

Attitudes of EFL Non-Major Students towards English

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ملخص

يهدف هذا البحث إلى دراسة اتجاهات طلبة السنة الأولى من غير المتخصصين في اللغة الإنجليزية في كافة كليات جامعة الأزهر - غزة. من بين متغيرات الاتجاهات التي تم فحصها في هذه الحالة، اختار الباحث المتغيرات المعرفية، و المتغيرات التدريسية، و متغيرات المتعلمين الشخصية. و لقد بين التحليل الإحصائي لنتائج الاستبيان بعض الاختلافات الهامة بين الطلاب في كافة الكليات. ففدى أبدى طلبة الكلية الواحدة اتجاهها منخفضاً بالنسبة لمهارة الاستماع، بينما أبدوا اتجاهها عالياً بالنسبة لمهارة التكلم. و قد بينت الدراسة أيضاً بأن الجنس كان أحد العوامل الهامة في قياس الاتجاهات.

ABSTRACT

This research paper attempts to describe the attitude of the non-English language major students who are enrolled in the first year of the various faculties in Al-Azhar University - Gaza. Among the attitudinal variables that have been involved in this case, the researcher lists: cognitive variables, pedagogical variables, and learner personal variables. The statistical analysis shows some significant differences among the students in the various faculties. The students of one faculty perceive a low attitude for listening, and at the same time perceive a very positive attitude towards speaking. It is also found out that gender is an important factor in the measurement of attitudes.

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INTRODUCTION

Cognitive psychologists and linguists have considered "attitude" as one dimension in determining the reasons that influence achievement in learning a foreign language. Gardner (1985: 09) defines 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". Cognitive Psychologists divide attitudes into positive and negative. Brown (1980: 55) states that "negative attitudes towards the people who speak the second language or towards the second language itself have been shown to affect the success of language learning in person from school age on up." Meanwhile, Chastain (1976:179) states that "attitudes and feelings play important roles in the prestige and importance of any academic subject in the curriculum, and this influence is strongly felt in the field of second language learning." It is thus obvious that second language learning is greatly influenced by the type of attitudes which students have towards the target language. Such learning may, in many times, be impeded by the negative attitudes with which many students view the target language. Generally, non-English major students in Al-Azhar University complain that they can

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hardly learn or remember or get anything out of the English language class, and they speak of English as a 'hard subject'. Generally, some students feel uncomfortable when they attempt to speak English due to the possibility that they are self-conscious and do not like to make mistakes or appear stupid in the class. They are either afraid of failure or of the ridicules of their classmates.

Researchers have conducted empirical studies to discover the relationship between attitudes and English language learning. Some researchers have focused on attitude to and achievement in English. Robert Gardner and Wallace Lambert (1972) investigate motivation as a factor comprising a number of different kinds of attitudes. They examine the effects of attitudes on the language learning of students from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds. The results of their studies show that positive attitudes and integrative motivation correlate with the achievements in learning a second language.

Similarly, John Oller et al (1977) conducted a number of studies in an attempt to examine the relationship between attitudes and language success. They examined the relationship of Chinese, Japanese, and Mexican students'

achievement in English to their attitudes towards the native language group, the target language group, their reasons for learning English and other needs. The researchers managed to identify a number of attitudinal variables that correlated positively with attained language proficiency. Khalil and Sanber (1987) conducted a similar study to investigate the relationship between Arab EFL learners' attitudes and orientations on the one hand and their proficiency in English on the other. They found significant correlation between proficiency in English and favorable attitude.

Celce Murcia and Goodwin (1991:137) also provide another example of the relationship between attitudes and pronunciation of English. Their hypothesis was that the attitudes which the learner has towards the target language may affect his or her pronunciation, "the more favorable the attitude, the better the pronunciation, for the highly motivated learner is not opposed to sounding like the target speaker."

