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**The Attitudes of First-Year EFL Students towards Listening to General Topics  
of Interest**

**The Case of First-year Students at the University of Saida**

Dissertation submitted as partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of *Master* in  
English Didactics.

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## **DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY**

I, Mr. H. Kherici, do hereby solemnly that the work presented in this dissertation is entirely the result of my investigation, and has not been submitted before to any other institution or university for a degree. I also certify that the work presented contains no plagiarism and is the result of my experimental work; the collaborative contributions have been indicated and acknowledged.

Date: 05/05/2021

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## DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my beloved wife *Isabel* for always supporting me unconditionally, and being there for me through everything and to my caring parents *Ahmed* and *Moktharia*.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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## **Abstract**

Attitude is a procedure that leads to a particular behavior. It is the realization of an intention or purpose. In language learning, listening is one of the most important skills that should be focused on by both the teacher and the learner. This skill is thought to be affected by the learners' attitude towards the general topics of interest. The present study has been conducted at the English department of the University of Saida, with the First-year students as a study sample. To investigate the learners' listening attitude to general topics of interest, what factors contribute to affecting it, and what determines a good listening topic, the study took a quantitative and qualitative approach. Thirty-six first-year **English students** were given a questionnaire, while two of their oral expression teachers were interviewed. The results have revealed that most students have an initial positive attitude towards listening to a general topic of interest; however, they disagree about how these topics are discussed during the classroom. The study suggests that the teacher should equip the learners with better strategies for learning, and they have to relate more to how students learn.

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## List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

EFL English as a Foreign Language

L2 Second language

L1 First language (native language)

LMD.....

US.....

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## **General Introduction**

Listening is more than an altering instinct for human beings, unlike animals who either use it to hunt their prey or to hide away from predators. Humans use this ability beyond survival, for instance; hearing a podcast or listening to an audiobook while driving, or listening to music for fun. Every day within our lives, from the day we are born till the day we die, we use our listening capacity for unlimited purposes.

There are two key components among the main reasons that human beings listen; whether it is gathering information or pleasure. In a foreign language learning context, the listening skill is deemed as one of the most important skills for the reason that it allows the learners to receive and deliver a message in the target language. Also, its purpose is to understand and make sense of what is being asked, for example, class assignments or reading comprehension. If the learners do not master this skill, there will be a misunderstanding, and the communication will be broken down as a result.

Moreover, during this process, many things are taken into consideration, like the learner's attitudes. This can include their motivation or anxiety for example, these behavioral states contribute to their engagement towards listening activities and learning in general. Teachers are required to attend to the physiological needs of their students for the reason of determining the students' ability and willingness of learning.

In an EFL classroom, the learner's fluency is usually measured through their ability of understanding and speaking, which both of these processes are based on the listening skill itself not hearing. Most of the time, the learners consider the listening skill as the most challenging and critical because it is multi-dimensional and involves so many different factors that can affect the whole process, one prime variable is the emotional state of the students, which is a decisive aspect that can make a significant change on the learning outcome and the output, so it should be a focal point for the teachers to achieve successful results.

The purpose of conducting this study is to investigate the learner's attitudes towards listening, especially to topics of general interest in the EFL context. The study attempts to answer the following research questions:

- 1- What are the learner's attitudes towards listening to general topics of interest?
- 2- What are the factors that contribute to affecting the students at the level of listening?
- 3- What determines an appropriate listening topic?

In this present study, the research will be investigated through a descriptive method for the reason of compatibility with the findings and the nature of the research by using a quantitative approach.

The data of this research **is** primary and **was** obtained through a scientific tool which is; the questionnaire. This instrument was addressed to the students, to measure their attitudes regarding listening to general topics of interest and preferences for a better understanding.

The target population is first-year LMD students at the English department of Dr. Moulay Tahar University, Saida. The sample consists of 32 students who were invited randomly to be part of the research. This sample was chosen due to their appropriateness with the study in terms of:

First, they are pursuing intensive English studies for the first time. Secondly, they are the best fit for English foreign language learners, and lastly, they are vulnerable to encounter various challenges and develop many attitudes more than any other level at the University. Additionally, the oral expression session is something new for them because they never undertook during their academic studies before. This factor can make them exposed to intensive oral output and input.

This study is divided into three chapters. Chapter one examines a Theoretical background on the Listening skill at different dimensions. The second one tackles the attitudes at the wide scope and all the factors interfering with the listening process. The last chapter focuses purely on the discussion of the findings of the questionnaire that was conducted.

The study was conducted to reveal new findings and contribute to the field of research that may benefit both the future researchers and students to promote **the** English language learning especially since the English language is a global trend and getting a lot of acceptance for the Algerian society. As for the students, it can be considered as a guide from their EFL guru, also, it will serve as a milestone when researching a similar topic and overcome their anxiety.

For the Professors and future researchers, it will give an insight from the perspective of the students to better understand them. This study will reveal many answers for the teachers and help diagnose anything that will stone the learning.

# **Chapter One**

## **Literature Review on the Listening Skill**

Chapter One:  
Skill

Literature Review on the Listening

## **1.1.Introduction**

Listening is a topic that has to do with all of us. It is estimated that 85% of our knowledge is learned through listening skills rather than other skills and this shows how crucial this ignored skill is. Besides, the learner is found to be mostly engaged in listening, especially those who are learning a foreign language.

In this chapter, the listening skill is covered as the main focal point from many aspects. First, it provides us with a definition followed by citing these types of processes and highlights the nature of listening comprehension and its importance, in addition to listening competency. Moreover, it gives an insight to the listening in the EFL field by discussing both the problems and solutions encountered. Eventually, it summarizes all that was said with a conclusion.

## **1.2. Defining Listening**

According to Remen, " The most basic and powerful way to connect to another person is to listen. Just listen. Perhaps the most important thing we ever give each other is our attention" (52). There is a variety of perspectives when it comes to the definition of listening because it is a complex process that is often rarely mastered. Along with being poorly taught and gets less focus, which makes it easy to ignore when comparing it to the other language skills. In the late 90s, Nunan made a projection of "Cinderella" on the listening skill, due to the lack of emphasis on it and giving more importance to speaking and writing. More than that, it is mystery defined and usually mixed up with hearing.

Listening is not such an easy concept that can be wrapped up through a line of words. According to Witkin, there are many definitions of listening, but no one is generally agreed upon (7). Listening is considered as both a variable and interconnected in research and this was the conclusion after many analytical studies, one of these experiments have proven how changing and complex is the term listening, is when 10 major journals of psychology were examined, just to found 315 variables, among 221 were classified as processes and 94 as related variables, which classified broad terms as listening and memory to be overlapped terms in other fields. In this regard, Rost highlighted that:

Listening is quite apparently relevant in humanities and applied sciences such as linguistics, education, business and law, and in social sciences such as anthropology, political science, psychology, and sociology. At the same time, the processes of listening are relevant to natural sciences such as biology and chemistry, neurology and medicine, and to the formal studies of computer sciences and systems sciences. (1)



It does not stop just here but it extends to the vocabulary area, where we can say that discussing this term is diffuse, for instance, it can be very thorough and quite specific while others definitions were too abstract. That is why when examining the literature we can find that many scholars have to say differently due to the nature of listening as a research variable. For Brown, listening is:

Making sense of aural input, we use our knowledge of individual pieces of language like sounds, words, and grammatical patterns in parallel with our knowledge of the topic, situation, and context to arrive at an understanding of what is being transmitted to us.  
(5)

Similarly, Saricoban argues that:

Listening is the ability to identify and understand what others are saying. This involves understanding the pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary of the speaker to grasp his meaning. Listening is decoding -making sense of the message process. Each short stretch of meaningful material which is read or heard has to be. (1)

Another interesting definition was introduced in the field of teaching English as a foreign language that deemed listening as a psychological phenomenon, which takes place on a cognitive level within your heads, and also a social phenomenon, which develops interactively between people and the environment surrounding them (Bueno 66).

Listening is a sort of combination of hearing what another person tends to say in addition to the psychological involvement with the speaker, which is also an effective key to receive messages. It is considered a language skill that requires a desire to understand the other with an attitude of respect and acceptance and willingness to see things from another perspective and with an open mind. Besides, it demands focus and energy and putting our thoughts aside, and putting ourselves in another person's shoes (Tyagi 1).

Listening has significant relevance in our lives. We never cease to use the sense of hearing for every encounter; also the sum of the information that we perceive and decipher through sound is a lot more than our visual systems. Because sounds communicate to the brain way faster than sights Listening can be found in;

For example; what someone says during a conversation, face to face or on the telephone; announcements giving information, for example, at an airport or railway station; the weather forecast on the radio; a play on the radio; music; someone else's conversation (eavesdropping); a lecture; professional advice, for example, at the doctor's, in the bank;

instructions, for example, on how to use a photocopier or other machinery; directions; a taped dialogue in class. (Lindsay and Knight 11)

All these definitions regardless of their differences all highlight the importance of listening whether in the general life or academic field it is an ability to understand what is around us whether in a receptive way as when we catch what's being said or in the form of constructive like when we construct and represent meaning. Also, it can be shaped in a collaborative way when we cooperate with speakers to make a conversation. All these forms can be found on a normal day that we live.

### **1.3.Types of Listening**

#### **1.3.1. Discriminative Listening**

This is the basic type of listening, which can be learned through the early years of development. It can be said that when the listener is distinguishing between two sounds even though he does not understand the meaning like in the case of a new learner of a foreign language or when a person travels to a new country. Moreover, when we use the sound and tone through cues to determine the meaning, it is the foundation of all the other types of listening. This definition by Kline gives a depth explanation. He asserts that is it the most crucial type in his perspective:

The final type of listening is discriminative listening. It is maybe the most important type, for it is basic to the other four. By being sensitive to changes in the speaker's rate, volume, force, pitch, and emphasis, the informative listener can detect even nuances of difference in meaning. By sensing the impact of certain responses, such as "uh-huh," or "I see," relationship listening can be strengthened. Detection of differences between sounds made by certain instruments in the orchestra, or parts sung by the a cappella vocal group, enhances appreciative listening. Finally, sensitivity to pauses and other vocal and nonverbal cues allow critical listeners to more accurately judge not only the speaker's message but his intentions as well. (Kleine 42)

According to Kleine, the discriminative type is the most important one. Through it, we can even figure out the speaker's intentions and the feelings conveyed through the message. It gives us an effective understanding. It is some sort of listening that involves the brain and the heart.

#### **1.3.2. Comprehensive Listening**

This type of listening requires an understanding of language and vocabulary. It is a bit more advanced than the discriminative type but they have to work along, at this level the listener must master decipher certain areas of language such as; grammar, syntax, and rules without excluding the tone and the facial expressions and the body language.

It is necessary to have a good command of our discriminative listening skills so that we can excel in comprehensive listening. This can be used in someone's daily life like attending a lecture, as listeners, we give attention to the interlocutor for not just the purpose of the gift but to understand the message effectively where it is up if the message is well understood and its interpretation only to the listener.

Many activities can involve comprehensive listening for instance;

- Listening to a podcast
- Listening to music in a foreign language
- Voice blogging

### **1.3.3. Informational Listening**

Informative listening is the name we give to the situation where the listener's primary concern is to understand the message. Listeners are successful insofar as the meaning they assign to messages is as close as possible to that which the sender intended (Kleine 30). A large portion of our learning comes directly from informative listening, like when we listen to a lesson, what we learn depends heavily on how well we listen. That will influence how we perform.

The effectiveness of informative listening is conditioned to concentration and knowing the source of the message. It is crucial to be careful with the message transmitted, otherwise, someone's it can cause fatal losses, for example, during routine landing preparations, between a pilot and a control tower operator Aircraft's read back was interrupted by another aircraft, by the end it caused a deadly crash with many victims, what we see here it is how important is the informative listening skills especially in fields where some commands depend only on spoken transmission as the only primary communication like missile crew members who can launch weapons of incredible destruction through an aural order, a simple listening error can cause significant damage.

Three major factors influence informative listening:

- Memory
- Vocabulary
- Concentration

### **1.3.4. Critical Listening**

As Bacon said, "Critical thinking is a desire to seek, patience to doubt, fondness to meditate, slowness to assert, readiness to consider; carefulness to dispose and set in order and hatred for every kind of imposture"(1605). Every day, we listen to different things in various ways. We are exposed either to a conversation with a coworker, the news on TV, or a new

podcast. At least in our native language, we know what we are lending our ear to and we comprehend it. In contrast to a foreign language learner, this can be especially difficult to grasp.

