the optimal analysis of the problem presented by defining its dimensions and the surrounding circumstances, in addition to following scientific description to determine the characteristics of the problem.

1-5. Research hypothesis

The research hypothesis is that the problems and obstacles facing students in studying and learning English negatively impact their educational level and reduce their ability to master and learn the English language.

The second axis

2-1. Research limitations:

The research limitations focused on the following:

- A. Time limitations: The limits of the research will be limited to the year 2025.
- B. Spatial limitations: (Saad Al-Mosul) High School for Girls.
- C. Objective limitations: A study at the secondary level shows the obstacles and problems that students face when learning the English language as a basic subject.

2-2. Research terms

2.2.1 What is the English language?

‘A person needs only one language to talk to someone else’, it is sometimes argued, ‘and once a world language is in place, other languages will simply die away’ David Crystal (1997-2003).

English has been the most used language for international communication in recent decades. More people speak it worldwide than any other language, and it is frequently referred to as a really "global" language. English language (is a system of communication consisting of sounds, words, and grammar, the way that someone speaks or writes, for example, the kind of words and phrases that they use, a system of communication by speaking, writing, or making signs in a way that can be understood, or any of the different systems of communication used in particular regions) dictionary Cambridge.

Modern English has expanded throughout the world because of the global influence of the United States and the British Empire since the 17th century.

2.2.2 Difficulties in learning English:

Students make mistakes when learning a language, and difficulties are challenging. To Maicusi (2000), “Making errors is the natural thing in the world and it is attached to human beings..... part of learning and teacher must use the

errors with the view of having better results in the classroom". This suggests that a teacher of a second language should have sufficient knowledge and experience to use errors made by students to help in the learning process.

All who know English cannot teach it well so the teachers of English must improve their teaching by knowing the learning difficulties and challenging factors affecting the learning of the students in English based on errors done by students themselves.

Tenses, active and passive voices, direct and indirect speeches, conjunctions, prepositions, written sentence structure, speaking, listening, punctuation, pronunciation reading comprehension, and many topics in a curriculum prescribed by the Ministry of Education were among the topics which the students struggled and make errors and mistakes, and these challenges were contrasted.

2.3.3 English language teachers:

They are responsible for ensuring students master basic English language skills, including grammar, writing, listening, and speaking. They also develop curriculum plans necessary to help students acquire the basic skills they need to master.

2.2.4 English Second Language (ESL) Teacher

They specialize in teaching students for whom English is an additional language, such as some college and school students, refugees, asylum seekers, and children from immigrant families.

The primary goal of an (ESL) teacher is to work with (ESL) learners and support them in understanding the curriculum of their subjects, as well as helping them acquire the everyday language needed to make friends, socialize, and communicate with peers and adults. To achieve this, (ESL) teachers often draw on their specialized knowledge of bilingualism, language learning, and acquisition to help them develop the language skills ESL learners need both inside and outside the classroom.

The third axis:

3. Methodology and procedures

3.1 Preliminary

The research methodology and procedures are based on data collection through direct classroom observation. The research used a questionnaire based on the descriptive approach to present the problems and obstacles facing the teaching of the English language, develop solutions to overcome them, and come up with results to address these problems and obstacles.

3.2 Research instrument: (A questionnaire)

The questionnaire method was used to obtain data by allowing the teacher to clarify the students' uses and opinions.

3.3 Population and sample:

Burn and Grove (1993) cited in Yang (2019:22) states that population is defined as all elements (individuals, objects, and events) that meet the sample criteria for inclusion in a study. The current community study community consists of 60 female students from Mosul Dam Secondary School for Girls in Mosul. The questionnaire was distributed to the female students randomly.

This questionnaire contains 25 questions. The questionnaire sheet is explained below in Appendix (1). The researcher made sure that the questions were linguistically correct and also made sure to read all the questions, which were written in Arabic and English at the same time, in addition to making sure that these questions were completely related to the problems of this study and within this field.