Al-Issa (1994) conducted a survey of the **EFL program in Palestine**, and attributed this weakness of Palestinian EFL learners to the school English Curriculum. In this regard, Al-Issa (1994: 5) states that the English language curriculum in Palestine "emphasizes rote learning, reliance on textbooks; and

the teachers' main way is focused upon preparing students for final exams. In addition, in the great majority of cases classes are administered in an authoritarian style with the teacher acting as an expert and a model that has to be followed." The university classroom environment shows that each class of non-English major hosts more than seventy. Unfortunately English learning / teaching theories and methodologies established in the past do not take into account this problem of large-sized classes.

Many teachers feel reluctant to try the new methodologies, techniques and approaches, which could be highly related to social, cultural and economic reasons. The majority of students in Palestine remain silent even when they want to ask questions and participate in a discussion. They might be very conscious of making errors in front of their classmates. The situation in Al-Azhar University classes might be similar to that in China where studies conducted found actual hostility and fear towards learning English. Chen (1985:88) reports that some of her subjects respond that they hate English and are afraid of it. She attributes that to the physical punishment dished by teachers and unpleasant

comments from classmates, and may be from parents due to the students' weak performance on examinations.

Since little research has been conducted in Palestine to investigate how cognitive, affective, pedagogical, and learners' personal variables influence the performance of EFL (non-English majors) learners, the researcher finds it necessary to conduct such a study and propose the necessary recommendations to Palestinian EFL teachers.

PROBLEM OF THE STUDY:

Despite the importance of the English language in the Palestinian society, as is needed when any person applies for a job, travels abroad, or has any commercial relationship, the students final exam results show a clear weakness on the part of university students in the various academic majors. The researcher has been encouraged to conduct this study by the great deal of complaints from English professors and instructors about the level of their students' performance. This study, a step in the way of analyzing the problem, measures the attitudes of EFL learners towards English language and how these attitudes affect them. Thus, the problem of this research paper can be identified in the following questions:

- a) What are the non-English major students' attitudes towards English?
- b) Are there any statistically significant differences between males and females in the same major and cross-major?
- c) Are there any statistically significant differences between the attitudes of students in the different majors?
- d) What are the attitudes of non-English major students towards the four language skills?

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

This paper looks into the attitudes that may have hindered students' proper learning of the English language in Gaza Strip in particular and in Palestine in general; for the role of English in educational institutions across Palestinian cities is similar. This paper tries to answer the questions stated in the problem of the study.

The second objective is to better understand the attitudinal variables that surround EFL learners in Palestine, and to enable the teachers to do what is needed to improve the English language performance of their students.

HYPOTHESIS OF THE STUDY:

- There is a negative attitude towards English.
- There are no statistically significant differences among students' attitudes towards English across faculties.
- There is a negative attitude towards the four skills.
- There are no statistically significant differences among male and female students' attitudes towards English.

SUBJECTS OF THE STUDY:

A total of 376 first year students from 6 English language learning classes from different majors in Al-Azhar University - Gaza were randomly selected to participate in the study. All of the subjects range between the age of 17 and 19, and they have studied English formally for 6 years in the preparatory and secondary schools. Two factors are considered in this random selection of the subjects: major and gender. Academic majors are divided into 6 groups: commerce, science, pharmacy, education, arts, and law students. To perform gender comparisons, each group of students comprises both males and females. Table (1) shows the number of students who participated from each faculty.

Table (1)

Number of Students Who Participated from Each Faculty.

Faculty	No. of Students	
	Male	Female
Commerce	27	43
Sciences	22	33
Pharmacy	32	46
Education	39	19
Arts	38	21
Law	39	17
Total	197	179

INSTRUMENT:

To obtain measures of the students' attitudes towards English, a self-report questionnaire based on a five-point Likert Scale was developed. It contained 34 statements expressing positive and negative attitudes towards many factors involving, for example, the English language, the teacher of English, and the four basic skills. Some of the statements were rewritten upon the recommendations of 6 professors to make them clearer to the students, e.g., some of

the complex and long sentences were rephrased. The questionnaire was administered during the last three weeks of the academic year 2000.

