Article

The Vital Function of Motivation and Attitude in Learning English as a Foreign language in the Moroccan University

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ABSTRACT

Most academic researchers argued that learning English necessitates a number of components to effectively enhance the learning process. The major components that are highly demanding are mainly motivation and attitude. This study aims to check upon the significant role of the previously mentioned components in learning English as a foreign language and to check whether motivation and attitude are highly required for an efficient learning process. For the data collection procedure, a google form questionnaire was designed and distributed to respondents through the social media applications, such as WhatsApp, Facebook and Messenger too. The respondents of this study are Moroccan university students affiliated to Moulay Ismail University in Meknes in Morocco, more precisely the Faculty of Letters and Human Sciences as well as the Faculty of Sciences in Meknes in Morocco. For the research outcomes of the study, respondents were aware about the requirement of enhancing their level in English. They held an encouraging attitude towards the language. They illustrated that they have become tolerant and open-minded in their process of learning. They also assumed that English is a global language and they are studying it for various reasons, such as passing exams successfully, delivering talks and publishing articles in internationally indexed journals, and settling in a foreign country whose English is the mother tongue of its native speakers. Consequently, they are adopting intrinsic/extrinsic and instrumental/integrative motivation clusters. Likewise, they argued that they ought to practice the language inside and outside the classroom setting to become fluent in English; otherwise, it will be hard for them to achieve an excellent level in the learning process. At last, it can be deduced that students' motivation and positive attitude are tremendously relevant for an effective learning process of a foreign language.

1. INTRODUCTION

Many learners claim that they usually fail in learning a language despite their efforts inside and outside the classroom setting. These students ought to ask themselves a number of questions before starting the learning process. Am I motivated to learn the language? Why do I need to learn it? Do I hold a positive attitude towards it? Do I like it? Do I like its native speakers? Do I have all the tools to learn it successfully? Have I ever been exposed to it? Do I need it for my studies? All the illustrated questions reveal that they are centered on two major components namely, motivation and attitude. The reasons behind the choice of this topic lie on the fact that when students fail in their learning process of English, they put it on the teacher instead of

blaming themselves. They ought to recognize that the latter should not be blamed because his job is to teach the language and if students are not highly motivated and have a negative attitude towards the language or its native speakers, the learning process will not be effective.

Gardner (1985) argues that learners' attitudes towards learning the target language are presumed to be more meaningful to conquering an extraordinary score in language competence than learners' curiosity in learning a foreign language or the people who speak the target language. Cakici (2007) exemplifies that learners' encouraging attitudes towards a language and the culture of that community lead to a calmer learning process; whereas, a disapproving attitude postpones learning. As practical studies on language learning motivation increase, it has been revealed that integrative and instrumental motivations are positively related, and both are efficiently charged targets that can maintain the learning process. They both can be enhanced by better proficiency and higher accomplishment in the target language (Dornyei,1994).

Furthermore, students' learning goals are similarly attested to split up into various motivation collections, the definition of which fluctuates counting on the socio-cultural environment in which the data are assembled (Galishnikova, 2014; Coleman, 2005; Cheng, Y. 2002; Noels et at, 2002; Clement et al., 1994). Thus, new motivation groups have been recognized, such as intrinsic and extrinsic motivations which were recommended in self-determination theory. "Intrinsic motivation refers to doing something because it is inherently interesting or enjoyable, and extrinsic motivation refers to doing something because it leads to a separable outcome and because of external rewards" (Ryan & Deci, 2000, p.55).

Most academic researchers believed that learning English requires a number of components to successfully develop the learning process. The key components that are vastly challenging are mostly motivation and attitude. Obviously, it is broadly approved that attitudes stand for specific objectives and motivation has specific actions as its objectives (Baker, 1992; Seki, 2004; Ushida, 2005; At-tamini & Shuaib, 2009; Ghazvini & Khajehpour, 2011; Ditual, 2012). Johnstone (2001:69-120), for instance, composed that "*attitudes have objects as their target, such as an encouraging attitude to*

school, and continues that 'motivation' has goals rather than objectives as its point of reference". As a result, students are assessed on whether they have negative or positive attitudes toward a particular object. In contrast, motivation is either present or absent, rather than negative or positive. Hence, the aim of this investigation is to check upon the vital role of the previously mentioned components in learning English as a foreign language and to check whether motivation and attitude are highly necessitated for an efficient learning process

They are viewed as two major elements that control the ways in which a student studies a language. Baker (1992: 14), debating the difference between 'attitude' and 'motive' in foreign language education, observes that these two concepts " often appear without discussion of the extent of overlap and difference". In the same line, Gardner & Lambert (1972, cited in Seki, 2004) describe 'motivation' as the second-language learner's inclusive objective and orientation and 'attitude' as the learner's diligence in endeavoring to the goal. However, Seki (2004) notices that 'motivation' and 'attitude' are not delineated from one another, in that the learner's motivation for language learning would be regulated by his attitudes and keenness to recognize and by his orientation to the entire process of foreign language learning.

