

ATTITUDES OF LIBYAN EFL LEARNERS TOWARDS LEARNING ENGLISH: A CASE STUDY AT AL ASMARIYA ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY, LIBYA

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Abstract

The current study aimed to explore the Libyan university students' attitudes, at AL Asmariya Islamic University, towards learning English as a foreign language (EFL) and the relationship between the students' language achievement and their attitudes towards learning English language. Both quantitative and qualitative methods were used to collect data from a sample of 50 Libyan female university students. Quantitative data were collected using a questionnaire which was adopted from Nawafleh (2009), and qualitative data were gathered using semi-structured interviews. Data obtained from the questionnaire were analyzed using descriptive statistics, means and correlation analysis using SPSS software (version 18.0). Data obtained from the interview were categorized into themes. The findings of the current study revealed that the subjects had positive attitudes towards learning English as a foreign language. The findings also indicated that there was a significant positive correlation between the respondents' attitude and their language achievement. This means when the students' attitude is positive their grades are also high and vice versa. Finally, the researcher recommends that further studies should focus on investigating the role of both the teacher and the environment in achieving successful language learning.

Keywords: Attitude, Positive attitude, Negative attitude, English foreign language (EFL), language achievement.

1.0 Introduction

In fact, Libya is one of the most ethnically homogeneous countries. People in Libya have few opportunities to communicate with people with different ethnic backgrounds in general and with different languages in particular. Many countries have recently started the teaching of many languages, one of which is English due to their international use and wide spread. Qasim (2007) pointed out that increase in the use of English as a worldwide language made many Arab countries introduce the teaching of English into their school curriculum.

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In Libya, English language is taught as a compulsory subject from grade 1 up to the university level. Actually, English is regarded as a foreign language because it is not commonly used in Libya. Moreover, it is obvious that most Libyan undergraduate students are not competent enough in English because they only interact with English in classrooms. Belaid & Murray (2015) observed that Libyan EFL learners are facing many problems and difficulties while learning English language particularly in the university level.

According to the researcher of this study, one of the important factors that may have an impact on English learning in Libya deals with the students' attitudes towards their own language and other languages. Given that the high classical form of Arabic is the language of the Quran, Libyan students' attitudes (as well as all Muslims) towards the high classical Arabic is highly positioned. Awwad (2009) stated that "Although, teachers' identification of students' needs, motivation and attitudes in EFL instruction is essential, Arab students have not been given the opportunity to assess their own needs, motivation and attitudes in their EFL preparation" (4). However, many Libyan parents attempt to give their children a competitive edge by starting their foreign language (English) study as early as possible to ensure good future opportunities for them. Rhema (2010: 433) said that Libyan students "are opening up to alternatives that could offer improvements".

Despite the government's and parents' encouragement, Libyan students still lack the motivation to learn English language. Thus, they have an unfavorable attitude towards English. The importance of investigating the attitudes of Libyan university students towards learning English lies in the fact that most of the job opportunities depend on English proficiency. In addition, completing higher education abroad would require students to be proficient in English. Although there are many studies investigating the attitudes of EFL learners, limited information is known about the Libyan context. Therefore, this study aimed to (a) determine Libyan university students' attitudes toward learning English as a foreign language; and (b) to find out the relationship between the attitude of these students and their English language achievement. The study was guided by the following research questions:

- 1- What attitudes do Libyan university students hold toward learning English as a foreign language?
- 2- What is the relation between the students' attitudes towards English and their language achievement?

1.2 Definition Of Related Terms

This section provides the definition of some terms that are related and used most often in this study. These terms include: attitude, foreign language and language achievement.

1.3 Attitude

Attitude in fact is a complex term and many definitions have been proposed to describe its essence. Gardner (1985: 09) defined attitude as “An evaluative reaction to some referent or attitude object, inferred on the basis of the individual’s beliefs or opinions about the referent”. Similarly, Dornyei (2001: 172) viewed attitudes towards the learning situation as “the individual’s reaction to anything associated with the immediate context in which the language is taught”. In addition, Ajzen (2005: 03) defined attitude as “a disposition to respond favorably or unfavorably to an object, person, institution or event”. In this study, attitude is defined as a mental positive or negative reaction that individuals hold towards the target language.

1.4 Foreign language

According to Oxford (1996), foreign language scenario means when a language is being learnt by a particular community and learners do not use this language as a tool of communication in their community. They have very few opportunities to practice the language outside the classroom. In this study, the researcher introduced foreign language as a process in which learners are exposed to a new language, and they do not have the opportunity to practice this language outside the classroom limits.

1.5 Language achievement

In this study, language achievement can be defined as the expectancy level of success in learning any language. It is the learners’ perceived ability in English as expressed in students’ grades in the exam such as: Excellent, Very good and Good.etc. For the purpose of the current study, students grades in English are presented below. The distribution of the participants' achievement in English is shown in the following table.