To each statement, participants selected one of five options on this Likert Scale by indicating whether they strongly agree, agree, unable to decide, disagree, and strongly disagree.

Statistical Analysis:

The results of the questionnaire were statistically analyzed using ANOVA combined with the Duncan's multiple comparison test (for statistically significant ANOVA results). The standard significance level of $p=0.05$ was used for the multiple comparison test. Two factors were considered in the statistical analysis: academic major and gender.

The data is statistically analyzed to assist in understanding and interpreting not only the students' general views and attitudes, but more importantly, if there are any statistically significant differences among the different majors who participated in the study.

RESULTS & DISCUSSION

To answer the first research question "What are the students' attitudes towards English?", means of responses and standard deviation were computed for all items as shown in Table (2).

Table (2)
Means of Responses

Question No. and Text	Mean	Std. Dev.	Percentile of Items
1. I feel annoyed when I study English	3.18	1.38	63.60
2. I respect English language teachers	4.49	.82	89.80
3. I like to translate all unfamiliar English words into Arabic	3.86	1.22	77.20
4. I wish to speak English fluently	4.46	.99	89.20
5. I prefer to listen to English programs on radio and TV.	3.40	1.26	68.00
6. I prefer to watch foreign films (Films in English)	3.67	1.25	73.40
7. I prefer not to read English books and writings	3.29	1.28	65.80
8. I like writing in English	3.76	1.22	75.20
9. I make sure I attend all English classes	4.06	1.10	81.20

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10. I do not enjoy studying English	3.53	1.23	70.60
11. I feel that attending English classes is a waste of time	4.20	1.17	84.00
12. I think that good command of English is the best way to improve my employment position	4.01	1.20	80.20
13. I feel that English provides me with the best way to express myself precisely	3.29	1.26	65.80
14. I feel that English is very difficult to learn	3.41	1.30	68.20
15. I enjoy listening to English music and songs	3.17	1.46	63.40
16. I want to study English because it is important and highly needed in our society	4.45	.84	89.00
17. English provides me with a huge amount of information	4.18	.92	83.60
18. I do not use English expressions when I speak Arabic	3.29	1.28	65.80
19. Whoever speaks English does not annoy me	3.88	1.14	77.60
20. I find it easy to	3.02	1.38	60.40

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understand English Grammar			
21. I do not feel very confident when I speak or use English	3.86	1.12	77.20
22. Teachers of English are snobbish	3.91	1.26	78.20
23. I respect all those who speak English	4.07	.95	81.40
24. English language classes are useful	4.24	.92	84.80
25. English language learning does not require strenuous efforts	2.14	1.17	42.80
26. I do not prefer that English will be cancelled from the curriculum	3.79	1.50	75.80
27. I wish to study all my courses in English	2.62	1.38	52.40
28. English does not negatively affect my GPA*	2.49	1.30	49.80
29. I feel afraid when I attempt to speak English	3.13	1.25	62.60
30. English makes me anxious	3.30	1.3	66.00
31. I like the way teachers use to teach English	2.78	1.47	55.60
32. The teacher of English does not build good	3.45	1.39	69.00

relations with his/her students			
33. I think that English is necessary for technological development in our society	4.46	.93	89.20
34. The teacher of English makes me hate this language	3.62	1.32	72.40

*GPA = Grade Point Average

The result of the statistical analysis of the questionnaire shows that subjects of the study maintain a generally-positive attitude towards English. This result is quite the opposite of the first hypothesis of the study. The mean of the attitude towards the learning of English, in general, ranges between (2.14 – 4.49). This positive attitude towards language as an instrument is due to the fact that English helps the students in their college work; it offers them good job opportunities and leads to self-realization.