The researcher used the following scale (Likert) to evaluate the level of agreement with the items in the questionnaire:

-Some times

-Never

-Always

Appendix (1)

Student questionnaire

استبيان الطلاب

الاسم:

My dear student:

Please read the following questions carefully and mark the option that best represents your true feelings under the proper heading and according to the current standards.

طالباتي العزيزات:

يرجى قراءة الاسئلة والاجابة عليها بوضع علامة صح حسب المعايير الموجودة وتحت البديل المناسب والتي تعبر عن - شعورك الحقيقي

Sometimes/ احيانا	Never / ابدأ	Always/ دائما	Question/ الاسئلة	Sec.
			I don't have a good knowledge of vocabulary words in the English language لا يوجد لدي المعرفة الكافية للمفردات باللغة الانكليزية	-1
			There is a low level of education in my family in general انخفاض مستوى التعليم لدى عائلتي	2
			I am afraid of the teacher when I start reading or answering any question انا اخشى المعلم عند البدء بالكلام او الاجابة على اي سؤال داخل الصف	3
			feel hesitant about making mistakes while doing the homework in front of the students اشعر بالتردد من ارتكاب الاخطاء اثناء حل الواجب امام الطلاب	4
			I take a long time to distinguish between tenses in English استغرق وقتا طويلا للتمييز بين الازمنة في اللغة الانكليزية	5
			I feel shy and prefer not to participate in class activities اشعر بالخجل وفضل عدم المشاركة في النشاطات الصفية	6
			I have excessive anxiety and an inability to concentrate when the teacher explains a new topic لدي قلق زائد وعدم القدرة على التركيز عند شرح موضوع جديد من قبل المدرس	7
			I'm not too fond of the English language because I am not comfortable with the teacher لا احب اللغة الانكليزية لعدم ارتياحي للمدرس	8
			My problem is that I forget the shapes and pronunciation of words that I have previously learned مشكلتي انسى اشكال ولفظ الكلمات التي سبق ان تعلمتها	9
			I use the dictionary when I need to translate a word انا استخدم القاموس عندما احتاج ترجمة كلمة ما	10
			I have a problem with English language structures لدي مشكلة في تراكيب اللغة الانكليزية	11
			I care very much if the teacher corrects my oral errors while reading انا اهتم جدا اذا قام المدرس بتصحيح اخطائي الشفهية اثناء القراءة	12

Figure (1) A- shown a sample of student's questionnaire

Sec.	Question/الاستئلة	دائما/Always	ابدا / Never	احيانا/Sometimes
13	I lack proper use of punctuation انا افتقر الى استخدام علامات الترقيم بشكل صحيح			
14	The teacher gives a negative comment when I make a mistake يقوم المعلم بإعطاء تعليق سلبي حينما اقوم بعمل خطأ ما			
15	I have difficulty understanding spoken sentences because the teacher speaks quickly اواجه صعوبة في فهم العبارات المنطوقة بسبب المعلم عندما يتكلم بسرعة			
16	I have difficulty reading and understanding texts correctly اواجه صعوبة في قراءة النصوص وفهمها بشكل صحيح			
17	I want to learn everything I can about the English language because it might benefit me one day اريد ان اتعلم كل شيء استطيع تعلمه من اللغة الانكليزية لانه ممكن ان يفيدني يوما ما			
18	I believe that my language will improve if the teacher corrects me periodically. انا اعتقد ان لغتي سوف تتحسن اذا قام المعلم بالتصحيح لي بشكل دوري			
19	I prefer the direct method of correcting errors انا افضل طريقة التصحيح المباشرة للاخطاء			
20	I prefer the indirect method of correcting errors انا افضل طريقة التصحيح الغير مباشرة للاخطاء			
21	I feel afraid and hesitant when the teacher asks me to solve the exercises on the blackboard اشعر بالتردد عندما يطلب مني المعلم حل التمارين على السبورة			
22	I suffer from the skills of learning the English language (writing, reading, listening and speaking) اعاني من مهارات العلم في اللغة الانكليزية (الكتابة، القراءة، الاصغاء والتكلم)			
23	I love, to learn the English language because it makes me more knowledgeable and aware of what is going on around me, as it is an international language احب احب تعلم اللغة الانكليزية لانها تجعلني اكثر علما ودراية لما يدور حولي كونها لغة عالمية			
24	I study English to pass the exam ادرس اللغة الانكليزية فقط لاناجح في الامتحان			
25	I like to create groups with my friends to encourage each other and understand the lesson together. احب عمل كرويات مع اصدقائي لنتشجع ونفهم سوية الدرس			