Table 1.1 Distribution of respondents’ grades In English.

Grades	Number of students	Percentage
Excellent	29	54%
Very good	10	24%
Good	9	16%
Accepted	2	6%
Fail	0	0%
Total	50	100%

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2. Literature Review

This section provides a review of the literature deemed relevant to the topic investigated. For a better understanding of the learners' attitudes and the relationship between their attitudes and language achievement, the researcher divided this section into four areas:

- 1) Attitude,
- 2) Theoretical perspectives on attitude,
- 3) The effect of attitude on language achievement,
- 4) And related studies.

2.1 Attitude

Many researchers have defined the term attitude. For example Wenden (1991) says that the term "attitude" in general has three components namely: cognitive, evaluative and behavioral. According to Wenden, a cognitive component consists of beliefs, perceptions and information about the object of the attitude. The evaluative component by which the attitude object may evoke like or dislike, agreement or disagreement, approval or disapproval. Finally, the behavioral component predisposes people to act in a certain way. As far as language learning is concerned, Gardner (1985) believed that L2 learning is determined by the learners' characteristics themselves such as the learners' attitudes towards foreign people in general and the target language in particular. In addition to the above-mentioned definitions, Karahan (2007: 75) pointed out that language attitudes are defined as follows: "Expressions of positive or negative feelings towards a language may reflect impressions of linguistic difficulty or simplicity, ease or difficulty of learning". Thus, language learning is affected by the status of attitude (either positive or negative) that the learners hold towards the learnt language and/or its speakers.

2.2 Theoretical Perspectives On Attitude

By providing an overview of some attitudinal theories, this section offers brief and broad explanation for attitude. It also illustrates how this variable affect second/foreign language learning. In fact, the concept of attitude has since long been one of the most generally applied concepts by psychologists and sociologists. For instance, Gardner and Lambert (1972); Gardner (1980), (1985), (2006) and Ajzen (2001). Consequently, there is abundance of theories on attitude, but there is not enough room and necessity to open up the whole discussion on attitude theories, so for the purpose of this study, the researcher provides only some theoretical frameworks and hence, provide the readers with a clearer picture on attitude.

- **Gardner's Socio-Educational Model**

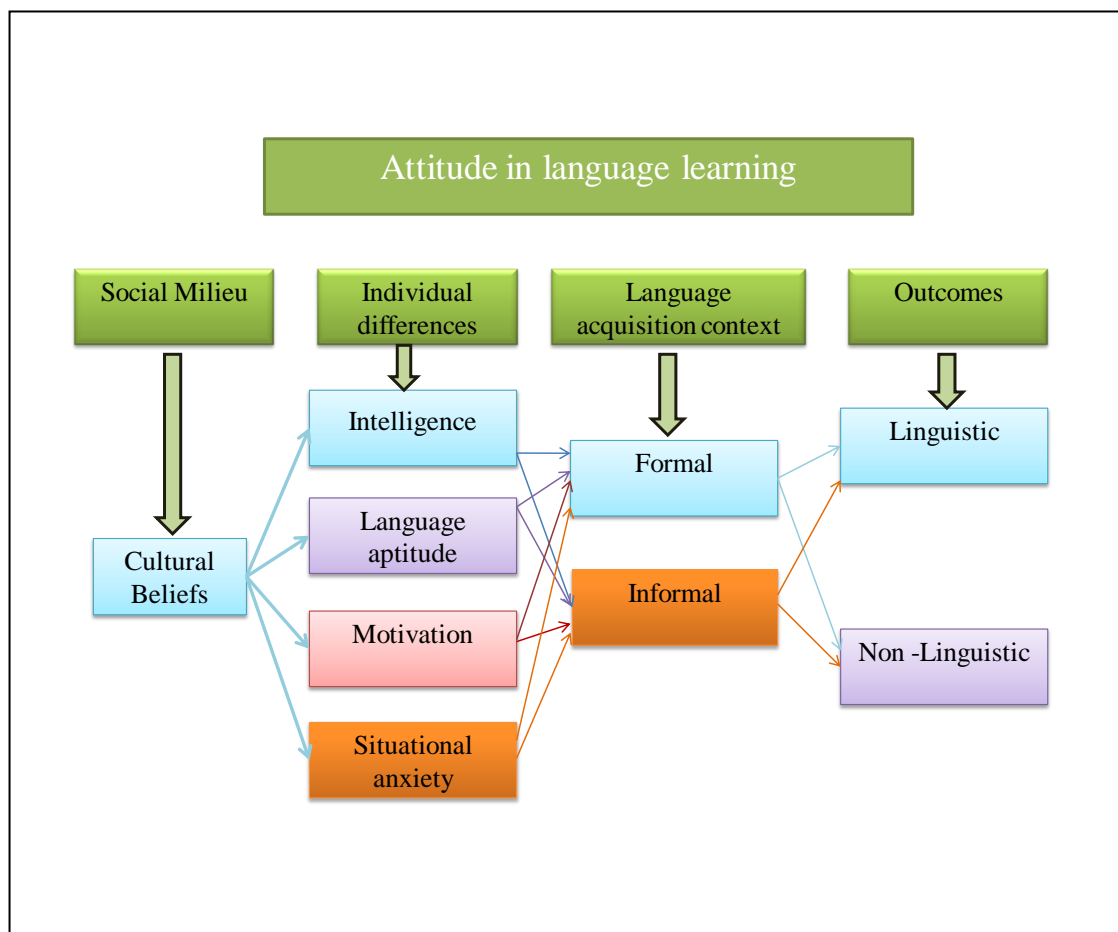
The socio-educational model was first proposed by Gardner during the early 1970s, but it was never published. However, later on in 1975, it was reproduced in an article by Schumann. Schumann (1975) cited in (Gardner 1985) has characterized this model as a powerful framework that can facilitate the understanding of the social and psychological facts associated with second language acquisition and learning. Gardner (1985) pointed out that although the socio-educational model has undergone a number of revisions, all versions stress the idea that learning a second or a foreign language is not like learning any other subject. Gardner argued that learning other subjects such as mathematics involves the development of some skills which are a part of the heritage of the students' cultural community whereas language learning would involve the acquisition of skills which are characteristic of another cultural community. It is evident that one of the characteristics of this model is that learning a second or foreign language is not only a matter of gaining knowledge (new language), but it also involves understanding different cultural beliefs and traditions. In addition, this model is seen as being very related to this study because it explains second language acquisition within classroom setting in which it is considered to be the factor influencing the learners' attitude towards language learning. Primarily, this model is constructed of four classes of variables: social milieu, individual differences, second language acquisition context and outcomes. Gardner (1985: 146) stated that "the language acquisition process is viewed as involving a particular causal interplay of these four types of variables".