During the academic span, every student is subject to many sorts of messages, either the ones that carry out an informational purpose, for example, the instructions from the teacher, classroom rules, and/or warnings. Other sorts of messages are conveyed through political discourses, for instance, advertisements, political speeches, jokes, and so forth. A good listener will be able to pinpoint and filter the truth due to much misleading information that can be used to favor the speaker himself. Being able to evaluate and interpret a message is an essential part of being a good listener. At this point, the listener should adopt critical listening, which is according to Derrington and Groom:

The type we adopt when faced a situation that requires a decision from us or when the listener try to weigh up whether the speaker is credible or not, whether the message being given is logical and whether they are being duped or manipulated by the speaker.  
(54)

It can be defined as using careful, systematic thinking and reasoning to see whether a message makes sense in light of factual evidence. Critical listening can be learned (Wrench 54). Furthermore, a critical listener would evaluate all the aspects of the message including analysis and an evaluation of what is heard. This skill is not easy to attain and can be learned through only consistent practice. Unfortunately, many students of foreign languages take everything at face value and do not question if it is true or untrue. As stated by Wrench a part of critical listening is learning to separate opinions from facts (92). Because the listener has to know if the message delivered is either factual or opinion-based.

Teaching language through critical thinking allows students to recognize a wide range of subjective analyses, to develop self-awareness, and to see linkages and complexities they might otherwise miss (Kagazbayev 49).

### **1.3.5. Active Listening**

It also is called the speaker-listener technique, reflected listening, and dialogic listening. In actuality, the term "active listening" was formally coined by Gordon when he tried to describe a set of verbal and non-verbal skills between children and parents. However, scholars like Carl Rogers have given an early contribution to this theme in 1951, which was a part of when he founded humanistic psychology. Active listening "Is the act of hearing a speaker, avoiding premature judgment, reflecting understanding, clarifying information through

restating a paraphrased version of the speaker's message and asking questions, summarizing, and sharing" (Hoppe 176). Similarly, Orlov maintained that it "is an attempt to demonstrate unconditional acceptance and unbiased reflection "(36). It requires that the listener try to comprehend the speaker's understanding but without letting his interpretive structures intrude on the understanding of the other. Active listening is more than merely hearing the speaker, but listening with all of your senses and giving your full attention. Topolnycky and Golparian identified five key techniques:

#### **1.3.5.1. Features of Active Listening**

- ❑ Paying attention entails maintaining eye contact with the speaker, and omitting the distracting thoughts, formulating responses while listening, with taking into consideration the speaker's body language neutral and nonjudgmental.
- ❑ Demonstrating that you are listening - This is done by smiling, nodding, and adopting an open and inviting posture, and encouraging others with such verbal comments.
- ❑ Giving feedback to confirm our understanding of what's being said through reflection, clarification of the listener's assumptions.
- ❑ Deferring judgment by allowing the speaker to speak without interruption and finish their point.
- ❑ Responding appropriately means responding honestly and openly (Kabir 100)

These techniques indicate that the listener is active and not passive by immersing themselves in this process with all their senses. In 2011, Gearhart and Bodie explained that "active listening was more closely related to verbal social skills than nonverbal skills "(88). Implying that being an active listener has less to do with being an effective conversational partner and more to do with being able to regulate nonverbal and emotional communication. Practicing active listening will foster conversational skills, though it will not help with anxiety that might be experienced in social situations. Unless the anxiety is overcome, then active listening skills will get better (Gearhart and Bodie 159).

#### **1.4.Appreciative Listening**

According to Derrington and Groom, it is when the listener gains a pleasure or a satisfying feeling from listening to a certain aural material, that appreciative listening comes into play (54). For instance, listening to music or poetry will give the listener some appreciation. However, appreciative listening relies on how the listener will respond rather than the message and appreciation is based on individual preferences.

#### **1.5.Empathic Listening**

It is to pay attention to another person with empathy and compassion to seek to understand the way before being understood. Another basic principle is to connect emotionally with another person while simultaneously attempting to connect cognitively (Huitt, 29).

This technique allows the development of good teacher-student relationships both intellectually and emotionally. Derrington and Groom stated that "empathic Listening is where the listener tends to listen rather than talk. Their non-verbal behavior indicates that the listener is attending to what is being said. The emphasis is on understanding the speaker's feelings and being supportive and patient"(p.77)

### **1.6.Extensive Listening**

Alludes to being exposed in large quantities to comprehensible and enjoyable listening input, the concept of extensive listening is that you learn by doing. "It should be pointed out that the main goal of extensive listening is to provide our students with a massive amount of comprehension practice" (Ridgway 15). In essence, it is known as listening for gist. Activities that are pleasurable and intrigue the learner, promote meaningful listening practice; for example, read-aloud, watching movies, listening to music, and teacher-directed dictations.

Nation and Newton stated that this type of practice can furnish learners with a cognitive map. "A network of linguistic information from which learners can "build up the necessary knowledge for using the language" (38). Extensive listening can meliorate students listening cognizance, undoubtedly because it allows them to process the foreign language more accurately and fluently.

Extensive listening enables learners to build speed recognition, the text is more likely to be enjoyable, and focus is concentrated on understanding and interacting with the text (Waring 18). A retired hockey player famously says "The only way a kid is going to practice is if it is total fun for him (...) and it was for me" (Mindes 45).

### **1.7. Intensive Listening**

It refers to the process of listening for pertinent phrases, words, grammatical and pragmatic units. Intensive listening is concerned with analyzing the language. An everyday implementation is deemed as an essential part of listening proficiency.

An integral part of intensive listening is "live listening," meaning a learner can interact with speakers in real-life situations. The ability to interrupt and ask for clarification when needed. Live listening is an excellent way to carry out intensive listening. For example, reading aloud in a classroom or having a conversation. Activities are excellent practice to help with difficulties of spoken text, for example with word recognition.

### **1.8.Listening Comprehension**

In the 1970s, more attention was given to listening comprehension after a significant debate about which of the four language skills (speaking, listening, reading, and writing), is more crucial, and the findings considered listening as the most important skill for language learning. At this point, the status of listening changed to importance rather than incidental and peripheral.

This was brought by Gary when he stated that the early phases of learning and teaching a second language that will result in creating four different types of advantages cognitive, efficiency, utility, and effectiveness. The initial exposure to language will allow the learner to have a more natural way of learning and this is a cognitive advantage. He also asserted that Listening should be stressed away before speaking for the reason that knowledge recognition is required to process the aural input.

Efficiency is the second advantage, Language learning is more efficient when students are not immediately obliged to speak and are only expected just to listen.

The third advantage is utility, in other words, the use of the receptive skill. This will allow the learners to make greater use of comprehension skills.

The final advantage is emphasizing listening to the beginning learners will tend to feel a bit embarrassed and often discouraged when they are forced to make early oral production. However, when those feelings are no longer in the air the students will become eased and engaged which can make them develop their listening skills.

### **1.8.1. Definition of Listening Comprehension**

The term listening Comprehension has various definitions. Gilakjani and Ahmadi defined listening Comprehension as an active process in which individuals concentrate on selected aspects of aural input, form meaning from passages, and associate what they hear with existing knowledge. Cognitive psychology defines comprehension as information processing (978).

Listening comprehension refers to the understanding of what the listener has heard and it is his/her ability to repeat the event though that the listener may repeat the sounds without real comprehension. Hamouda maintained that “Vandergrift described Listening comprehension as anything but a passive activity. It is a complex, active process in which the listener must discriminate between sounds to comprehend vocabulary and grammatical structures” (168).

He also noted that it involves interpreting stress and intonation, retain what was gathered in all of the above, and interpret it within the immediate as well as the larger sociocultural

context of the utterance (168). Using all of this requires a great deal of mental activity from the listener that is why listening is a hard job.

### **1.9. Listening Comprehension Strategies**

The literature is dense with studies conducted on listening comprehension and its strategies, most of them indicate how important it is in foreign language learning since language learners rely heavily on understanding and comprehend most of the communication verbally as a key to acquire and inquire they will need a strategy because successful listening can also be defined by the listening strategies employed by the listener.

The best way to enhance the learning process and to help students with listening is to teach them certain strategies. According to Vandergrift, the development of strategy is significant for the training of listening and learners can guide and assess their understanding and answers (168). Furthermore, Goh argues that it is very important to teach listening strategies to students and before doing this, teachers should increase learners' knowledge of vocabulary, grammar, and phonology (75).

There are three types of strategies in listening comprehension; cognitive, metacognitive, and socio-affective, developed by O'Malley and Chamot based on the cognitive theory:

#### **1.9.1. Cognitive Listening Strategies**

Eckardt claimed that "Cognitive listening strategies refer to all mental abilities and processes related to knowledge" (110), for instance applying linguistic knowledge to resolve a certain issue or when interpreting, predicting, or storing the information, even translating, repeating, and elaborating, note-taking.

Bao and Guan emphasized that "Cognitive strategies are important for listening comprehension because they help learners monitor and control their mental processing, identify comprehension breakdowns, and connect world knowledge to listening content"(1).

Moreover, Richards defined Cognitive strategies as " Mental activities related to comprehending and storing input in working memory or long-term memory for later retrieval" (102). Cognitive strategies are crucial for listening comprehension because they assist students in monitoring and controlling their mental processing, identifying their comprehension issues, and connecting world knowledge to listening content.

#### **1.9.2. Metacognitive Listening Strategies**

Cross and Vandergrift defined it as "thinking about one's thinking to effectively and efficiently process information and to achieve a concrete goal. It is a broad concept that embraces learners taking charge of, and directing, their learning"(1). Goh stated that



"Metacognitive strategies refer to the ability to understand one's method for learning and assimilating information, that is, thinking about one's mental processes in a learning context"(223).

They can be defined also as conscious or unconscious mental activities that exercise executive control over cognitive strategies. These sorts of skills are important for the reason that they assist in supervising and managing learners' strategy use, as well as planning, and evaluating mental processes, and dealing with listening difficulties such manipulation functions assist learners in defining task objectives and proposing strategies for dealing with them. They draw the attention of learners to specific aspects of language input, such as discourse markers, content phrases, and main ideas.

### **1.9.3 Socio-affective Listening Strategies**

According to Habte-Gabr "socio-affective strategies are those which are non-academic and involve stimulating learning through establishing a level of empathy between the instructor and student "(2). This nation can be defined as the strategies or the techniques listeners use to collaborate, verify understanding, or reduce anxiety levels (Vandergrift 88).

Affective strategies are concerned with managing both negative and positive feelings and emotions. Anxiety is a negative emotion that can cause a direct impact on academic progress and the student's achievements that can interfere with listening. However, enjoyment and motivation are positive attitudes that can encourage learners. These two sides of attitudes are grouped into socio-affective listening strategies. They are applied to assist the students to overcome the negative emotions that they might experience. In terms of improving student learning, socio-affective strategies are ranked as the most effective.

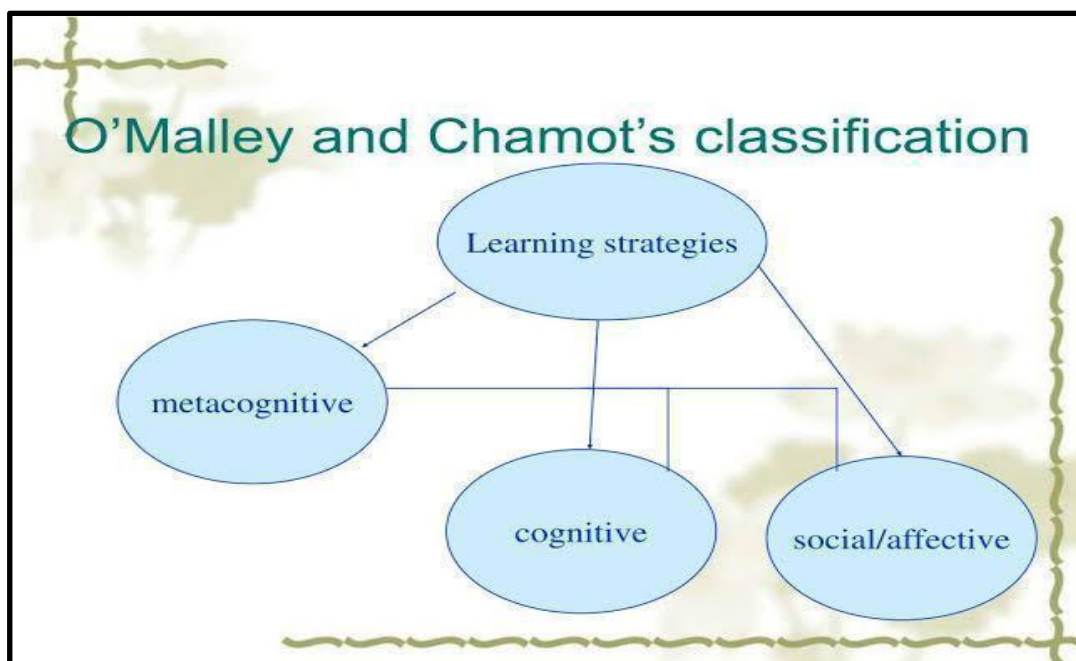


Figure. 1.1. O'Malley and Chamot Classification Graph from HuWenzhong (33)

### 1.10. Listening Process

Listening is an invisible process that happens at the cognitive level not just necessary at the ear, this fact indicates how complex it is for listeners, especially they have to pass through many levels to understand the aural input and process it. Therefore, researchers had agreed on two models for describing the listening process.