Figure (2) B- shown a sample of student's questionnaire

3.4 The Validity of the Questionnaire

Al-Juboury (2000:61) defines validity as (a truth or the degree to which a test measures what it claims to measure). If research has high validity, it produces results corresponding to real properties, characteristics, and variations in the physical or social world, Middleton (2019).

3.5 The Reliability of the Questionnaire

Reliability refers to the consistency or stability of test scores. How far would the test give the same results if the same subjects under the same conditions could do it again? (Al-Juboury, 2000:49). It describes the degree to which the tool produces consistent outcomes over multiple tests.

3.6 Data analysis of student's questionnaire

After conducting a questionnaire on the difficulties and challenges in learning the English language by Mosul Dam Girls' Secondary School students as a sample, the following results emerged in **Appendix 2**:

The degree is divided as follows:

Table (1) variables degrees

Variables	degree
Sometimes	2
Never	3
Always	1

The total degree for all questions is (60) degrees.

The fourth axis:

4. Results, Conclusions, Recommendations, and Suggestions:

4.1 Result:

Light of objectives, the study of the research sample revealed several problems and challenges among students. Some students chose the variable Always, others chose Never, and others chose Sometimes, through this questionnaire, the following results emerged:

1. The student writing the pronunciation of the English word in Arabic, or the student's lack of motivation in learning the skill of reading the English language, or the student's lack of practice reading the English language outside of school, or his inability to correct while reading, or his shyness to

read in front of his colleagues, in addition to the student's lack of familiarity with the vocabulary of the English language.

2. Students suffer from the scarcity of the necessary audio and visual aids to learn English language skills, including the correct pronunciation of English letters and good listening to the comprehension pieces that the Ministry of Education did not provide. This created a kind of hesitation and fear among the students when starting to read or speak.
3. For case (2) The lack of family assistance for the student to learn the skill of reading. The lack of follow-up with the students at home is primarily due to the negligence of the family and the low level of education within the family itself. This is due to the existence of a gap between schools the family's failure to monitor their daughters' levels in the English language subject, and their lack of awareness of the importance of learning the skill of reading the language English.
4. For points (1,5,8,10,11,22, and 25), it has been found that students lacked English language structures. When reading a book, they had speaking difficulties in understanding the texts correctly. In addition, they had a big problem distinguishing between tenses, which created a kind of confusion. They took a long time to answer which tense it was.
5. Cases in points (3,٤,6,7,12,15,18,21) Regarding these cases, the researcher found that the psychological factor greatly affects the student's performance, as most students always chose the variable over these cases. The questionnaire noted that students have a kind of fear when starting to speak in English or when answering any question in English. They also feel shy and sometimes prefer not to participate in class activities.

It has also been shown that students sometimes experience excessive anxiety when the teacher explains a new topic. From the researcher's point of view, this is due to the students' problem with the basics of the English language. From this point, the students repeat many questions to waste time.

It was also discovered that when the teacher speaks quickly, the majority of students find it difficult to understand the words he uses. It was also discovered that they have the same reading difficulties when they wish to follow the teacher since they did not pay close consideration to the teacher's initial reading.

It was also noted that the students agree to the principle of periodically correcting errors in English language skills within the classroom in terms of reading, writing, listening, and speaking, and from this point, almost half of the students have become dependent on classroom participation such as writing on the board or reading comprehension passages.