Under the Socio-Educational Model, language learning normally takes place in specific cultural contexts, meaning that language acquisition will be affected by the cultural belief towards the learnt language. Thus, if the stereotype (cultural belief) says that English language is easy to learn, then the learners' achievement will be high and vice versa. Moreover, language acquisition and learning will be affected by individual differences (such as intelligence, aptitude, motivation and anxiety). Such variables are considered as having a direct effect on language achievement (Gardner 1985). Last but not least, Gardner, in his model, takes into consideration the formal language training and the informal language experience of the learners. Finally, Gardner (1985) stated that the linguistic outcomes refer to second language proficiency, vocabulary knowledge, grammar, pronunciation and fluency whereas non-linguistic outcomes refer to the learners' attitudes and values. The four variables presented in Gardner's socio-educational model can be used to explain both classroom and outside the classroom factors that contribute to the Libyan students' attitudes towards learning English in this study.

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Figure 2.1 shows the construct of Gardner's socio-educational model.

Source: Gardner 1985



2.3 The Effect Of Attitude On Language Achieveme

Although many studies have investigated attitudes in language learning, many language teachers nowadays are not aware of the role of such variable. Generally, there is a variety of factors that can influence the learners' achievement. Shelly and Whalen (2002) cited in (Arawati and Norazila 2003) mentioned that there are many variables including background characteristics, psychological and environmental variables that had strong effect on the learning process outcomes. In fact, one of the most influential factors is said to be attitude. Ching and Julia (2001); Dornyei (2001) and Gardner (1985) all have emphasized that foreign language achievement is related to the learners' attitude. Therefore, in order to facilitate foreign language learning, learners' attitudes

need to be accounted. Hendrickson (1997) cited in (Ching-Chun et al 2001) in his study that investigates students' success found that attitude was the best predictor of student grade point average. By focusing on attitude, the researcher does not denigrate the importance of other variables, but it is an attempt to allow for a more detailed and focused look at attitude. As far as attitudes are concerned, many studies have emphasized the relationship between them and learners' achievement. For example; Arawati and Norazila (2003) stated that the learners' attitude towards the learnt subject is of key importance in determining academic success. In an agreement with Arawati and Norazila (2003), Alhmali (2007: 14) revealed that "attitudes towards the processes of learning can also have very large effects, potentially cutting a student off from further study". Thus, language teachers need to make sure that their learners are aware of the advantages and disadvantages of the target language (s), and also they should teach their learners how to believe in their ability in order to build confidence and achieve goals.

2. 4 Related Studies

This section provides some previous studies that investigated learners' attitudes towards learning English language. In addition, it presents some studies about the relationship between the learners' attitudes and their language achievement.