1. **Bottom-up Processing Mode:** Van Duzer defines this model as "deriving the meaning of the message based on the incoming language data, from sounds to words, to grammatical relationships, to meaning" (36). This processing model focuses on decoding the smallest units such as phonemes and syllables to get the meaning; the listener uses linguistic information as well to obtain the meaning. The name is based on the process because the language input is deciphered from the smallest speech component to the highest component to construct the meaning.
2. **Top-down Processing Mode:** According to Wilson this mode "emphasizes the use of background knowledge to predict content. This may refer to world knowledge, knowledge of the speaker or context, or analogy (if the situation is familiar, listeners can guess what they're going to hear next"(15). This means understanding all the messages rather than a broken down part or individual sounds. The listener employs his knowledge to help him grasp the message or

guess it if it is unknown. This is known by schemata simply the students use their background knowledge to interpret the meaning. For instance, predicting listening activity content. This will also brainstorm information and engaging learners.

The bottom-up approach is affected by the sound heard whereas; the top-down model relies on the learner's knowledge way before the listening happens to predict the meaning. Brown suggested that both approaches should be applied and exposed to the learners to understand the spoken language. Morley agrees that teachers have to give their students opportunities to work listening by using these two models.

To test listening comprehension, the text both approaches bottom-up and top-down should be employed. Therefore, the text should have linguistic cues and non-linguistic cues for immersing intrinsic and extrinsic information global and detailed comprehension (Seliger and Shohamy 96). According to Flowerdew,

At the level of the group, beginners are likely to need to spend more time on developing basic bottom-up skills of decoding. For more advanced learners, however, who have mastered basic phonology and syntax, emphasis on the development of top-down skills of applying schematic knowledge may be more appropriate. (27)

### **1.11. Stages of Listening**

To be a successful listener, you must simultaneously manage a series of mental functions the DeVito has divided the listening into five stages:

1. **Receiving:** This means the intentional focus purely on the speaker's message through filtering out the other sources to avoid distraction and confusion, the primary tool used at this level is the ear but the listener can use both listeners' auditory and visual sensory receptors.
2. **Understanding:** In this stage, we attempt to understand what is meant but not necessarily this means it is an easy task to do, sometimes the message is not articulated properly and this will hinder our understanding of the granted message.
3. **Remembering:** Recalling what was said can be achieved only if the listener was attentive. Wolvin and Coakley noted that the most common reason for not remembering a message after the fact is because it was not learned in the first place (15). The misunderstanding may happen when the listener misses out on a concept especially if the messages contain a set of complicated information that flows in a specific order.

4. **Evaluating:** This stage is quite a bit similar to critical listening because the listener is judging the content of the speaker. Our background and perception can influence the message received in a way or another.
5. **Responding:** Also known as feedback, it is the final listening stage, it can reflect the involvement of the listener. The responding stage of listening occurs when a listener provides verbal or nonverbal feedback about the speaker or message. There are many forms of feedback, not necessarily the verbal type.

### **1.12. Factors Affecting EFL Learner Listening**

Language learners are more vulnerable to encounter certain problems than native speakers, because of learning a new culture and a mindset. Also, many factors interfere with the learning process they can be cognitive or effective. When it comes to listening that is many reasons why learners fail at developing this important skill.

When the student fails at developing the listening skill, this will result in infertility of language production in learning. Especially that foreign learners need to communicate and to be engaged in the target language. They are required to be understood and understand the other. The only way for students to be linguistically competent is by achieving fluency; however, this equation work backward fluency comes after being linguistically competent.

The importance of communicative competence is very crucial not only for academic purposes but also for social interaction outside the professional context, the consequences of not being sufficiently competent can extend even to the affective level like anxiety and lack of motivation are results tend to be felt with weak learners. By contrast, being proficient can facilitate a better academic psychological life.

#### **1.12.1. Phonological Factors**

Within foreign language learning, the phonological factors have a significant impact on understanding the listening input, especially when it comes to the interpretation of what is being said, unlike the case of the mother tongue because children are accustomed to their native languages and have a lot of exposure even unconsciously. Students of Foreign languages lack both familiarity and exposure to that target language, which is a setback since the sounds carry a certain message and the meaning impaired with aural input should be interpreted well.

#### **1.12.2. Sounds Familiarity and Pronunciation**

Vandergrift and Baker have stated that "more work has to be dedicated to pronunciation within the classroom"(407), because the learners' instruction stretches out from the articulation of the sounds to achieving fluency. In addition, the main reason behind misunderstanding usually is not only being able to understand the meaning, but more the familiarity with the

sounds especially, for instance, English speakers who want to learn Arabic will find difficulty not just with the alphabet but sounds too. Ableeva maintained that "students very often misunderstand the meaning due to the absence of some sounds in their L1"(262). Hence, more work has to be done on phonetics. Rost stressed that incomplete knowledge of phonological features can distort perception and understanding of the meaning.

### **1.12.3. Word Boundaries**

Another factor is word boundaries in speech, Altenberg Emphasized that "To comprehend language, part of what the listener needs to do, is to segment the continuous stream of incoming speech into meaningful units" (44), the phonological assimilation can hinder language perception.

### **1.12.4. Accented Speech**

The teacher's accent can be considered as a factor too because the students receive a lot of linguistic data in the classroom through their teachers that provide so much information and instruction. But sometimes the teacher's accent is not always perfect. In English language teaching, many teachers are not native and naturally, they have an accent. Students can notice the accent in the information delivery.

Demirezen reports that the pointer of the speaker's inefficiencies at the level of articulation, pronunciation, and intonation is the foreign accent. It is noticeable that many foreign teachers have accents as a result of their mother tongue impact, which makes them speak English in the same way they do with their first language without them even being aware. This can make awful outcomes such as misunderstanding, failure of understanding their classes, losing the will, and the least or the collateral consequences are carrying a heavy accent in their speech.

### **1.12.5. Speed of Input**

The high speed of delivery, this issue usually is found when getting attending beginner classes that are taught by native speakers, the learners complain of the speed especially when it comes to listening because in reading the learners can go back and re-read, but in listening when the learners lose the flow of ideas can cause them to be confused and lose focus since they cannot rewind what was said. The speed rate in foreign languages sounds way faster than in native languages.

### **1.12.6. Linguistic Factors**

To comprehend listening input, the learners have to be proficient linguistically and have significant knowledge when it comes to vocabulary and grammar because they can alter the information received through listening. For instance, an extensive vocabulary will enable the learner to decipher many words, there is a close relationship between the level of comprehension and vocabulary size. Vocabulary knowledge is the main issue to successful listening comprehension for EFL learners (Kelly 88).

#### **1.12.7. Vocabulary**

According to Hazenberg and Hulstun, " 3000 words allow you to understand about 95% of most ordinary texts "(150). Moreover, Stæhr stated that "Existing vocabulary knowledge specifically might also be expected to influence how much vocabulary is gained through spoken input, given that vocabulary breadth is positively correlated with listening proficiency. Learners that have an extended vocabulary size can benefit from that by acquiring more words through aural input due to their understanding of input before all.

#### **1.12.8. Cognitive Factors**

Cognitive factors are deemed to be the most affecting when it comes to listening Comprehension in L2, such as strategy instruction, short-term memory effect, and ability to concentrate.

##### **1. Short-term Memory**

Listening is a cognitive task that requires encoding the information received and for that data to pass through memory, as it is important to have an extensive vocabulary and grammar knowledge it is also to have a powerful short-term memory. Hearing words and making sense out of them is the last product of a complicated succession of processes, first, the listener receives the sounds or the stimulus through their auditory system, then the words get stored for about a second, to get interpreted, this storing act is also known by echoic memory, which is a sort of conversion of utterances heard to meaningful units, for instance; clues, words, and phrases, through this journey information becomes a part of the short memory.

Loe stated there is a link between target language proficiency and short-term memory. She has examined the memory span for lengthy and complex grammar sentences in foreign language learning and concluded that it is easier to recall short sentences, unlike the long ones they are hard to recall. This indicates the relationship between short-term memory and complex grammar sentences, for instance, advanced learners recalled the sentences that have clauses better than the sentences that have series of phrases even though they have the same length of word count. But contrast the less-proficient students, the sentences that contain phrases are easier to remember, this shows more skilled speakers have learned to group incoming linguistic

data efficiently using increasingly complex syntactic patterns. Target language pronunciation scores are correlated with scores of short-term memory span students scoring high on tests of pronunciation also score high on aurally presented digit memory tasks.

## **2. Strategy Instruction**

This refers to teaching practice in that mode and shows students how to learn either skills or context that they may need; for instance, note-taking to help them process and express what they want to learn. Mendelsohn defined them as "programs that have been set to provide the listeners with a collection of workable strategies to help them successfully carry out listening tasks in real-life contexts" (120). The employment of strategies in L2 can be beneficial for the learners. Nakatani reported that "Skill-specific strategies are effective in helping learners to make up for L2 inadequacies in doing particular L2-related skills or tasks"(128).

## **3. Concentration**

James defined concentration as "the taking possession by the mind, in clear and vivid form, of one out of what seem several simultaneously possible objects or trains of thought. It implies withdrawal from some things to deal effectively with others" (403). When learners lose their focus they will face difficulty keeping up with incoming knowledge, this can be deemed detrimental to the effectiveness of listening, regardless of the cause that results from losing concentration whether, lack of interest, getting distracted, or stress, the focus is a must in the classroom, Wolfgramm emphasized that "concentration is a strong predictor of listening comprehension" (18). It is not enough to have attention but to be focused more because concentration is maintaining attention for a longer period.

Furthermore, strong attention skills are necessary to keep up during lessons in addition to concentration (Blair), usually, children that suffer from ADHD or attention deficiency are reported to not perform well academically.

### **1.12.9. Socio-Psychological Factors**

#### **1. Age**

Young language learners are regarded to be better than old starters, considering the importance of the age factor in learning; many perspectives are revolving around this matter. Lenneberg views that "Some adolescents or adults who start to learn a second language would fail to achieve language fluency, while children who were exposed to a second language at their early age seem to be proficient like a native speaker.

There is a theory that the younger the better when it concerns second language learning, for instance; Ruyun confirmed that" young learners probably have great potential to acquire second languages rapidly, efficiently and proficiently"(2154). However even though the adults

would face many difficulties and they seem to learn at a faster rate, Ekstrand argues that "L2 learning ability 'improves with age'(130). In Harley's research, he favors the faster acquisition rate among.

Children can be fluent with less effort and mere exposure, and gain a native accent unconsciously, most scholars agree on the Critical Period Hypothesis and age as determining factors in language learning.

## **2. Anxiety and Motivation**

Learning involves a mixture of dimensions; there are the cognitive dimensions such as intelligence and memory but also affective dimensions like anxiety, which sometimes can be either positive or negative for learners. Student's attitudes have a strong effect on learning as well especially on listening comprehension since it's a multi-dimensional skill that can contain many provoking factors such as anxiety which can result in many consequences.

There are various perspectives in the literature regarding what is meant by anxiety exactly, for instance, Spielberger sees it as "Emotional reactions including tension sensation, fear and irritability, unpleasant thoughts (concerns) and physiological changes" (14). In addition, Budak defines it as a "reaction triggered with the influence of forces oppressed in the mind against a factor that has not been perceived yet" (145). It was also defined as a "persistent, distressing psychological situation that emerges from the internal conflicts of the individual (Köseler 13). Anxiety has been categorized into two facilitating and debilitating anxiety based on each type of effect. According to Scarcella and Oxford, Facilitating anxiety is stated to be facilitating the learning process by allowing learners to attach greater importance to the subject (155). On the other side, debilitating anxiety is stated to be negatively affecting student performance by lowering their participation and distancing them from the activity of listening.

The development of language skills can be affected by either the positive or negative affective states, anxiety is one of these affective states that can impact listening ability significantly, in addition to its dominant mental and psychological dimensions. Students in foreign language classes can experience the feeling of worry and panic just because they do not understand what is being said during learning. Some studies have reported that the greater the anxiety, the lower the level of listening comprehension of the learners. When students doubt themselves and their abilities as a result of struggling with learning or confronting difficulties that will push them to give up to cope with anxiety and this is debilitating anxiety because it affects the learner's performance.

Lowering students' anxiety can help achieve learning outcomes of learning by the teachers since they are orchestrating and supervising the process. They can increase their



learner's motivation and choose well-fitted topics that can raise the learner's interest in listening. Pan stated that "students are always afraid of unfamiliar topics" (Pan 66).

### **1.13. The Significance of Listening**

Listening has a vital role in our lives and especially when it comes to the academic context we find it crucial to both learning and teaching, According to Devine, "Listening is the primary means by which incoming ideas and information are taken in" (34). Listening is a most consuming type of communication within classrooms compared to all the other forms of verbal communication (Wolvin and Coakley 9).

Guo and Wills acknowledge "it is the medium through which people gain a large proportion of their education, their information, their understanding of the world and human affairs, their ideals, sense of values"(3). With all this being said, the frequently used language skill is not reading nor writing but listening.

Language learners similarly are child-like when it comes to learning a new language and listening is considered as the first language mode that's acquired by children. The period when the language learner relies only on listening before even articulating a single word is known by the critical period. At this stage, the student is more receptive than productive.