6. In cases (19 and 24), the researcher found that a minority of students with high levels prefer direct correction, and this is due to their high level because of the surrounding environment or because of learning English since childhood as a primary language through YouTube, for example, or educational cartoons speaking in the English language. This sample believes that they have no hesitation or fear. In all English language skills, even at the level of the oral or written exam, but on the other hand, the researcher found that the majority of students lack the correct foundation of the English language and do not prefer the direct method of correction in front of the students because this leads to their feeling of shyness, hesitation, and fear. In addition, the majority always chose the variant of the case (24), which says that students study the language only out of success and not because they want to develop this language. They have the English language, and this causes a big problem for students and teachers at the same time.
7. According to (17,23 and 25) the researcher found that there was a small percentage of students who chose the variable (sometimes) for the situation that says (I want to learn everything about the English language because it can benefit a person one day). Most students do not have this openness and awareness of the importance of the English language in our time, even though it is a global language this is due to their lack of awareness, while a few students showed interest in this language. They want to learn the language because of their love for this language and they want to continue learning it to enter the College of Arts Department of English or for personal purposes, such as developing individual skills or learning everything useful, and this is up to the student himself and the amount of awareness and awareness he has.

All the results above depended on analysis of the results of the student questionnaire in the table (2) below:

Table (2) Student survey results

Students	Degree	Students	Degree
A1	53	A31	52
A2	50	A32	45
A3	45	A33	44
A4	55	A34	58
A5	53	A35	52
A6	37	A36	59
A7	45	A37	40
A8	51	A38	44
A9	45	A39	40
A10	44	A40	41
A11	43	A41	54
A12	41	A42	44
A13	50	A43	33
A14	41	A44	39
A15	41	A45	44
A16	55	A46	40
A17	42	A47	51
A18	43	A48	38
A19	54	A49	42
A20	47	A50	47
A21	55	A51	50
A22	53	A52	41
A23	54	A53	43
A24	39	A54	50
A25	49	A55	46
A26	45	A56	36
A27	51	A57	42
A28	54	A58	51
A29	42	A59	56
A30	50	A60	49

4.2 Conclusion

The following conclusions are reached in light of the study's goals, statistical analysis, and findings:

1. Schools follow the Ministry of Education curriculum. During the research sample operationalized by questionnaire, it was observed that the majority of students were unable to speak fluent and natural English. Despite many years of learning English, students still face problems.
2. Challenges when speaking English in front of their colleagues and in front of the teacher himself. This is due to the difficulty of the curricula in addition to the Corona crisis, which has greatly affected the performance and level of students.
3. ESL students struggle with several speaking, reading, listening, and writing problems that limit their ability to improve their communication, including problems with their mother tongue use, shyness, anxiety, fear of making mistakes, great hesitation during exams or class participation, and a lack of frequent speaking evaluations. In other words, they face a high degree of difficulty in learning and mastering English language skills.

4.3 Recommendations

In the light of findings and conclusions of the study, the following recommendations are made:

- 1- Holding training courses and workshops for English language teachers on using strategies modern teaching and active learning methods.
- 2- Reconsidering the English language curriculum for the intermediate and preparatory stages to keep pace with using modern teaching strategies while writing school books, in addition to providing English literature classes and audio classes.
- 3- Activating the sound material as before and providing audio linguistic laboratories that help the student in the correct practical application of the sound material and pronouncing English letters correctly, which leads to the formation and formulation of sentences in a peaceful verbal manner.

- 4- Work to provide audio-visual aids during the teaching process, such as data shows the PowerPoint program and DJs, as they help students understand the study material more, especially if the lesson contains texts, literary paragraphs, poetic poems, and illustrative pictures of a specific project.
- 5- Regular connection between parents and the school, as represented by the educational adviser, giving them information about the quality of education by holding meetings and conferences, advising them on how to deal with and supervise their girls, and helping to support them.
- 6- Parents can also help them learn by explaining the value of developing speaking skills and encouraging them to practice speaking English at home as much as possible.
- 7- The role of teachers should not be limited to supervising students while speaking, but it also should include correcting errors of students to enable them to overcome their shyness and increase their self-confidence.

4.4 Suggestions

Through the research results, the following suggestions can be made:

1. Avoid using the mother tongue while teaching English in class and translating only the main titles
2. Conducting research similar to ours at other educational levels to learn more about the obstacles and problems that stand in front of students to learn and master the English language.

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