Table (1) also shows that (item 25) is marked the least important and positive item on the questionnaire 'English language learning does not require strenuous efforts'. On the other hand, the most important and positive item on the questionnaire is item (2: mean 4.49) 'I respect my English language teachers'. This indicates that the subjects of the

study express high attitudes towards the English language teacher. It is a part of the Arab culture to treat teachers as if they were prophets. However, when they are asked about their attitudes towards the way teachers treat them, they express very low attitudes and appreciation as in items (22,31,32,34). The students see the teachers as snobbish and unable to build good relations with their students. The students also feel that teachers do not use good methodologies to present the language material in the class. All these factors must have a certain load that makes the students hate English. The second highest item is (16: mean 4.45) 'I want to study English because it is important and highly needed in our society.' This item, as well as items (12, 13, 16, 17. and 33) shows that the subjects of this study are instrumentally motivated, for the students see English a tool for a job or future position. They also feel that it provides them with the best way to express what they need. English has also been seen by the students as a necessary tool for technological development of the Palestinian society as shown in item (33), which has received the second highest mean as that of item (16: mean 4.45). Table (2) also shows that the students have high attitudes towards speaking English as in items (4: mean 4.46), and

towards listening as in items (5, 15, and 19). However, on item (29), the students have expressed their fear when they speak English, but in item (26: mean 3.79), they are in favor of not canceling English from the curriculum. Despite their fear when they attempt to speak English, the students have shown a positive attitude towards listening to English music and watching English programs, as in items (6: mean 3.67 and 15: mean 3.17).

As for the items that have received the lowest attitude, the first deals with the question that English learning does not require strenuous efforts as in item (25: mean 2.14), the second deals with the teaching methodology used by the teacher as in item (31: mean 2.78), and the third deals with the students' opinion that the English grades affect their GPA (general point average) as in item (28: mean 2.49).

The above result has encouraged the researcher to investigate the textbooks that the students use in class. These textbooks provide the students with a superficial exposure to simple and unrelated texts, and written grammar exercises. The textbooks used furnish the ground for rote learning, which, according to Ausubel (1968: 108) is the process of acquiring material as "discrete and relatively isolated entities

that are relatable to cognitive structure only in an arbitrary and verbatim fashion, not permitting the establishment of [meaning] relationships". In this type of learning, learners store items that have little or no association with what the learner already knows. To avoid rote learning, Brown (1980: 71) recommends that "teachers shift to meaningful learning where blocks and new material become an integral part of the already established categories or systematic clusters of blocks". Grammar Translation is the major method used in the schools of Palestine. The classrooms are crowded which result in very few opportunities to listen, speak, or do grammar exercises. Chastain (1976:23) criticizes grammar – translation practices and sees that they are not the way to teach a foreign language. It is worth mentioning, in this respect, that since the students are sensitive to the teaching methodology, teachers must do their part by sensitizing themselves to the psychological discomfort of their students. Teachers are highly recommended to seek to devise ways and means of making the students have greater confidence in themselves and their ability to learn the language. They must come up with techniques and all collaborative efforts to eliminate the causes of discomfort that the students have shown according to the

mean of the attitude towards the learning of English. Despite the weakness and the negative effect of English on the students GPA's, the students maintain a positive attitude towards English.

The neutral attitude of the students appears on item (20) 'I find it easy to understand English Grammar' and Item (29) 'I feel afraid when I attempt to speak English.' After discussing this part of the result with the teachers in the Department of English, they all confirm that the students show a greater participation when they are asked to form short sentences to illustrate grammatical rules. Thus, it can be concluded that the reason behind this attitude is that the students feel confident when they try sentences to demonstrate their understanding of the English grammatical rules, but when they are asked to express themselves in normal English conversations, they feel afraid to do so.

To answer the second research question "Are there any statistically significant differences between males and females in the same major and cross-major?", the means of responses and standard deviation were computed for all items as shown in Table (3).