Students' attitudes toward learning a foreign/second language is a topic which has attracted many researchers. Learners of foreign/second language may express like or dislike toward the target language and/or its speakers which would affect positively or negatively the learning process. The available literature involved Arab and non-Arab learners. This study concentrated on the studies that targeted Arab learners. Al-Dhaher (2006) conducted a study to investigate the impact of learning English as a foreign language on the attitudes of Yarmouk University students. The study involved 150 university students. Al-Dhaher used a questionnaire to collect his data. The study results demonstrated that the respondents have positive attitudes towards learning English as a foreign language. In a similar context, another study, by Abu-Melhim and Abdel-Rahman (2009) investigated language learners' attitude towards learning English as a foreign language. Abu-Melhim and Abdel-Rahman investigated the attitudes of college students at Irbid University in Jordan towards learning English as a foreign language. The researchers used both a student survey and interviews for data collection. The study findings revealed that almost half of the students exhibited negative attitudes towards learning English and entering the teaching profession. Other students demonstrated more positive attitudes.

In addition, Nawafleh (2009) conducted a study to investigate the attitude of Jordanian secondary school students towards learning English as a foreign language.

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The study sample consisted of 105 final class students from Sammua' school in Jordan and the data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS version 12.0). Results in this study showed that the respondents hold strong positive attitude towards learning English as a foreign language, and they believed that learning English would enable them to benefit considerably from pursuing higher education, obtaining high grades in exams, getting a new job in the future. Diab (2006) conducted a study aiming to examine the Lebanese students' beliefs towards learning English and French as foreign languages. The study involved 284 students in three universities in Lebanon. For data collection, the researcher administrated a modified version of Horwitz's "Beliefs about Language Learning Inventory". The findings revealed that the respondents found English as an easy language and French as a difficult one. They also agreed that it is "easier" to learn French before learning English. More importantly, most respondents showed strong instrumental motivations for learning English and agreed that it is more important to learn English than French.

Although the aforementioned literature involved Arab learners, only few studies engaged Libyan learners. For example; Awwad (2009) carried out a study on Arab students' attitudes towards learning English as a foreign language at the National University of Malaysia (UKM). His study consists of 36 Arab students (Libyans, Yemenis, Jordanians, and Iraqis). Awwad (2009: 78) found that "Arab students' responses displayed positive attitudes towards EFL". In line with Awwad (2009), Suleiman (1993) also conducted a study on Arab students' attitudes towards learning English as a foreign language at the university of Arizona in the United States. This study targeted 22 Arab students (Libyans, Saudis, Jordanians, and Palestines), and the researcher found that almost all the participants have positive attitudes. Suleiman's results reveal that learning English is attributed to either educational (continue education; academic success; desire to study abroad), professional (more opportunity; getting a job; better future), or a result of family pressure (fulfill parental expectations, family encouragement).

Based on the above- mentioned literature, it can be said that although many studies have been conducted on learners' attitudes towards learning English as a second/foreign language, there is no enough literature involving Libyan learners. The researcher also observed that there is a considerable amount of studies involving Arab learners' attitudes towards English learning. Yet these studies are restricted either to the learners of particular countries such as Nawafleh (2009) and Al-Dhaher (2006) on Jordanian learners, and Diab (2006) involving Lebanese students, or involving mixed Arab learners (Awwad 2009), Arab learners in Malaysia and Suleiman (1993), Arab learners in the USA. As a result, the findings of such studies cannot be generalized to Libyan students studying in Libya.

Despite the found literature regarding Libyan students such as Abied and Ali (2022) examined 'Error analysis of the written essays by EFL learners, Almabruk (2008) investigated 'using the internet to support Libyan in-service EFL teachers' professional development'; Orafi's study (2009) examined the 'intentions and realities in implementing communicative curriculum reform in Libya', and Rhema (2010) looked at 'towards E-Learning in Higher Education in Libya', however, no study has investigated the attitudes of Libyan students. This study focuses on Libyan university students' attitudes towards learning English as a foreign language because at this specific phase people move from teenagers' life to the adults' life. It is considered to be the cut-off point. Normally, at this point learners make decisions and determine their future on the basis of their beliefs and experience which can affect greatly the student's attitude.

Fakeye (2010) conducted a study to find out the relationship between secondary school students' attitude and achievement in English Language in Nigeria. A questionnaire was used for data collection. 400 students were involved in this study. A correlational Analysis was run. The study findings revealed that there was a positive relationship between students Attitude and their Achievement in English language, indicating that language achievement is attitude-dependant. According to these findings, Fakeye (2010) stated that there are several factors that influence the respondents' attitude such as: parents, home environment, teacher's way of teaching, teacher's personality and the school administration. The same study indicated that parents should provide their children with the learning facilities by which they would create quiet and comfortable learning atmosphere. This in return would improve the students' attitude towards learning in general and language learning in particular. Teachers can also improve the learners' attitude by using effective teaching and learning strategies. Finally, school administrations should offer their teachers the opportunity to attend seminars and workshops to keep them abreast of innovations in the teaching of the subject in a way that can improve the students' attitude.