Listening is the fundamental skill in language learning, and it accounts for more than half of the time that foreign language students spend in learning, devoted to only listening (Nunan ?).

Krashen explained that language acquisition is achieved through understanding what is heard by first receiving understandable input; this can be accomplished only by the listening ability (4). Language teachers need to make their students good listeners. The communicative approach to language teaching considers modelling listening strategies and allowing learners to practice the inauthentic situations that can happen out of a classroom setting.

### **1.14. Listening Activities**

Listening sequences are divided into three stages. Rost elaborated that "listening activities, in general, should consist of some well-structured pre-, while-, and post-listening stages"(232). Both the learner and teacher will get their chess move in this sequencing fairly where each one gets a role to do.

#### **1.14.1. Pre-listening**

This is the first step. It is considered as a preparation for what the learner will hear. Thus, they can have an initial idea that will help by activating the student's schemata so they can predict the content of the aural input. This stage will serve as a warm-up for the lesson.

After that engaging learners will be easier and effective, and their motivation will increase. There are many techniques the teacher can employ to conduct this stage.

Wilson pointed out that "Brainstorming is a particularly useful thing to do before listening to factual passages with one main topic"(64). When learners raise questions, this will make them more aware of what is being said and heard, as the effect, it will force them to draw their attention into the topic the feeling of being challenged will intrigue any student to use their abilities.

Using visuals can help visual learners to get immersed within the lesson such as an image or diagram, the purpose of this tool is to be thought-provoking and illustrating some abstract concepts. Textbooks often contain a drawing or pictures, because it is easier to guess content from a picture than a written statement. Asking learners to grapple with ideas is very evocative and beneficial for listening passages. Once the attention is drawn and the prior knowledge is activated, comes establishing the purpose of listening for example setting an achievable goal. This phase is very crucial and represents the foundation of the lesson as a whole.

#### **1.14.2. While-listening**

This stage can be defined as "are all the tasks that students are asked to do during the time of listening to the text. The nature of these activities is to help learners to listen for meaning that is to elicit a message from spoken language"(Pospieszyńska 45). This level can determine if the student understood or not so the teacher can intervene to clarify. Students are expected to be involved fully in the tasks. Underwood adds that "the purpose of listening activities is to help learners develop the skill of eliciting messages from spoken language"(16). Rixon points out that, in the while-listening stage students should concentrate on comprehension rather than worrying about interpreting long questions or giving full answers (18).

The only initial requirement needed from students is to list for gist, after that the listener tends to select only what is important which is known by selective listening also, here some details matter, this can be very helpful for note-taking because when selecting information, only important ones are picked out. It will even be a good thing for future use.

#### **1.14.3. Past-listening**

This is a sort of follow-up after getting student's attention and engaging them, then assigning tasks to work on. This can allow them to reflect or maybe notice new vocabulary. The teacher in return can assess the feedback of the learners through a discussion.

### **1.15. Conclusion**

Listening is the ability to feel, to perceive sensually what another person transmits, to understand the message; This aspect allows the listener to evaluate the importance of what was heard to respond correctly to the interlocutor; It also requires awareness of the possibilities of misrepresentation of messages. There are different forms of listening, and different stages of it that makes it a very important skill in the language learning process.

# **Chapter Two:**

## **Attitudes and Listening**

**2.1. Introduction**

This chapter will attempt to give more details about what is meant by “ attitude “ and how it affects listening, and thus the process of acquiring a new language.

**2.2. Attitudes as a Concept**

Attitude is defined by Allport as the mental and neurological disposition, which is organized from experience that exerts a directing or dynamic influence on the individual's reactions to all objects and situations that correspond to them (35).

In the same regard, Young defines attitude as the learned tendency or predisposition, more or less generalized and affective in tone, to respond in a fairly persistent and characteristic way, usually positively or negatively (for or against), with reference to a situation, idea, value, object or class of material objects, or to a person or group of people (12).

To give a generalized definition, attitude can be thought to be the behavior that an individual uses in front of life. In this sense, it can be said that it is their way of being or the behavior of acting, it can also be considered as a certain form of character, therefore, secondary, compared to biological motivation, of a primary type that drives and guides action towards certain objectives and goals (Grant and Dweck 23).

**2.3. Components of Attitudes**

Rodríguez (1991) makes the case for attitude being composed of three main components. They are as follows:

- Cognitive component: for an attitude to exist there must also be a cognitive representation of the object. It is formed by the perceptions and beliefs towards an object, as well as by the information we have about an object. In this case, we speak of attitudinal models of expectation by value; especially in reference to the studies of Fishbein and Ajzen (Fishbein and Ajzen). Objects that are not known or about which there is no information cannot generate attitudes. The cognitive representation can be vague or erroneous; in the first case the effect related to the object will tend to be not very intense; when it is wrong it will not affect the intensity of the effect at all.
- Affective component: it is the feeling for or against a social object. It is the most characteristic component of attitudes. Herein lays the main difference with beliefs and opinions - which are characterized by their cognitive component.

- Behavioral component: It is the tendency to react to objects in a certain way. It is the active component of attitude (15).

#### **2.4. The Power of Attitude**

From the standpoint of personality psychology, in its search for stable trends in behavior, it is interesting to ask what relationship there is between attitude and actual behavior. The beginning of the research on attitudes was marked by the idea that attitudes are formed by quasi-conscious judgments of certain characteristics of objects and, therefore, can be measured through questionnaires or even simple questions. In a 1934 study, LaPiere wrote letters to 250 hotels and restaurants across the United States asking if these establishments catered to customers of Chinese origin (77). At that time, there was a great prejudice in the US against the Chinese and 92% answered that they did not serve Chinese people. However, LaPiere had gone to all these restaurants and hotels six months before, accompanied by a Chinese couple and had always been served - the owners were influenced by factors other than their prejudice. Subsequent research confirmed the low correlation between attitude and direct behavior. Wicker (1969) sought to explain this phenomenon by stating that individual behavioral characteristics would be specific to certain situations and could not be predicted through generic attitudes.

What the first researchers failed to notice, however, was the principle of aggregation: the surveys were carried out in only one situation. Fishbein and Ajzen (10) showed that individuals' attitudes toward religion had a low correlation with actual behavior when measuring only one type of behavior (e.g. going to church at Christmas), but this correlation rose when asked why. Different forms of behavior (praying, going to church, paying tithing, etc.). What Fishbein and Ajzen observed regarding the behavior described by the people themselves, showed Weigel and Newman (55) regarding the observed behavior. These two authors researched attitude and behavior about ecology - that is, if people with a positive attitude towards ecological awareness also acted more in accordance with this attitude (participating in petitions against nuclear energy, carrying out selective garbage collection, etc.). Here the behavior was observed and not asked - and also here the situation was repeated: if only one or a few behaviors were taken, the attitude-behavior correlation was low; if you took many forms, it was tall. Thus, a positive attitude towards a certain value (e.g. ecology) is not able to predict whether a person in a given situation will act in a manner corresponding to this attitude (e.g. separate garbage even on the camping), but it predicts that the person, in general, behaves more

ecologically conscious than a person with a neutral or negative attitude to this value (LaPierre 239).

## **2.5. Language Attitude**

There is a great variety of studies that tell about the process carried out in learning, and the different aspects that influence their development. Often, the information presented is explained in the form of hypotheses, or theories that teachers can sometimes find useful and sometimes not. The latter depends on the different characteristics of all: the classroom, the students, and sometimes even the teachers (Cooper and Fishmen 51).

When a teacher encounters a difficult situation in the classroom and seeks in these studies some clues to be able to develop his or her classroom efficiently, it is well expected that they focus exclusively on the general ideas which we think are equally applicable in all contexts. However, as these studies show us, we cannot forget that each student and teacher, as well as the relationship that exists between the two, is something unique that may or may not conform to the pattern that we have read in the different studies. Therefore, we must consider that each student is a unique individual, and has to be treated individually by Cooper and Fishmen (Cooper and Fishmen 52).

Therefore, when teaching, it is a must to consider that each human being presents characteristics that differentiate them from each other and that these characteristics affect their learning, individually. These individual differences come determined by cognitive, physical, and affective factors i.e. each student has different cognitive skills, different physical qualities and even certain affective aspects that determine in one way or another, their attitude towards learning a language.

Given that the three factors determine the attitude of the student, one might think that the most appropriate thing would be to study them as a single block in the search for learning enhancements. However, there is a distinctive feature between them that cannot be ignored when analyzing them. This distinctive feature resides in that cognitive and physical conditions are determined by each one of us. From the moment we were born to this day, they are part of us; a genetic structure you may call it, while affective competencies are acquired during life (Amin 28). This does not mean that our cognitive and physical conditions cannot develop any further. On the contrary, with effort and good training, these conditions are strengthened, making it easier and faster to use them. Thus, these conditions are enriched as we work them;

what cannot be changed is the ability to work with them. This is the reason why some children are born stronger than others or have a better ability to perform certain activities, depending on the cognitive and physical aspect they had genetically acquired when they were born into this world. This “determination” is an innate ability and is not subjected to change. On the other hand, our affective characteristics can be altered or modified since they are not innate but acquired through our individual life experiences.

The information stated so far is to highlight the difficulty, if not the remote possibility, of making such research. However, studies have shown that there is a link between affective factors and learning success. Therefore, below, we will dive into a great deal of research to understand better the relationship between affective conditions and acquisition of the new language. In terms of affective factors, we can highlight three main aspects: Attitude, motivation, and personality. These three aspects are interrelated at the same time, which strongly influence the learning of a new language. For example, a good attitude should lead to positive motivation. Equally so, an open-minded person is more likely to show a good attitude toward a foreign culture or own language learning, and at the same time, a motivated person will have a good attitude towards it. As we can see, each aspect is related to the others and we cannot determine to what extent one is more dominant than the other.

Many researchers have investigated these factors. We shall have a look at some studies that demonstrate how motivation and attitude are important factors in acquiring a second language with regard of course to personality. It is important to highlight that according to the character of each person, motivation and attitude can be more or less intense, or negative or positive i.e. an optimistic character will allow the student to develop a better attitude as well as face anecdotes that could motivate them. Whereas, in the same situation, a pessimistic character will be more prone to drop out of the study or not succeed despite their effort.

## **2.6. Motivation: An Overview**

Motivation is a key component in any teaching model of languages. Gardner believes that motivation can be of two different types: integrative and instrumental (41). As an integrative motivation, the interest in learning a language is to become part of a new culture. For example, a person would learn a language to communicate in a new environment, out of personal interest.

As instrumental motivation, Gardner refers to the practical reasons why the student learns a new language; for example, learning a language for occupational reasons.



Both types of orientations are equally efficient since both allow the student to establish their own goals to learn the language. However, both types of motivation are affected by personality factors such as acceptance, anxiety, nervousness, confidence, etc.

Concerning attitude, one can also speak of two significant types, mainly the attitude towards the speakers and use of the language being learned, and the attitude towards the learning context in which the learner is immersed. The effects of these two types of attitudes are different in that the former is constantly related to achievement, while the latter shows a more varied set of relationships. Learning motivation is determined by these two types of attitude and by the type of orientation (integrative or instrumental) that the student has towards the target language (Spolsky 203).

### **2.6.1. Definition**

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### **2.6.2. The Relationship between Attitude and Motivation**

Several factors intervene in the development of the competence of a new language. Attitude is only one of them, but this, together with the aptitude for learning languages are the only two individual traits that have been sufficiently investigated to appear as elements involved in the learning process. Moreover, we can say that attitude has an indirect effect on learning. The results of the attitude conditions are more related to motivation (which has a direct effect) than to linguistic results. According to Gardner and Lambert, motivation derives from attitude

since motivation is a complex factor consisting of the combination of effort, desire to learn, and a favorable attitude towards language learning (Spolsky 204).

The attitude itself can be measured by asking an individual to respond to a series of questions to evaluate a given subject, as Gardner and Lambert affirm, the attitude of an individual is the evaluative reaction towards some object based on the belief or opinions of the individual about the referent in question (Spolsky 205). That is, the attitude is built from the response of a subject to some questions about an object. The student's attitude shapes the development of motivation in the sense that the favorable attitude towards speakers of a language, their culture, and country allows better integration and a positive attitude towards studying, leading to positive motivation.

### **2.7. Attitude towards the Speakers of the Language and Language Use**

As we have already explained, the different types of attitudes lead to motivation that favors the integration of the student. The preferred attitude in relation to other groups (speakers of other languages in general) as well as the positive attitude towards the community of the language being learned will help the student to get involved in the new languages being learned. On the contrary, the negative attitude towards the other group together with the students' ethnocentric thoughts determines the lack of success to the time to learn the new language. Gardner's concept of "integration" is similar to Schumann's notion of "acculturation" (76). By which, Schumann means the sum of a complex group of types of attitude towards the target language, social functions for the ones, for example, the student's perspective towards the people he thinks speak the language and the student's belief about its effect on their self in his personality or feeling of power (28). With these variables of "acculturation", the student ends up giving a certain use to the language that he wants to learn. For instance, if the student has a bad attitude towards the English culture or the people who speak English (due to a stereotypical conception about them) likely, the student wouldn't be motivated to learn the English language. While on the other hand, if the student likes or is attracted to any of these aspects, meaning he has a positive attitude towards them, and then he is likely to be motivated to learn. The concrete effect of integrative motivation is the product of the integrative orientation or the positive attitude towards the speakers of the target language. In particular, the development of a pronunciation closes to the native one and the assimilation of the new field of semantics.