Table (3)

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Difference of Means between Males and Females

Question No. and Text	Male		Female	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
1. I feel annoyed when I study English	2.87	1.36	3.51	1.33
2. I respect English language teachers	4.49	.84	4.50	.80
3. I like to translate all unfamiliar English words into Arabic	3.75	1.30	3.98	1.11
4. I wish to speak English fluently	4.35	1.10	4.59	.85
5. I prefer to listen to English programs on radio and TV.	3.24	1.20	3.56	1.30
6. I prefer to watch foreign films (Films in English)	3.61	1.19	3.73	1.32
7. I wish to read English books and writings	3.05	1.27	3.56	1.24
8. I enjoy writing in English	3.51	1.31	4.03	1.04
9. I make sure I attend all English classes	3.95	1.17	4.17	1.00
10. I enjoy studying English	3.32	1.21	3.76	1.22
11. I feel that attending English classes is a waste of time	4.07	1.28	4.34	1.03
12. I think that good command of English is the best way to improve my employment position	3.79	1.27	4.25	1.08

13. I feel that English provides me with the best way to r express myself precisely	3.22	1.19	3.36	1.32
14. I feel that English is very difficult to learn	3.21	1.29	3.63	1.27
15. I enjoy listening to English music and songs	2.95	1.44	3.41	1.44
16. I want to study English because it is important and highly needed in our society	4.39	.94	4.51	.71
17. English provides me with a huge amount of information	4.09	1.01	4.27	.81
18. I use English expressions when I speak Arabic	3.16	1.22	3.44	1.32
19. Whoever speaks English annoys me	3.84	1.14	3.92	1.14
20. I find it easy to understand English Grammar	2.81	1.32	3.25	1.40
21. I feel very confident when I speak of use English	3.71	1.17	4.03	1.04
22. Teachers of English are snobbish	3.83	1.32	3.99	1.18
23. I respect all those who speak English	4.00	1.06	4.15	.81
24. English language classes are useful	4.14	1.01	4.34	.79

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25. English language learning does not require great strenuous efforts	1.99	1.07	2.31	1.26
26. I wish that English will be cancelled from the curriculum	3.61	1.54	3.99	1.43
27. I wish to study all my courses in English	2.51	1.36	2.77	1.39
28. English negatively affects my GPA	2.44	1.23	2.55	1.37
29. I feel afraid when I attempt to speak English	3.13	1.23	3.12	1.27
30. English makes me anxious	3.27	1.29	3.32	1.39
31. I like the way teachers use to teach English	2.64	1.42	2.93	1.50
32. The teacher of English does not build good relations with his/her students	3.47	1.40	3.42	1.37
33. I think that English is necessary for technological development in our society	4.39	.95	4.54	.91
34. The teacher of English makes me hate this language	3.69	1.24	3.55	1.40

The outcome of the analysis of table (3) has shown gender differences as regards the attitudes; the comparison between the means of male and female students indicates that

females have a more positive attitude towards English than males. This supports the findings of Chen (1996), Nyikos (1990), Maccoby & Jacklin (1974), Marsh (1989), and Marsh, H. W., Byrne, B. M., & Shavelson, R. T. (1988). Their studies have shown female students' superiority in language learning over male students. A closer look into the students' response on the attitude questionnaire reveals some interesting results; female students enjoy studying English more than male students do. This noticeable gender difference can be due to the fact that females did not fall under the effects of the first Intifada (Palestinian uprising from 1987 to 1994) as much as male students did. According to the teachers' estimates and remarks, the English language performance of females is much better than that of males'. This corresponds to the difference in the attitude of both gender (items 1, 9, 15, and 20); for females enjoy studying English more than males do. Female students find it easier to understand English grammar than males do. The statistical result of (item 27) reveals that both females and males have a relatively lower attitude towards studying all their courses in English. The statistical result of (item 25) is similar to the expectations of some of the teachers in the Department of English, Al-Azhar University -

Gaza, who believe that English requires that the students exert strenuous efforts in order to learn. Both male and female students have expressed a similar attitude towards this issue. The subjects' response to (item 15) reveals that males have less positive attitudes towards English music and songs, and that females listen to English music and songs more than males do.