Sevim and Seda (2004) aimed at examining the relationship between students' attitudes and their language achievement. The participants were in their last-year in high school in Afşin and Elbistan, K. Maraş. The total sample were 421 students. The reason why they chose the last-year high school students was to identify their attitudes towards language at the beginning of their university course. A questionnaire was used for data collection. Data were analyzed using SPSS 18.0. The findings revealed that there was a significant relationship between the students' attitude and their language achievement. According to the findings the respondents' attitude is affected by a number of factors such as: Teacher respect. Students will have positive attitude if the teacher has

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respect for students' feelings. In addition, curriculum design should be improved through adopting effective aims and activities in curriculum to develop favorable attitude towards foreign language learning. Last but not least, parents' education (especially from the mother side) found to be of real impact on the learners' attitude in this study.

3. Methodology

Leedy and Ormrod (2001: 14) defined research methodology as "the general approach the researcher takes in carrying out the research project". Therefore, the goal of this chapter is to present the methodology employed in this study. This chapter is concerned with the participants, the methods of data collect and data analysis.

3.1 Participants Of The Study

The sample of this study consisted of 50 university students whose ages were between 18 and 20 years old. Only 5 students participated in the interview. All participants were female fresh Libyan EFL learners. They have completed 12 years of education: 6 years in preparatory level, 3 years in primary level, and 3 year in secondary school. The participants' mother tongue is Arabic. The participants were selected randomly from grade 1, during the academic year 2022/2023. The researcher chose university students at an early stage (1st semester) because it is considered the departure point of the students' responsibility and independence. At this level students make decisions regarding their future based on their experience and attitudes. Thus, the findings of this study will be very crucial for Libyan students, English teachers and curriculum writers to produce competent graduates in English who can communicate internationally and can help in the development of the country (Libya).

3.2 Instruments

- **Questionnaire**

For the purpose of this study, the researcher used a questionnaire adopted from Nawafleh 2009). This questionnaire was used successfully by Nawafleh to identify Jordanian students' attitudes. This makes the questionnaire very related to the current study. In addition, the researcher found the items of this questionnaire suitable for answering the current study research questions. In fact, the questionnaire consisted of 30 items for measurement. These items were divided into two parts. The first part of the questionnaire gathered personal information about the respondents. It contained 4 items dealing with 1) name, 2) gender, 3) age, and 4) year of study.

The second part consisted of 14 items (7 positive sentences and 7 negative sentences) in order to identify the students' attitude. The respondents had to answer the questionnaire by choosing a score on a 4-point scale where 4 represents strong agreement and 1 indicates strong disagreement for the positive worded statement and vice versa with the negatively worded statements. One item in the questionnaire was

adapted. Item 12 in the adopted questionnaire says "I am calm whenever I have to speak in my English class". This seems to be a general statement, therefore the response might not be due to a positive or negative attitude towards the language, but due to other factors such as shyness and incompetence. Instead of this statement, the researcher has selected a direct statement namely: "When I have a problem understanding something in my English class, I always ask my teacher for help". The rewording of this statement was taken into consideration following a pilot study. In addition, the researcher also added Arabic translation next to the English questionnaire items to ensure that all participants would understand every part of the questionnaire in order to provide reliable information.

- **Interview**

In addition to the questionnaire, the researcher interviewed 5 selected students. The interview would support the questionnaire' results and help the researcher to get more insights into the students' responses in a face -to- face interview. Seidman (1991: 7) stated that "interviewing is a powerful way to gain insights into educational issues through understanding the experience of the individuals". The interview is defined by Frey and Oishi (1995: 1) as "a purposeful conversation in which one person asks prepared questions (interviewer) and another answers them (respondent)". In fact, interviewing is not only restricted to asking and answering questions, but also to exchanging ideas and beliefs. Kvale (1996: 14) introduced interviews as "... an interchange of views between two or more people on a topic of mutual interest". Many studies recommend interviews to be used as data collection tool in social studies. Jensen and Jankowski (1991:101) pointed out that "Interviews are a useful tool which can lead to further research using other methodologies such as observation and experiments". However, interviews would enable researchers to elicit more details about the learners' attitudes towards English. Daniel (2010: 1) stated that "Interviews provide in-depth information pertaining to participants' experiences and viewpoints of a particular topic".

In regard to interview types, there are three formats of interviews. Gall, Gall and Borg (2003) classified interviews as follows: (1) informal conversational interview, (2) general interview guide approach, and (3) standardized open-ended interview. The researcher used the open-ended interview because , according to Daniel (2010), "the open-endedness allows the participants to contribute as much detailed information as they desire and it also allows the researcher to ask probing questions as a means of follow-up" (756).

For the purpose of this study an interview was conducted. The interview questions were adopted from Awwad (2009) and served as a guide for the interview session. The interview questions focused on students' attitude toward learning English

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as a foreign language. The researcher modified some of the interview questions. The changes were made after a pilot study. Furthermore, the interview questions were written in both Arabic and English. The reason behind this procedure was to ensure that the respondents could understand the interview questions. In addition, respondents were given the freedom to respond using their mother tongue (Arabic). Oatey (1999) pointed out that “freedom for the respondent to answer how they wish to is important in giving them a feeling of control in the interview situation”.