### **2.8. Attitude towards Learning Situation**

This type of attitude refers to the learning situation as a whole that includes the teacher, the method, the class environment and the syllabus of the course. Language learners bring a

wide range of beliefs and opinions on how their instruction should be carried out, and it is more than likely that these ideas can affect learning. Previous experiences, either in terms of education in general or language learning in particular, plays a fundamental role in shaping the attitude towards learning. The reason for this is that the students become familiar with the philosophy that each teacher brings to the class, his or her method of teaching, and the choice of learning strategies. Therefore, each teacher presents a different philosophy corresponding to different methods to which students respond more or less efficiently depending on their characteristics. Focusing on language teaching, we can talk about three philosophies:

1. Use of language: The teacher who abides by this philosophy gives importance to learning languages in a natural way, based on practice and simulation of real conversation.
2. Language learning: With this philosophy, the teacher emphasizes learning grammar and vocabulary.
3. Personal Factors: in this case, the teacher gives importance to the beliefs and feelings that facilitate or hinder learning: Self-esteem, and aptitude to learn.

These preferences affect the types of strategies teachers choose for students to learn the new material. If the student feels that the method of teaching to which he is exposed is not appropriate, his attitude towards that situation will turn out to be negative. That is if the students detect inconsistencies or deficiencies in teaching, or simply do not understand the need to assimilate what is taught, the teaching-learning process is paralyzed. Faced with this situation, we find classes with a high degree of demotivation to which cases of bad behaviour are added. Therefore, it is not surprising at all that the attitude of the students in the classroom determines their learning experience. Activities that are not appreciated by the students as truly educational, that are useful for real life, will produce negative attitudes and the attention and participation in class will be at an all-time low. Therefore, attitude is essential now, which is the element that determines the continuation or the end of the learning process.

In addition, these methods are strongly related to strategies that maintain motivation and a positive attitude. Such methods include a positive attitude towards the native speakers, the language itself, the subject of study, and the teachers. It also includes the student' desire and interest in learning the new language both integratively and instrumentally. However, there is no possibility for measuring the extent to which attitude and motivation would affect language learning. Moreover, this begs the following question; if certain types of attitude are correlated with a high degree of learning success, wouldn't that mean that a positive attitude is also generated from success? For instance, students with better conditions for learning the language would consequently have a better attitude towards the language and speakers,

regardless of the presumptions they might have had in the past. Even if the main direction is from attitude to success, which does not mean that it does not work the other way around. In brief words, is there a relationship between a good physical condition and a good attitude? Attitude and aptitude? The answer to this question is: while a high degree of motivation and positive attitude lead to the student's fruitful learning, the success in learning doesn't lead to motivation and positive attitude i.e. learning the target language does not affect how people see the language, the culture, and the people speaking the language.

## **2.9. Influence on the Attitude**

According to what has been explained, it is essential that students have a positive attitude towards the culture of the target language, and learn it as well, to obtain the best result. For this reason, language teachers should encourage these types of attitudes by making students aware of the cultural differences and acculturation process. To do this, students have to be provided with useful guides in class so that they can know the cultural elements of the communities of the target language, while at the same time, promote a positive attitude. However, this cannot fall only on the teacher's lap, since it would not be reasonable to hold the teacher accountable for everything happening inside and outside of the classroom. In most cases, a negative attitude is usually caused by bad past experiences. For example, associating the people who speak the Arabic language with terrorism through fake media or the influence of the environment, when parents or the society give little importance to the target language learning. For example, in the Algerian community where the French language is given more importance than English.

In learning a new language, depending on the context in which the students are immersed, the degree of influence on attitude can vary. In relation to this, Dornyei explains that students differ from each other in the origin of their attitudes (Rebecca 118). That is, the student who learns a language within the classroom is not immersed in the environment in which it is spoken in a real way. Therefore, they will have less influence on the target language, than a student who learns it by going directly to the country where it is spoken. This student would learn the language more efficiently since he would always be in contact with the language in a real communication situation. That is, the student would use the language regularly, which guarantees to learn. When the language is learned in this way, the attitude is shaped positively in a much easier way than if the language was to be learned exclusively in the classroom. This way, the student who learns the language by practicing directly in a real situation is in a great

measure. Typically, these students show a positive attitude towards learning as they feel the need to learn it to feel integrated into their new environment (Anderson 10).

## **2.10. Motivation and Attitude in the Second language According to the Gardner Model**

The first and most important researches in the study of motivation and attitude of the learning of the second language were conducted by Gardner and Lambert in 1959. They show that motivation and a positive attitude increase the development of linguistic competence and the construction of the target language identity (Gardner 88).

Motivation in learning determines the directionality of the human behaviour i.e. the choice of a particular action, and the persistence of this action over time, and commitment to it (Dornyei 50). The phenomenon was later studied by many other researchers such as (Ushioda 10; Noel 44; Csize 70). The following information is based on the works of (Gardner 89) and includes the insights of (Ushioda and Dornyei 23). A brief overview of the model includes the following components:

- \* The social environment and cultural conviction: refers to the place of learning, and its effect on attitude towards the language, and its ethnic group.

- \* The variable of individual differences: the socio-cultural environmental influences that affect the individual on both cognitive and emotional levels.

- \* The learning context: It can be formal, but also informal.

- \* Success in learning L2: it can be measured by linguistic knowledge (the correct use of vocabulary, grammar, etc.), or nonlinguistic (attitudes, beliefs, etc.).

Although the model was changed several times, the central nuclei have remained the same. In the last proposed model, attitude towards the language is interrelated and influenced with motivation, which in turn has an effect directed on academic success. A learner's success also comes influenced by his abilities. An interrelation can also be observed between success and anxiety in learning and interacting with speakers of this language. Individuals with high levels of integrative motivation and a positive attitude towards the learning situation and other levels of instrumental motivation are generally characterized by more success in learning the language.

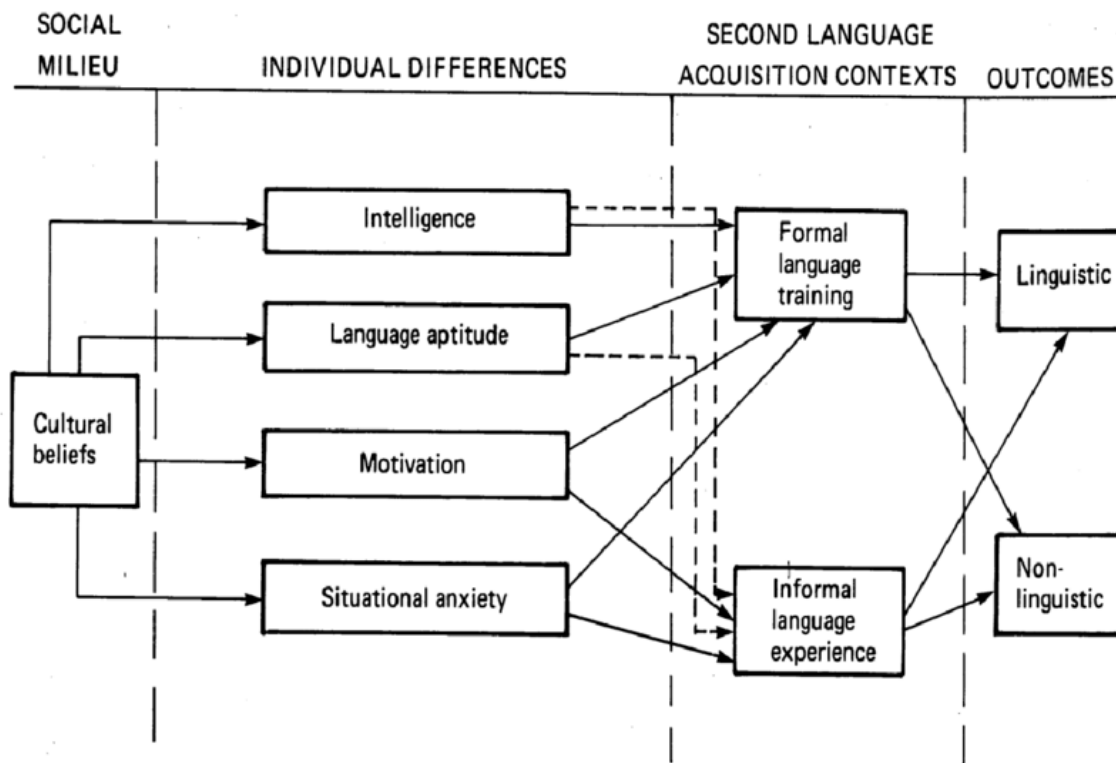


Figure .2.2. Schematic representation of Gardner's Socio-educational Model (Gardner 14)

Based on this model, Gross conducted a study on primary school children's attitudes and motivation towards second language learning in Tyrol, Italy (16). The study had found factors such as differences in school systems, gender.

## 2.11. Differences in Schooling Systems

The results of the study had shown that the differences in the schooling systems indicated a significant dividend in how much motivation, and encouragement from parents is perceived by the learners, and their attitude towards the speakers of the target language, as well as their perceived image of the teachers and the curriculum affects their success in learning the language.

### 2.11.1. Gender Differences

The results have found a significant gender difference in motivation and attitude towards the speakers of the target language. It indicated that female learners have a higher integrative motivation and positive attitude towards the language and its speakers than male learners. Which in consequence, have correlated greatly in females having better learning results than male students?

### 2.11.2. Factors Affecting Attitude

### **2.11.2.1. Sociocultural Factors**

Brown argues that when a person is learning a new language, he is not only adding the vocabulary, and the grammar of that language, but is also learning the culture of the target language (13). Thus, there would be a mirroring of this new learned culture, and the culture the learner already has. Four secondary factors are therefore born.

#### **Peer Pressure**

Peer pressure is reported to be the most dominant reason that makes learning so difficult for learners. One of the researchers has reported, “Students don't want to look dumb by being the only one who speaks English” (Ranganathan, et al 53). This causes the lack of practicing the language outside of the classroom, which as a consequence impedes the learning. Many language students have a motivation for learning the language, but their interaction with other students’ compromises immensely.

#### **Fear of Negative Evaluation by Peers**

Along with the anxiety and stress classmates could make, the fear of the negative feedback is almost as dominant. It is natural for human beings to always try to look in the best form and shape possible in front of anyone. That would be something very normal, except for when it comes between the learner and practicing the language. It is inevitable for the students to make mistakes when practicing the language. However, the fear of being judged by peers, and being laughed at, is a constant hindrance that many students face when learning a new language. Therefore, in most classrooms, learners usually resort to speaking their native language with each other, to avoid embarrassing themselves in front of their peers.

#### **Cultural Communication Patterns**

There is no debate about how culture is strongly attached to language. But since every culture is unique in its way, which means that every language follows its cultures' guidelines. For instance, Korean students found it difficult to communicate with adults in English because it is considered disrespectful to address an elderly with the pronoun you. This linguistic difference has made communicating in English very hard for learners.

### **2.11.2.2. Linguistic Factors**

Sometimes the problem is not from the outside but is from the inside. Language components can sometimes be the reason why the students may or may not learn the language adequately. Studies had shown that the following linguistic components of the language are the main ones that affect learning:

## Lack of Vocabulary

Lack of proficiency was reported to be one of the main reasons why students would resort to using their native language rather than the target language because they feel that they can't express themselves to a great extent using their current vocabulary and grammar. Some learners describe it as a very stressful feeling when they are full of emotions, but are unable to find the words to express themselves to other people. And it becomes a sort of natural habit for them to use their native language rather than English.

## 2.12. The Progress of Attitude throughout the Learning Stages

Vasilievna and Vadimovna have conducted an experimental study on the progress of attitudes towards the study of a foreign language throughout the different stages of learning: Freshmen, sophomores, and graduates (32). The study was carried out on 158 students from the pedagogical University of Novgorod.