The statistical results also indicate that males and females have almost the same degree of low attitudes on (items 27, 28, and 31). The relation among these three items could be a cause-and-effect relationship. Since the methodology used to teach them English is not appropriate, the students' GPAs are negatively affected by their weak performance on the tests. These two items are consistent with (item 11) which shows a negative attitude among the non-English major students towards attending classes, which they consider a waste of time. These results may be the reasons behind the students' rejection of studying all their courses in English (item 27). Moreover, males and females have equally expressed a degree of high attitudes on (items 2, 4, 11, 16, 17, 23, 24, and 33). These items indicate that non-English major students see English learning not only as a hope but also a

desire at the same time. They respect their teachers and see English as the source of information and that it is necessary for the technological development of their society.

To verify whether the mean differences are statistically significant, a t-test for two independent samples was computed as shown in Table (4).

Table (4)

t-test for two independent samples

Sex	N	Mean	S.D.	t-value	D.F	Sig
Male	197	118.5	20.9	4.00	374	.000
Female	179	126.8	18.9			

The results of the t-test show that there is a statistically significant difference at $p= 0.05$ related to gender. This significant difference shows that females have a more positive attitude towards English language. This result contradicts with the second research hypothesis.

This result indicates that females are more motivated to learn English than males. This also justifies why they always have a higher grade-level on their GPA than male students do.

It must be noted here that this result is not expected because both male and female students are taught English at equally the same methodology and by using the same

textbooks. At the university level, they are also taught by the same teacher using the same textbook for all the students in the same major.

To answer the third research question “Are there any statistically significant differences between the attitudes of students in the different majors?“, a multi-variant analysis of variance was computed as shown in Table (5).

Table (5)

Multi-variant analysis of variance to measure the differences in the students’ attitudes towards English based on academic major

Source	Sum of Squares	D.F	Mean Square	F-value	Sig
Between Faculties	14047.3	5	2809.5	7.3	0.00
Within faculties	141925	370	383.5		

The results of the analysis of variance show that there is a statistically significant difference at $p= 0.05$ related to academic major. To verify these differences, multiple comparisons have been made by applying Scheffe- method. Table (6) shows these differences:

Table (6)

Descriptive data and differences among faculties based on
Scheffe method

	Com	Science	Pharm	Edu.	Arts	Faculty
Commerce		-7.6	-6.1	6.3	5.9	8.2
Sciences			1.5	*13.9	*13.5	*15.9
Pharmacy				*12.4	*12.1	*14.4
Education					-.34	1.9
Arts						2.3
Law						

* means significant

Table (6) shows that there are not any statistically significant differences in the students' attitudes towards English between the Faculty of Commerce and other faculties. The table also shows statistically significant differences between the students of the Faculty of Sciences and those of the Faculties of Education, Arts, and Law in favor of the faculty of Sciences. There are also statistically significant differences between the students of the Faculty of Pharmacy and those of the faculties of Education, Arts and Law in favor of the Faculty of Pharmacy. The statistical results of table (6) are not surprising because most of the courses in the faculties of Pharmacy and Sciences are taught in English, and that makes the students have a more positive attitude towards

English. Most teachers use English textbooks, and they frequently, but not consistently, use English to deliver their lectures. Therefore, it is not unfamiliar that the students of these two faculties have higher attitudes towards English than that of the other faculties. Another factor that may have something to do with the high motivation of pharmacy and sciences students is that they are considered the distinguished students among high school graduates; for pharmacy students have to have a GPA of not less than 85% to be admitted to the faculty of Pharmacy. Science students have to have 75% and above, and commerce students 70% and above. This correlates with the percentage of their attitudes.