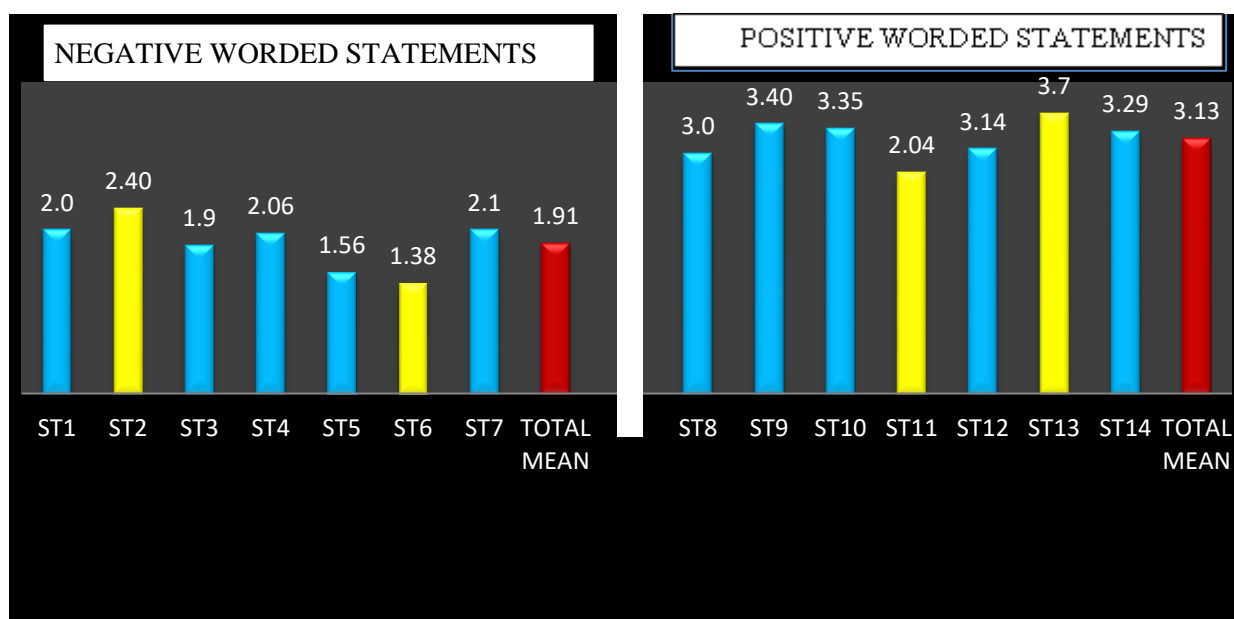
4. Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using both quantitative and qualitative methods. In fact, using only one method will not provide valid and reliable findings. Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004) pointed out that the advantage of using both quantitative and qualitative methods in one study is to exploit the strengths and reduce the weakness of both methods. Therefore, both methods will be used so that the questionnaire findings will be supported by quotations from the interviews and the literature review.

4.1 The Respondents’ Attitudes

As it was stated earlier in this article, the questionnaire consists of 14 items about the respondents’ attitudes. The percentage and the mean for each item are presented to show whether the respondents have positive or negative attitude. In addition, the correlation between the respondents’ attitude and their achievement is worked out. The following Figure (4.1) shows the analysis of the attitude statements (taking into consideration the fact that the statements from 1-7 are negatively worded items and the statements from 8-14 are positively worded items).

Figure 4.1 Attitude analysis



Statements from 1-7 are negatively worded sentences while from sentence 8 onwards are positive worded sentences. The mean value for statements 1-7 is as follows: from 1.0 up to 2.50 is positive whereas from 2.51 up to 4.00 is negative. On the other hand, the mean value for the other statements from 8-14 is as follows: from 1.0 up to 2.50 is negative and from 2.51 up to 4.0 is positive.

According to chart (4.1) about the students' attitude, it is obvious that all the statements showed positive scores. The positive scores were revealed by calculating the mean value of each statement as well as the overall mean score. For example: The lowest score reported for the negatively worded statements was 2.40. This score was given from statement (2) which is: "I hate English" and showed positive score. This indicated that the majority of the respondents in this study do like English language. On the other hand, the highest score which was 1.38 is observed in statement (6): "I learn English because I am forced to learn it". This exhibited a positive rate, indicating that the respondents in this study are not actually forced to learn English, but they themselves are willing to learn English, and their learning is based on self-satisfaction. Thus, results from the current study showed that the overall mean for the negative worded statements is 1.91, indicating positive score.