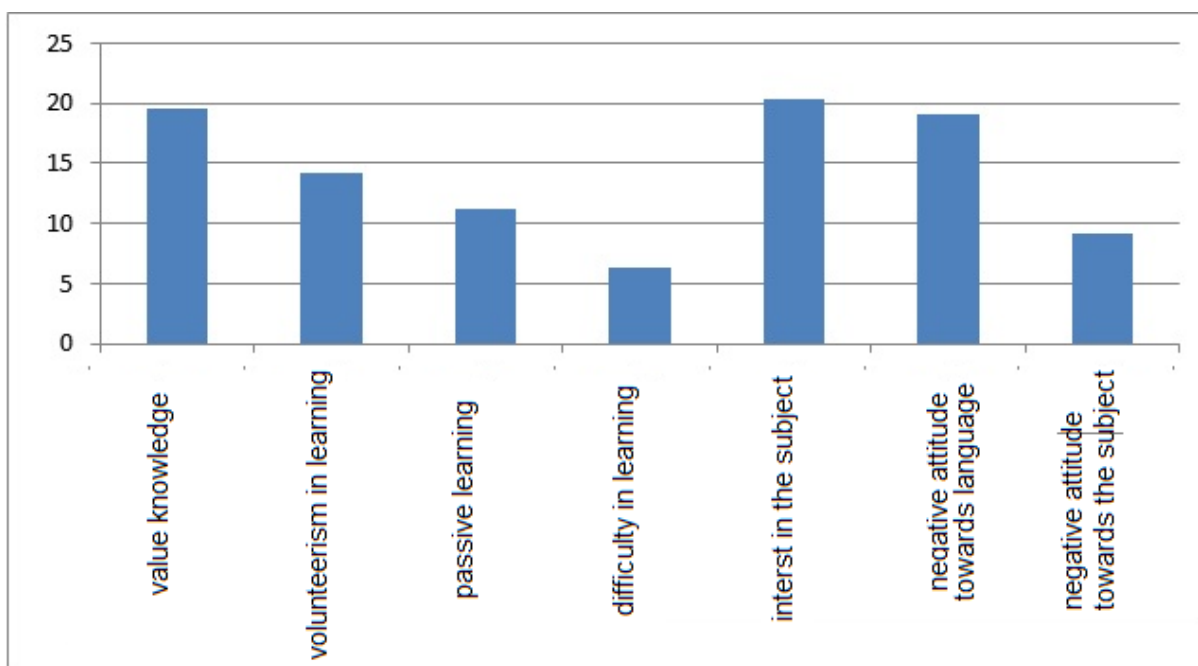


Figure. 2.3. The attitude of first-year students to learning a foreign language

The data had shown that the first year students are interested in the subjects. These students are attracted to learning a foreign language by showing a genuine desire to participate inside of the classroom, which directly affects their academic performance. However, 19% of the students have responded with a negative attitude towards the foreign language class. These students prefer either to skip the class or not work during these classes. Therefore, their results were consequently poor. Another 9% have a negative opinion towards the subject and have expressed the opinion that they feel no need to study this language at all. 6% of the respondents have



expressed difficulty in learning English, due to grammatical, lexical or phonetic complexity, which negatively affects their attitude towards the classes, and the subject as a whole.

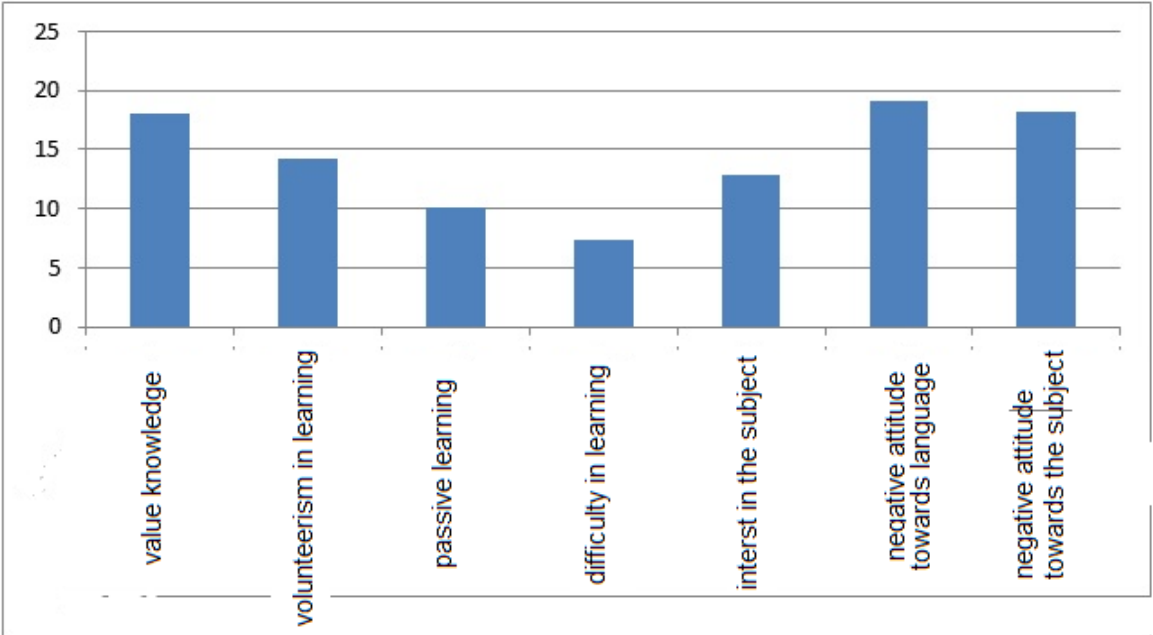


Figure 2.4. The attitude of Second-year students to learning a foreign language

Nineteen point two percent of the subjects showed a negative attitude towards the classes, and 18.2% of the students have a negative attitude towards the subject of a foreign language. Such a high percentage (37.4%) of negative attitudes towards a foreign language is due to the increasing difficulties in its mastery. These results indicate that 2nd years are more passionate about their main subjects of studying in the university which is very important for their future careers and start to care less about the foreign language. Nevertheless, 18.1% of the students have valued the knowledge gained in the course of foreign language. 14.1% of the students in this group have expressed volunteerism in studying. 12.9% of the subjects are interested in studying the language. This percentage is significantly lower compared to the first-year learners. (8% difference) This may indicate that there might be an incorrect choice of selected methods of teaching the foreign language, which doesn't correspond to the age and interest of the students. 10.1% of the second-year students are passive in studying the language, and 7.4% of students have difficulty in learning the foreign language.

As obvious as it may seem, the number of students with negative attitudes have increased in a noticeable number among the sophomore students.

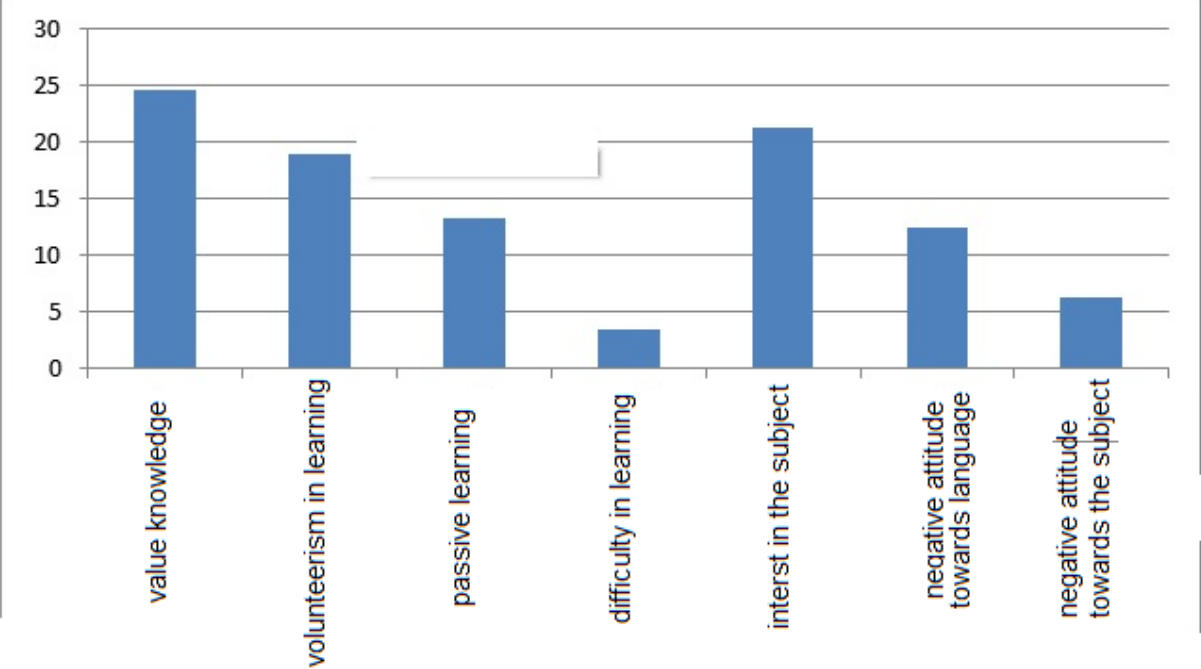


Figure 2.5. The attitude of Final Year Students Towards Learning a Foreign Language

The majority of graduate students (24.5%) recognize the value of learning a foreign language. This indicator is prevalent among graduates, which is associated with the awareness of the importance of the foreign language in the modern world, and how it opens more career options for them in the future. 21.2% of the respondents in this group showed any interest in the subject of foreign language, which is also the best result among all the groups of students. Motivation for language learning is directly related to graduate students' attitude to language as a value that increases the competitiveness of their graduation. 18.9 of the graduates demonstrated self-willingness to study the subject. Only 3% are passive learning the language, and 12.4% of these students have a negative attitude towards the classes. And only 3.4% of the graduates indicated difficulties in learning a foreign language, which is very low compared to the other groups.

The results obtained in the course of the study demonstrates a decrease in the positive attitude towards the foreign language among second-year students, which based on the study, is associated with the increase of the other special subjects, and the complication of educational materials in a foreign language, and the ineffective choice of teaching methods. This study also shows the value of foreign language among the graduate students, and how well they understand its importance for their future, which positively affects their attitude towards it, and thus have a better academic performance.

**2.13. Conclusion**

Attitude is not simply an impression someone has about a certain idea, but it is a collection of feelings derived from past experiences, expectations, and different environmental factors that all form together, and make a general decision about a certain thing. Therefore, attitude cannot be influenced very easily by the student, or the teacher, but has to be worked on by both.

**Chapter Three**  
**Research Methodology,**  
**Data Analysis, and**  
**Discussion**

### **3.1 Introduction**

Based on the information discussed in the previous two chapters, attitude and listening are both dynamic concepts i.e. they are not static, and always changing depending on the situation, and the people involved within this situation, including teachers, students, and administration, etc. This practical side of the study will investigate the attitude of the first year ELF students of the University of Saida towards listening.

### **3.2 Methodology**

By the means of two quantitative and qualitative questionnaires, one for students, and another for teachers, this study had set sail to shed light on the different types of attitudes the students of Saida University, department of the English language, have towards different types of topics, during the Oral-Expression sessions.

### **3.3 Population**

The targeted population of this study was the first-year students in the English language, at the University of Saida. The selection was made on the hypothesis that these students are fresh to university, and have a raw attitude towards their major of study. In addition to this, the Oral Expression module is one of the main modules in the first year of English, which means the students will give it high importance, at least more than the other modules.

### **3.4 Learner's Profile**

The sample chosen for this survey was made of (40%) male students, and (60%) females. (12%) of them were still teenagers ( less than 18 years old), (21%) were between the ages of 19 and 21, and 46% of them were between 22-24 years old. (21%) of the rest of the students were older than 24 years old.

### **3.5 Teacher's Profile**

This research had the honour of having two teachers of the English language at the department of Moulay Taher, Saida University. They decided to keep their identity as anonymous as possible; therefore, their personal information cannot be disclosed in any way.

### **3.6 Research Instruments**

In chapter two, the attitude was defined as the apparent emotions and behaviours which a person would express toward a specific thing. Based on this definition, the best way to gauge attitude would be to observe the person during the specific situation, rather than asking him about his feelings. However, due to the abnormal situation the whole world has been going through, for the last couple of years, due to the spread of the COVID-19

pandemic, attending classrooms was impeded due to the safety protocols, and the use of video call meetings. In consequence, the study had settled on using two questionnaires, one for the students, and another one for teachers, and counted on the honesty and integrity of the participants to yield genuine results for the study.

### **3.6.1 The Students' Questionnaire**

Between the two questionnaires, the one given to the students was given high importance since they are the ones to experience the attitude. The questionnaire as a whole was made of (10) questions. Six of them were close-ended questions and four were open-ended questions.

The questionnaire was divided into four sections: the first section was about the age and the gender of the participants since it was proven by the previous studies that age and gender play a huge role in shaping the attitude of the person. This also helps to organize the results of the study by having an anonymous profile of participants.

The second part of the questionnaire consisted of straightforward questions to the participants about the self-evaluation of their level in the four language skills. This section was made to filter the participants' results according to their level of proficiency in the language.

The third part of the questionnaire was targeted to show what triggers the students' positive and negative attitudes during the Oral Expression classes. The students were given a range of suggested answers that would help them organize their answers, while at the same time they were allowed to suggest their answers.