Table (7)
Attitude of Female Students Cross - Faculties

Faculty	No.	Mean	Std. Dev.
Commerce	43	129.4	18.6
Sciences	33	132.7	12.4
Pharmacy	46	130.9	19.1
Education	19	114.2	14.9
Arts	21	116.0	19.6
Law	17	124.7	22.8

Table (7) indicates that female students from the Faculty of Sciences maintain the highest attitude among females. Females from the Faculty of Pharmacy come in the second position. This very positive attitude of females from these two Faculties is due to the fact that most of the courses taught in these two faculties use English as the medium of instruction. Female students from the Faculty of Law have the least attitude among the subjects of the study. The students from the Faculty of Education, Arts, and Law show the lowest attitude towards English. The difference between these three faculties and the faculties of Sciences and Pharmacy are due to two possible factors: first, the majority of the books studied by the students in the faculties of Education, Arts, and Law are written in Arabic, whereas those studied by the students in faculties of Sciences and Pharmacy are written in English, and

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second, the students in the faculties of Sciences and Pharmacy have high scores at the Tawjihi (high school) level. The only surprising result is that of the Faculty of Commerce whose students have shown the most positive attitude towards English.

Table (8)
Attitude of Male Students Cross - Faculties

Faculty	No.	Mean	Std. Dev.
Commerce	27	113.2	28.5
Sciences	22	127.9	16.5
Pharmacy	32	127.0	16.7
Education	39	118.2	17.9
Arts	38	117.9	17.3
Law	39	110.7	22.8

Table (8) indicates that male students from the Faculty of Pharmacy maintain the highest attitude among males. Males from the Faculty of Commerce come in the second position. This high positive attitude of males from these two Faculties is due to the fact that the jobs these students will have in the future need English as an instrument for success. Male students from the Faculty of Sciences have the least attitude among the male subjects of the study. To evaluate the causes behind this low attitude among males from the Faculty of Sciences, the researcher interviewed a random sample of 16

students who reported that they did not like the way the teacher treated them in class. They also reported that the book used was not that motivating. The comparison between table (7) and table (8) shows that females are more motivated towards English than males. This gender difference is quite remarkable between the students from the Faculty of Commerce, where females' responses have a mean of 129.4 and males have a mean of 113.2. The second remarkable gender difference is between the students of the Faculty of Law where females' responses have a mean of 124.7 and males 110.7. As for the other faculties, female students also show a more positive attitude towards English than male students do.

To examine the superiority of the females' attitude towards English, the researcher interviewed a random sample of the subjects of the study and found out that females spend more time watching English programs on TV than males do. For this reason, they believe it is necessary for them to study English in order to know more about the culture of the English speaking community. Females also feel that they are not treated equally like males by their society; therefore, they work hard to prove that they can do better than males do.

Males talked about not having much time for their studies, and expressed their worries about the economic situation of their families. Many of them have to work in order to help their families and cover part of their university expenses. From these interviews, it is worth introducing a social dimension that has nothing to do with the target language nor has it any thing to do with the culture or the native speakers of the target language. It is an internal social matter that deserves further investigation.

Table (9)
Students' Attitude towards the Four Language Skills

Faculty	QA 4 Speaking	QA 5 Listening	QA 7 Reading	QA 8 Writing
Commerce	4.8	3.5	3.6	3.9
Sciences	4.7	3.9	3.6	4.2
Pharmacy	4.6	3.6	3.7	3.9
Education	4.5	3.2	2.9	3.5
Arts	4.1	3.2	2.9	3.5
Law	4.3	3.0	2.8	3.4

Table (9) shows that the students in the 6 faculties have the most positive attitude towards speaking; they express their wish to speak English fluently. The students from the Faculty of Commerce have the highest attitude towards speaking due to the nature of their future job requirements. As for the

listening skill, the science students have the highest attitude, which could possibly be due to the nature of their education; for most of their scientific courses are taught in English as the medium of instruction. Education students have shown the lowest attitude towards listening. This low attitude is due to the fact that they do not use English often in their major classes. As for the reading skill, all faculties except those of Arts and Law have expressed a very positive attitude towards it. However, in writing, students from all faculties have shown positive attitudes. Pharmacy students have shown the highest attitude towards writing. Since high achievement in English is an essential element of success in the students' career, or in society, it is not surprising that the students have a positive attitude towards the learning of English.