Moreover, the lowest score for the positive worded statements was 2.04. It was scored by statement (11) that says "I love reading English books", revealing a positive score. This means that the majority of the respondents like to read English materials. Similarly, the highest score for the positively worded statements showed a positive rate of 3.70. It was scored by statement (13) which says "English is the language of the future", indicating a positive rate. This means that most of the respondents in this study believed that English is a very important language in their life. As a result, the overall mean for the positive worded statements is 3.13, showing a positive score. Hence, it can be inferred that Libyan students at Al Asmariya Islamic University have positive attitudes towards learning English language.

The questionnaire findings are supported by some of the interviewees' responses. The respondents revealed that English is highly crucial for them in the future and are extremely interested in learning it. This is supported by the respondents' viewpoint as they were asked about their opinion with regard to studying English as a school subject. For instance, interviewee C pointed out that "*aaam it is good language because English is becoming the first language in the world*". Similarly, interviewee B emphasized the role of English in one's life and argued that English enables the new

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generation to contribute to the development of their society as indicated by her statement: *"when the kids are small aaa when they are younger they grow up to be better people they have the language with them yeah I think to build the new community"*. In addition, interviewee E stated that *"I agree that English is a necessary subject and schools should continue teaching it yeah it is important"*. The importance of English as an international language seems to be highly recognized by the Libyan university students, signaling their positive attitude towards it.

According to the interview data, the respondents' positive attitude towards English is due to the support of their parents and friends. Interviewee E supported this point as she pointed out that *"yeah my parents and friends but most of the time my parents because they know the importance of English and they want me to have it for my life"*. In addition, when interviewee C was asked about who encourages her to learn English, she replied: *"my family, parents and friends"*. Interviewee D agreed with interviewee C as she said *"in fact my parents aaa encourage me to learn English so I can get out of Libya and study outside"*.

Although the respondents of this study have a positive attitude towards learning English, and they are encouraged by their family members and close friends to learn English, they revealed that they face some problems and challenges in learning English because of some other factors such as the teacher and the learning environment. The respondents argued that they did not have enough exposure to English among themselves as Libyans, and they consider speaking English in their environment as a kind of arrogance. Interviewee B mentioned *"if you speak English Libyans think you are Showing off something like that"*. The same thing said by interviewee D *"well it is important to study it but all students in Libya they do not concentrate on it because they are not going to use it in here"*.

The interviewees' responses provide evidence that both the teacher and the learning environment are of a direct effect on learning English in Libya. When the respondents were asked about the teaching of English in Libya, they claimed that they do not have professional English teachers and suitable environment. For instance: interviewee B indicated that *"aaaaaaa yes we have some problems with the teachers and society "*. Similarly, interviewee A said that *"well I think we need more professional teachers and people in my country who understand more about English"*. Although there are some challenges that encounter Libyan university students in learning English, most of them are now happy and willing to learn English due to its worldwide spread. For example; interviewee D pointed out that *"yaah now I think I like English language because many reasons"*.

Thus, it may be concluded, according to both questionnaire and interview findings, that Libyan university students at the Al Asmariya Islamic University have a positive

attitude towards learning English as a foreign language. Similar to the findings of this study, many other studies (mentioned earlier in this paper) support the current findings. For instance; Dhaher (2006) who investigated the attitudes of Yamouk University learners towards learning English as a foreign language found that the respondents demonstrated a positive attitude towards learning English. In contrast, it is clear that other studies revealed results which differ from those reported in the current study. For example, Abu-Melhim & Abdel-Rahman (2009) who investigated the attitudes of Jordanian college students towards learning English as a foreign language revealed that their participants exhibited negative attitudes towards learning English.

4.2 Correlation Between The Respondents' Attitudes Towards Learning English And Their Language Achievement

Table 4.2 Correlation between the respondents' attitudes and their language achievement

		Grades of the study group	The mean of attitude
Grades of the study group	Spearman correlation	1.000	.214*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.045
	N	50	50
The mean of attitude	Spearman Correlation	.214*	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.038	.
	N	50	50

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table (4.2) showed the relationship between the respondents' attitude and their language achievement. It is clear that the correlation coefficient value (r) = 0.214*, this reveals that there is a weak positive correlation between the respondents' attitude and their language achievement. With P value = 0.045, which means that there is a significant correlation (since it is less than 0.05) between the respondents' attitude and their language achievement. This means that when the students' attitude is positive their grades will be high and vice versa. Thus, one may conclude that Libyan university students' attitude correlates with their English Language achievement. In fact, many previous studies (for example; Gardner 1985 and Alhmali 2007) support the findings of this study as they all emphasized the role of attitude in language learning. Alhmali (2007) asserted that learners' attitude has a great effect on the learning process.