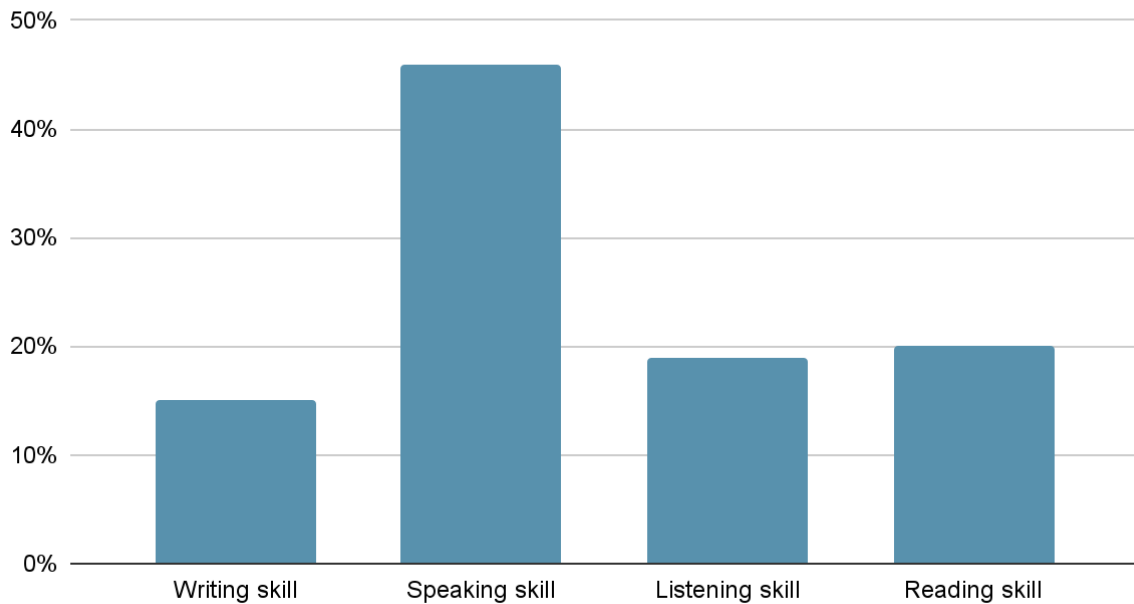
The fourth and last part of the questionnaire was about the difficulties and problems students face during the classroom, which in their opinion, might cause their attitude to drop down to be negative towards the subjects, and what solutions do they think would help them, and improve their attitude.

### **3.7. The Results of the Questionnaire**

Before discussing the results of the questionnaire, it is worth mentioning that the sample chosen for this survey was made of (40%) male students, and (60%) females. (12%) of them were still teenagers (less than 18 years old), (21%) were between the ages of 19 and 21, and 46% of them were between 22-24 years old. (21%) of the rest of the students were older than 24 years old.

**Question 1:**

Fig 3.1 Language skills ranking.



According to figure 3.1, most students (46%), consider speaking skills to be the most important language skill which a learner should master. Reading ranks second with (20%), listening ranks third with (19%), and the writing skill ranking fourth with (15%) .

**Question 2:**

Fig2. How do learners evaluate their level of listening skill

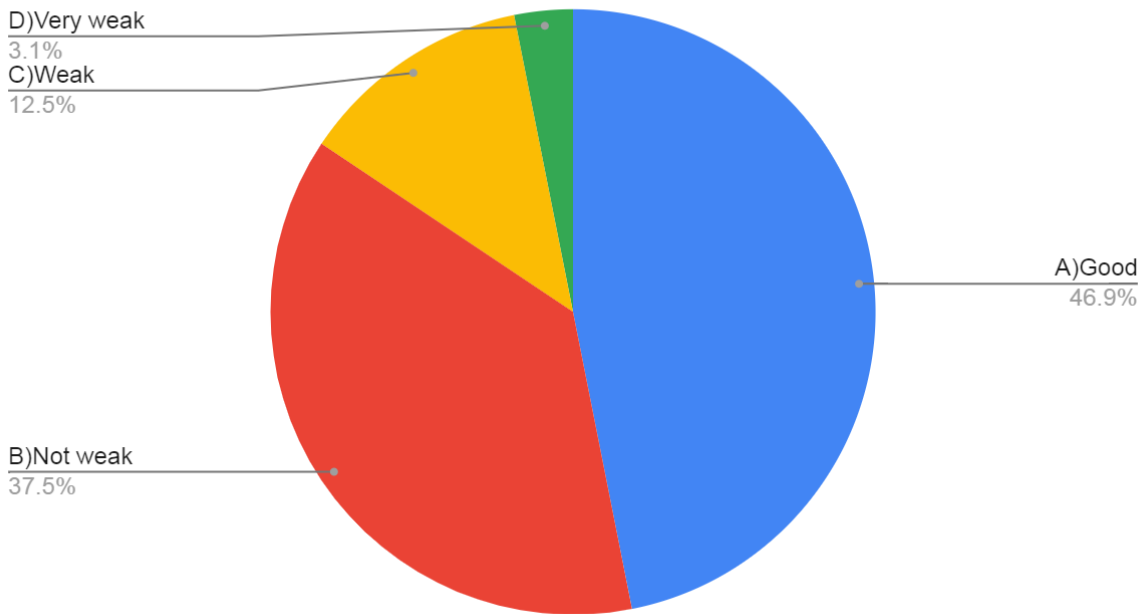


Figure 3.2 shows that 46.9% of the learners consider themselves to be good at listening. 37.5% of the learners don't think of themselves as good, but they are not weak either. 12.5% of the learners admit to themselves that they are weak when it comes to listening, and only 3.1% report that they are very weak at listening.

**Question 3:**

**fig 3.3** What encourages students to be more engaged during oral sessions

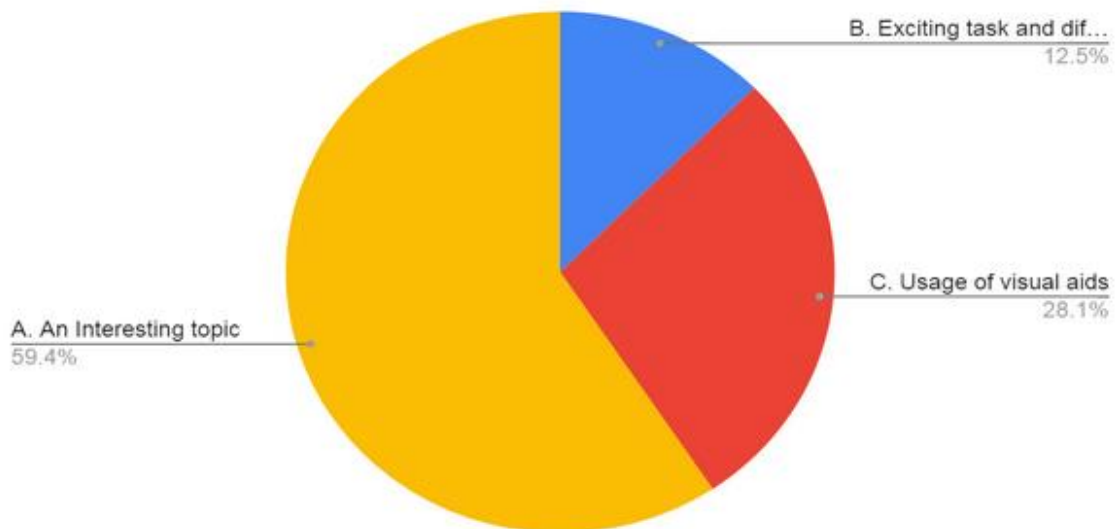




Figure 3.3 demonstrates that 59.4% of students agree that the choice of topics is the deal-breaker for their engagement during the oral session. 28.1% of the students favor the usage of visual aids as what causes them to participate more during the class and 12.5% point to the kind of tasks used in the classroom.

**Question 4:**

fig 3.4 would introducing cultural and real life situations that are related to students' interest make you them involved ?

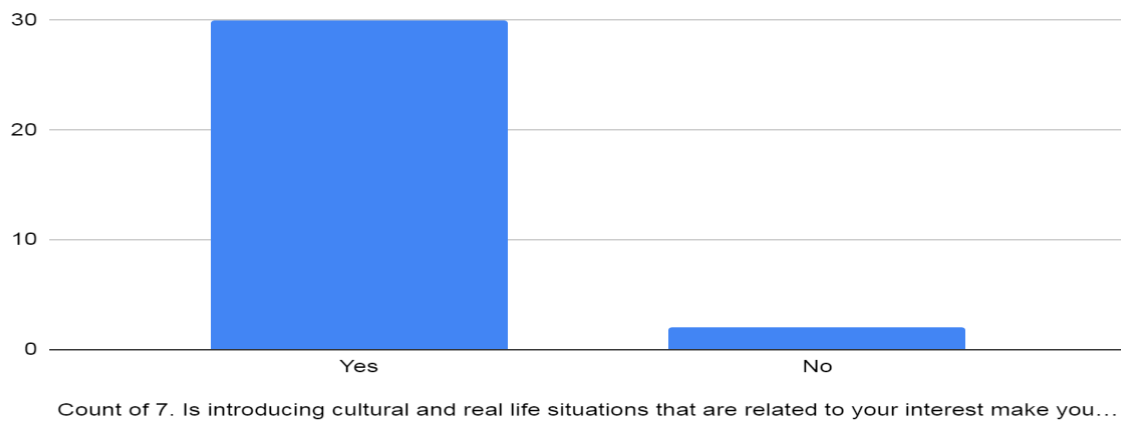


Figure 3.4 indicates that only two students think that introducing cultural situations and real-life situations that are related to their subject of interest would make them more involved during the listening sessions. As opposed to the rest of the students, all 30 of them, who think that doing so would enhance and increase their engagement in the classroom sessions.

**Question 5:**

fig 3.5 the difficulties students face during the listening sessions

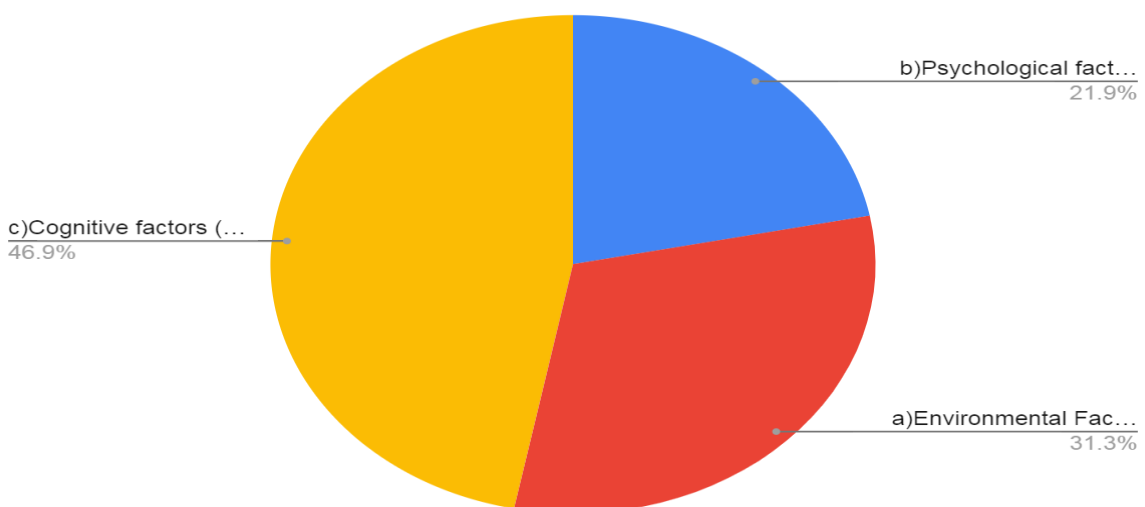


Figure 3.5 reveals that roughly half of the students think it is cognitive factors that cause difficulties for them during the listening sessions. 31.3% of them believe it is the environmental factors that pay a hindrance against them when trying to listen. 21.9% of the students think it is psychological factors that affect their listening abilities during the classroom.

**Question 7:**

When the students were asked about which tools enhance their listening skills, the answers were varied personally, according to the students' self-awareness. The answers were as follows:

- Audio videos dialogues
- patience and not judging
- watching YouTube videos and listening to music
- A good environment
- Podcasts ( Spotify, BBC radio..etc)
- Watching television: (Movies, series, documentaries..etc)
- Talking with native speakers
- Use of ICT
- Music
- Talking with classmates
- Use of subtitles

**Question 8:**

When the students were asked about which methods and strategies they think would improve their listening skills, the answers were grouped as follows:

- The use of ICT
- Use of Ted Talks ( Public Speaking )
- The use of Visual aids
- Repetition even if it is boring.
- Conversing with native speakers.

**Question 9:**

When the students were asked about the topics they would be most interested in listening to, their answers were as follows:

- Cultural
- Social
- Debate

- Religion
- Reading books
- British history
- Science and technology
- Sports
- Books, football, history...
- Psychology
- Science

### **3.8. Interpretation of the Questionnaire**

Based on the results collected from the first question, most students prioritize the speaking skill, over the other three skills, and for a good reason. Speaking is what most people use to determine what level of language proficiency the person has. After all, a language is mainly about speaking. However, speaking skill is not something that can be developed on its own. However, good speaking skills are generated from good listening and reading. In this regard, it becomes apparent that most learners are usually so focused on the result, rather than the work that must be done to acquire the desired result.

Even though most students consider speaking as the most important language skill, they are self-aware about their abilities to speak. Although more than half of the students consider themselves to be good at listening, this does not mean they are. As it was mentioned before in chapter two, listening is a very complicated action that does not only require hearing what the other person is saying, but also understanding, and having the right interpretation of what has been spoken.