A closer look into the attitude towards the language skills reveals the difference among the five groups of academic majors. It has been found that Pharmacy majors have a significantly more positive attitude towards the four skills than the students of the other majors. However, the positive attitude of all students in the 6 faculties indicates perhaps an increasing awareness of the importance of English, the

usefulness of English, and the inescapable future encounter with the English language.

Conclusion:

This investigation of the attitudes of Palestinian university non-English major students towards English, and the statistical analysis of the differences in the attitudes of males and females reveal that this favorable attitude among the subjects of the study should be utilized and used as a predictor of future success in English. The results have a significant value for the EFL program in Palestine, for they have presented a measurable account of how non-major students view English language learning. To help students foster and maintain these favorable attitudes, teachers are highly recommended to find the most suitable methodologies and techniques to expose the learners to communicative, culturally unbiased materials that do not form a threat to the students' self realization. Teachers have to utilize and promote the learners' attitudes towards the English language and culture. They must, as Savignon 1983: 113) says, "combine language teaching with cross-cultural experiences."

The statistical analysis has revealed that Pharmacy students have a more positive attitude towards English than the

other majors. This is probably explained by taking into consideration that Pharmacy students are the ones who usually get the highest grades in the high school examination. Among females, students from the Faculty of Sciences have the most positive attitude towards English, followed by the students from the Faculty of Pharmacy and those of the Faculty of Commerce. The attitudes of the other groups remain close to one another. The comparison across the 6 faculties reveals difference in the students' attitudes towards English; however, no group has gone beyond the average level. The students from the faculties of Pharmacy, Commerce, Law, and Sciences have maintained a high attitude towards speaking. For the listening skill, science students have perceived a great need for that as represented by their favorable attitude towards the skill. For Reading, students from the faculties of Sciences, Commerce, Pharmacy, and Education maintain attitudes that remain close to one another. Pharmacy students have marked the highest attitude towards the writing skill, while the other majors maintain attitudes close to one another.

The statistical analysis has also shown some significant differences among the various faculties. It must be noted that although Education students have perceived a low attitude for

listening, they nonetheless perceived a very positive attitude towards speaking and recognized its important role in getting a job. The researcher has found out that gender is an important factor in the measurement of attitudes; for females have maintained a more positive attitude towards the English language than males.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Teachers have to develop warm and friendly classroom atmosphere as a prerequisite for an English class.
- Teachers should be receptive and encouraging to the students efforts.
- Teachers are advised not correct every mistake the students make. Students must be encouraged to look at errors as natural and unavoidable when a person attempts to perform in the target language.
- Teachers ought to devise ways and means to reduce or eliminate the causes of discomfort that the students experience.
- The teaching methodology has to be changed or modified to furnish a teacher/learner relationship similar to that in the Counseling Learning Method; a model of education presented by Charles Curran (1972). In this

model, the teacher is not seen as a threat, nor is it the teacher's purpose to impose limits and boundaries, but rather as a councilor, to focus his/her attention and priorities on his/her learners and their needs.

- Teachers must minimize the effects of the lecturing technique which provides more knowledge about the language, but less practice in the language.
- Teachers ought to give students more chances to practice speaking English.
- Teachers should seriously consider Holec's remarks that "to teach the learners to learn, that is to enable them to carry out the various steps that make up the learning process, is considered the best way of ensuring that learning takes place." Holec(1995: 265).

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