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Similarly, Gardner (1985: 146) pointed out that “the relative degree of success will be influenced, to some extent, by the individual’s attitudes towards the other community”. With regard to the relationship between the learners attitude and their language achievement, some literature (Sevim and Seda 2004 and Fakeye 2010) support the findings of this study. For example; Fakeye (2010) investigated the relationship between secondary school students’ attitude and their language achievement in Nigeria. His findings revealed that there was a positive relationship between the students’ attitude and their achievement in English. Fakeye (2010) emphasized several factors that might affect the learners’ attitude such as: parents, environment, teacher’s personality and the school administration.

Similarly, in the current study, it was found that parents and close friends are of a positive effect on the learners’ attitude whereas in contrast, teacher’s personality and environment were found to be of a negative effect. Based on the above discussion, it can be concluded that these factors (parents, friends, teacher, and the learning environment) should be taken into consideration whenever language learning is concerned because they may strengthen or weaken the learners’ attitude and hence lead to success or failure in language learning.

On the other hand, the findings of this study negate findings of some other studies. For instance; Nawafleh (2009) conducted a study to investigate the relationship between Jordanian secondary school students’ attitude and their language achievement. He found no significant correlation between the two variables at all.

5. Conclusion

According to the data analysis, it is unexpectedly found that the Libyan university students have a positive attitude towards learning English. These results differ completely from the researcher’s hypothesis about their attitude. In fact, the majority of the respondents in this study agreed that they like English. They stated that they learn English because they are interested in the language and they believed that English is a highly important tool of communication in the future. Finally, most of the respondents agreed that English is a worldwide language and it is essential to introduce it as one of the main subjects in the school curriculum. Furthermore, it was found that there is a significant correlation between the respondents’ attitude and their language achievement in the English subject which means that when the students’ attitude is positive their grades are also high and vice versa.

5.1 Recommendations For Future Research

The present study investigated the attitude of Libyan university students towards learning English. This study involved only 50 female students whereas future studies may include a larger population and both genders with the same linguistic background in order to give the findings more validity. Questionnaires and interviews may also

include teachers because teachers can provide the research with rich and important information about their students. According to the findings of this study, parents were seen as one of the factors affecting the respondents' attitude positively whereas teachers, environment and curriculum are of a negative effect. It is recommended that future research could investigate the role of parents, learning environment and curriculum in affecting Libyan EFL learners' attitude towards English. In addition, the teachers' attitude toward learning English as a foreign language need to be investigated because teachers' attitude can affect their learners. If the teacher has a positive attitude towards the target language, then s/he will facilitate and encourage the learners to acquire the language whereas if s/he has a negative attitude, then the learning process will not be successful.

5.2 Limitation Of The Study

This study only explored the Libyan students' attitudes towards learning EFL at Al Asmariya Islamic University. The study targeted 50 Libyan female students only. 5 students out of the total number of the students were selected for the interview. Therefore, the study findings can be applied only to this group of students or to similar groups in similar contexts. The study involved only 1st semester students whereas it may be possible for future research to include students from different levels to give the study more reliable findings.

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مواقف متعلمي اللغة الانجليزية الليبيين نحو تعلم اللغة الانجليزية كلغة أجنبية و علاقة هذه المواقف بتحصيل المتعلمين.

دراسة بالجامعة الاسمرية الإسلامية - ليبيا

أ. أبوبكر منصور محمد الوجواج

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ملخص

قامت الدراسة بتحديد موقف الطلبة الليبيين بالجامعة الاسمرية الاسلامية تجاه تعلم اللغة الانجليزية كلغة أجنبية. كما كشفت الدراسة أيضا العلاقة بين التحصيل اللغوي للطلاب الليبيين وموقفهم تجاه تعلم اللغة الانجليزية كلغة أجنبية. تم جمع البيانات عن طريق توزيع استبيان مع 50 طالبة وإجراء مقابلات منظمه مع 5 طلبة. تم تبني أسئلة الاستبيان والمقابلات من (Nawafleh (2009. حيث تم تحليل بيانات الاستبيان بطريقة كمية والمقابلات بطريقة نوعية (وصفية) . بيانات الاستبيان تم تحليلها باستخدام برنامج (SPSS version 18.0). كما تم تصنيف البيانات التي تم الحصول عليها من المقابلات إلى موضوعات لدعم نتائج الاستبيان. كشفت نتائج الدراسة أن الطلبة الليبيين بالجامعة الاسمرية الاسلامية لديهم موقف ايجابي تجاه تعلم اللغة الانجليزية. كما أشارت الدراسة أيضا إلى وجود علاقة ارتباط مباشرة بين موقف الطلاب وتحصيلهم العلمي في مادة اللغة الانجليزية. أخيرا توصي الدراسة الحالية البحوث مستقبلا إلى التحقق من عاملين رئيسيين ذات تأثير مباشرة في تعلم اللغة الانجليزية وذلك كما ورد في نتائجها و هما: دور الأستاذ و بيئة التعلم.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الموقف, الموقف الايجابي, الموقف السلبي, اللغة الانجليزية كلغة أجنبية (EFL), والتحصيل اللغوي.