Although actions speak louder than words, it is usually the thought that matters the most. These two mixed sayings explain the reason why most students think that choosing an interesting topic is usually what determines their level of engagement during the classroom. This is because no teacher can predict everything that could happen during a classroom and make the lesson go exactly as they want it to be. What they can do is choose an interesting topic that guarantees that most students would participate and then have some guidelines that would orchestrate the lesson and nudge it in the right direction.

Students also point to an important detail which is the use of visual aids. Although oral sessions are usually about listening and reading, keeping the lesson entertaining and appealing

as much as possible by using visual aids that would also enhance students' understanding, is a detail that most teachers should keep in their plans.

Culture and language are two sides to the same coin. Researchers have always tried to pin out which has the most influence on the other and this topic has been a subject of controversy throughout the years. But there is no room for debate that learning about culture helps in learning the language and developing all the language skills including the listening skill. Most students seem to understand this point; however, the fact that some of the students think that learning about culture is not as good as it is proven to be, suggests that the way culture learning is implemented in the language learning classes is not to put correctly. Therefore, it becomes a crucial point for the teachers to acknowledge this fact and try to highlight how learning about culture enhances the language learning experience.

Moving on to another important point, which are the difficulties that students face during the listening sessions. Starting with the cognitive factors which half of the students' population reported to be the main hindrance they face during the listening sessions. It is no surprise since these cognitive difficulties that are related sometimes to some mental disorders such as ADHD, or bipolar, etc can indeed be a very hard thing to deal with, by both the students themselves and teachers. The fact that most schools, especially in Algeria, do not offer much support and care for these kinds of problems. Some might even misunderstand the situation the student is dealing with, and blame the student for being "lazy "or" not interested" while they are suffering from a serious cognitive problem. This lack of support also pressures the teachers, who do not have the special training to deal with this kind of thing. As for the psychological problems; this ranks second. These types of difficulties are almost similar and even identical to the cognitive ones; however, the main difference is they are relatively easier to deal with since they are only temporary. However, if these mood swings are not given the right care, they would develop into cognitive problems. Last but not least, one of the problems which are the easiest to be controlled are the environmental difficulties. These highly relate to the teacher's ability to manage his or her classroom; creating the right atmosphere for learning is the pivotal step towards having the best results of learning.

Sometimes the hardest questions do not require a very hard answer; sometimes the answer is just right there, all that has to be done is ask the right person. Students might be naive sometimes, and irrational, but that does not mean they are not aware of what is good for them. When it comes to learning the language, students' needs should be given very high importance.

That of course does not institute listening to every whim, but taking their needs, and working it out with what the teacher already has of data, possibly guarantees the best results. Almost all of the students' suggested tools are related to ICT: (Videos, Podcasts, internet...etc). This shows how deeply students are connected with the digital world nowadays. As scary as that might seem, that's the world we are living in now, and swimming against the tide is something a teacher can no longer do. Thus, the teacher must adapt to the trends, and try as much as possible to relate to the students' interests. Although most of these suggestions are informal, and some of them are more distracting than they are straightforward, their implementation is almost compulsory.

Every student, or even a human being, has his interest. Catering to these interests for a teacher is remotely an impossible mission. But it is not about choosing the right topic; it is about how to present the said topic to the student and making it interesting. Therefore, teachers must stop thinking about what topic to choose and focus more on how to make this topic interesting to the students. The answer to this particular situation could vary immensely. However, a method that can be used is linking what the student is already interested in, with the topic at hand. For example, if a student is interested in Math, but the topic is about biology, the teacher could add just a small bit where he could include something about mathematics, which could hook the student up with the topic for the remainder of the session.

### **3.9. Interview Description**

1. What are the main skills you think are necessary to be developed through your courses?

The first teacher insisted that the students should work on all four skills equally since each one of them serves a specific purpose. While the second teacher said he thinks that the emphasis should be put on the communicative skills: Listening and speaking.

2. What is your usual way of doing a lecture?

The first teacher's usual way of doing his oral expression lectures is listening to audio about a specific topic that usually touches a real-life situation with which the students are familiar. After discussing the audio, the students are given the freedom to discuss the topic freely, from their perspective. As for the other teacher, he said that his favorite activities are listening to songs, doing role plays, and listening to dialogues.

3. What are the main activities you include in your lectures?

The first teacher said that his way of teaching changes depending on the topic and the language skill on which he is trying to work. The second teacher said he tries to use audiovisual aids as much as possible.

4. Do you think that improving listening skills is important?

The first teacher said that working on it alone is not something he would recommend, but it can be helpful. As for the second teacher, he said that everything starts with listening, and it is a pivotal language skill; therefore, it is very important.

5. Is there a correlation between good listeners and good speakers in your class?

Both teachers reported that it is the case most of the time and only rarely do you find a good listener who is not that good at speaking. But every good speaker is a good listener.

6. What are some of the difficulties your students face, from your perspective?

The first teacher said that most of his students have problems with vocabulary (they find it hard to express their ideas), problems with the accents some native speakers use; especially when they speak fast. The second teacher said that they have problems with grammar, pronunciation, and vocabulary.

7. How do you recognize if the learners are good or bad listeners?

The first teacher said before the session finishes, he asks the students to do a recap of what they have understood. From that, he can tell whether the student is good or bad. The second teacher said he does gauge the students' level during the lecture, by giving them straightforward questions about the topic, and how well they do.

8. How do you help your students overcome their difficulties?

The first teacher said that the best way to help them is by repetition; as much as possible. The student might not understand the time, the second time, and maybe not even the third time. But every time you repeat for him, he would understand more. The second teacher said the best way is to break down the point they do not understand into simple parts and use as much illustration as possible.

### **3.10. Interpretation of the Interview**

Based on the results, it is obvious that teachers have different perspectives about what language is, and what is the best way to teach it. Since it has already been revealed that every student prefers a specific way of learning, this means that it is very likely that the way of teaching would not suit the students. Therefore, teachers should not have a specific way of teaching, and instead, would have a flexible method that changes based on the students' needs for the language.

The activities used by the teachers are overall great; however, there still is room for improvement. Teachers should try to relate more to what students are interested in. It is a fact that nowadays social media plays a huge role in our daily lives, and mainly the life of young people (who make the majority of the university students). Students spend most of their leisure time browsing the internet, mostly famous websites such as Youtube, Facebook, and Instagram...etc. Following these trends, and including them in the lectures, could help significantly increase the chances of the students listening attentively during the lectures. A study conducted by (Abdulkareem 220), has revealed that there is an urgent need for teacher training to cope with the incredible growth of social media;

According to the teachers as well, there is a strong correlation between speaking and listening; most good speakers are usually great listeners. Therefore, teachers should focus more on developing the students' listening skills, because when they do that, they are developing the speaking skill as well. In other words, it is like the famous proverb "hitting two birds with one stone" This is similar to the study conducted by Vasilievna and Vadimovna (3) where teachers have found out that their students with the best speaking skill are already good active listeners.

Assessment is a very important point that should be given much attention by the teacher. The result of good listening does not always appear as a fluent utterance of the language, and it cannot be an instant result either. The signs for good listening could be delayed by a minute to a month, depending on the level of the student, and can be in different forms and shapes. Therefore, teachers should be patients and easy-going when it comes to assessing the students.

### **3.11. Recommendations**

This part of the study is the set of recommendations that the study suggests to enhance students' attitudes towards listening in the target language for better learning results.

#### **1. Setting the Right Conditions for Learning**

An important role in enhancing the attitude of students is by controlling the content of educational materials. Influencing the attitude, according to Alexandrovna and Vladimirovna (14), through the learning materials suggests that the content has to meet the needs of the students, as well as their age, personal and professional interests. In this regard, the following requirements have to be imposed on the aspect of professional foreign language teaching:

- Saturation with facts and realities taking place in everyday life around the spheres of communication, and reflecting the speech behaviour of people in the said framework.
- Genuine lexical content and grammatical forms.

- Stimulating speech communication in interpersonal and professional communication situations.
- Variety of styles in teaching/
- Authentic texts containing socio-cultural components.
- A set of tasks aimed at developing the communicative culture of the students, and the ability for interpersonal interactions with native speakers.
- Simulated situations of everyday life, which increases the level of professionalism in the foreign language.

Thus, the relevant educational content related to the specific future work activities of the students, and reflecting the realities and culture of the target language country, which increases interest, arouses a positive attitude and thus helps motivate the students.

## 2. Psychological Science and Psycho Pedagogical Orientation

Educational and psycho-pedagogical orientation is a set of interventions specialized and aimed to optimize the level of global achievement of the teaching-learning process (Zabalza 132). According to Garcia, Moreno and Torrego (55), orientation is a process of help inserted in the educational activity, whose objective is to contribute to the integral development of the student, to train them for autonomous learning, and active, critical and transformative participation in their society (Bassedas 118).

This study suggests that this type of guidance has to be integrated into universities to help the students in all of their personal, academic, intellectual and cognitive aspects of life with the purpose of prevention and development.

## 3. Capitalizing on the Raw Positive Attitude

Most students have already a positive initial attitude towards the area of learning a new language such as English. Investing in their raw attitude and not letting go of waste is supposed to be one of the teachers' priorities.

## 4. Let Students Construct their Learning

Learning is an internal, active, and individual construction process within the social and natural environment. Students have to be given the chance to use their logical structure to learn and acquire the language.



5. Learning has to be Significant

Learning does not have to be only about acquiring knowledge about something the learner doesn't know about, but it also has to have significance in the life of the student. Therefore, the new knowledge has to be related to the students' subjects; to the extent that learning will develop the learners' motivation, and increase their ability to learn.

**3.12. Conclusion**

This chapter has revealed that there is a great diversity in how the learners want to learn, while the teachers have their perspective of how learning should be. In consequence, this affects, to a great extent, how the students react during the classroom; eventually, creating a somewhat negative attitude towards listening.

## **General Conclusion**

This study had the purpose of examining the attitudes of the first year EFL learners towards listening to the general topics of interest, at the University of Saida. The results of a students' questionnaire, and two teachers' interviews, have revealed that the majority of the participants have an initial positive attitude towards the general topics of interest. However, students and teachers have a small disagreement about how these topics should be presented and carried out during the classroom. This is to say that both the students and the teachers agree that the topics should be about the current daily life trends and topics that relate to the students' general interests; however, students prefer that these topics should be presented entertainingly, more like how the social media websites do them nowadays, while the teachers prefer to stay conservative about how they do their teaching.

Active listening is defined as the willingness to attend and try to grasp the meaning of what the other is saying to us. It means trying to understand the other. It also means being very attentive to the needs and emotions that the other party tries to convey to us as well as showing full attention and interest. Along with trying to recognize all the details that our interlocutor expresses, not only through his words but also through his gestures, gaze, tone of voice and from his worldview or inner world.

Previous literature had shown the importance of active listening when learning a new language, as well as having positive attitudes towards the topics of these lectures. Linguists have found a great correlation between these two aspects, that each one of them empowers the other. Therefore, teachers, as well as students, must pay great attention to the listening attitude in the target language.

In this respect, it is recommended that the teachers should not ignore the learner's opinion about how the lectures should be carried out. It is also quite important to give the students sufficient instructions, and strategies to be good listeners. Teachers also have to make use of the surroundings of the learner including their peers, the classroom setting, the social environment, to enhance the learner's attitudes. In addition to that, the students must be given clear instructions, and strategies to listen effectively. Last but not least, the teachers should put more effort towards relating to the students' general interest, and have to implement new modern ways when teaching.

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## Appendices

### Appendix A: Student's Questionnaire

Dear students,

This questionnaire is a part of research work for a Master's degree. It aims to collect data on students' attitudes towards listening to general topics of interest; particularly the listening skills among the first year EFL students.

The questionnaire consists of 10 questions. It should take less than 15 minutes.

Your answers would be of great help and sincerely appreciated. Thank you in advance.

\*Required

1. Specify your gender \*

Tick all that apply.

A: Male

B: Female

2. Your age? \*

Mark only one oval.

A)16-18

B)19-21

C)22-24

D)Other:\_\_\_\_

3- Rank the following skills according to their importance to you [Speaking - Listening - Writing - Reading ] \*

4-How do you evaluate your listening skills ability? \*



Tick all that apply.

A) Good

B) Not weak

C) Weak

D) Very weak

Other:

5. Which of the following makes you more engaged in listening? \*

Mark only one oval.

A. An Interesting topic

B. Exciting task and difficult

C. Usage of visual aids

6. What are the topics that interest you the most? \*

7. Is introducing cultural and real-life situations that are related to your interest make you more involved? \*

Tick all that apply.

Yes

No

8. What type of barriers do you encounter while listening? \*

Mark only one oval.

a) Environmental Factors: noise, temperature

b) Psychological factors (Affective): anxiety, stress

c) Cognitive factors (Mental): inability to focus, fluency and limited vocabulary

9. What tools do you use to enhance your listening skills? \*

10. In your opinion, what method do you consider effective to better your listening skills? \*