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According to the previously mentioned scholars Ryan and Deci, (2000:64-65), when a learner has no extrinsic or intrinsic objectives for learning a language, discouragement arises, a fact which signifies the state of lacking an intention to act. As these concepts have attained popularity, it is asserted that intrinsic motivation performs a dominant function in acquiring a foreign language (Liu, 2007). Hence, it can be argued that both integrative/instrumental motivations, as well as intrinsic/extrinsic motivations, contribute to learning a foreign language depending on the setting in which the learning prevails. Correspondingly, students in a variety of situations can be motivated to learn a foreign language by different motivation clusters.

Consequently, the purpose of this paper is to try to reveal the significant role of motivation and attitude in the learning of English as a Foreign language and to try to propose some measures in order to enhance students' learning of English as a foreign language.

2. METHODS

The purpose of this investigation is to reveal the significant role of motivation and attitude in learning English as a foreign language. Also, whether they are highly required for an efficiently successful learning process. The respondents of this study, they are Moroccan university students affiliated to Moulay Ismail University in Meknes,

Morocco, more precisely the Faculty of Letters and Human Sciences as well as the Faculty of Sciences in Meknes. Concerning the data collection procedure, a google form questionnaire has been designed as the major data collection procedure. It has been transmitted to respondents via social media applications, such as WhatsApp, Facebook, and Messenger.

As for the data collection procedure, the questionnaire is been designed as the major data collection instrument, which has been transmitted to respondents through the social media applications, such as WhatsApp, Facebook, and Messenger. For the questions addressed in the questionnaire, they have been classified into a number of categories namely, students' attitudes towards learning English as a foreign language, their motivation to study the English language, their involvement in the classroom setting, their proficiency in learning English, their challenges towards learning English, and their personality characteristics in learning English as a foreign language. The return rate is 100%. One hundred and eight university students filled out the questionnaire.

3. RESULTS

The findings of this paper have been classified into a number of categories namely, respondents' background information, their academic path, their attitudes towards learning English as a Foreign language, their motivation to study English, their involvement in the classroom setting, their proficiency in learning it, the encountered challenges in learning the language, and their personality characteristics in learning English as a foreign language.

The majority of respondents are aged between 20 to 25 years old while 44% are more than 25 years old. As for the respondents who are between 18 to
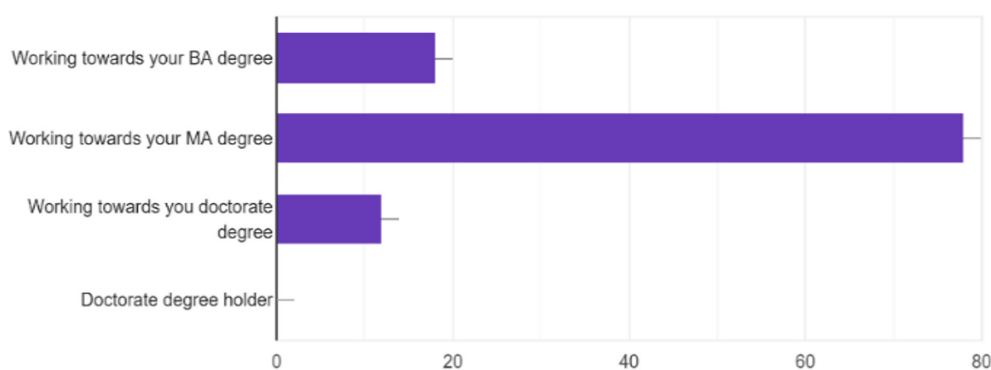

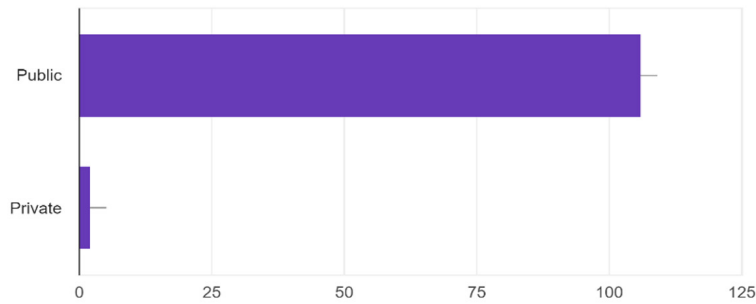**Fig. 1. Distribution of respondents by education level**

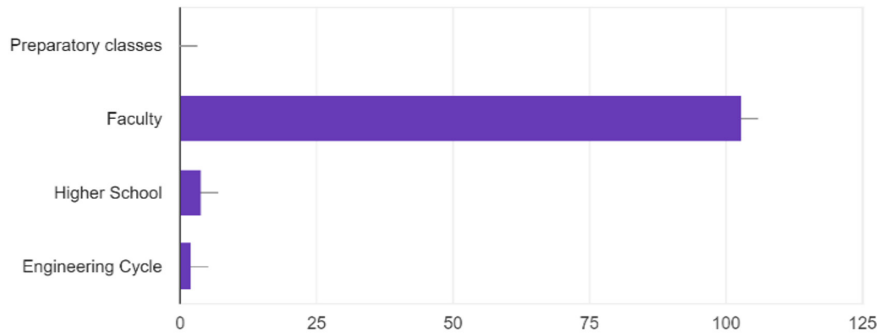**Fig. 2. Distribution of institution enrolled**

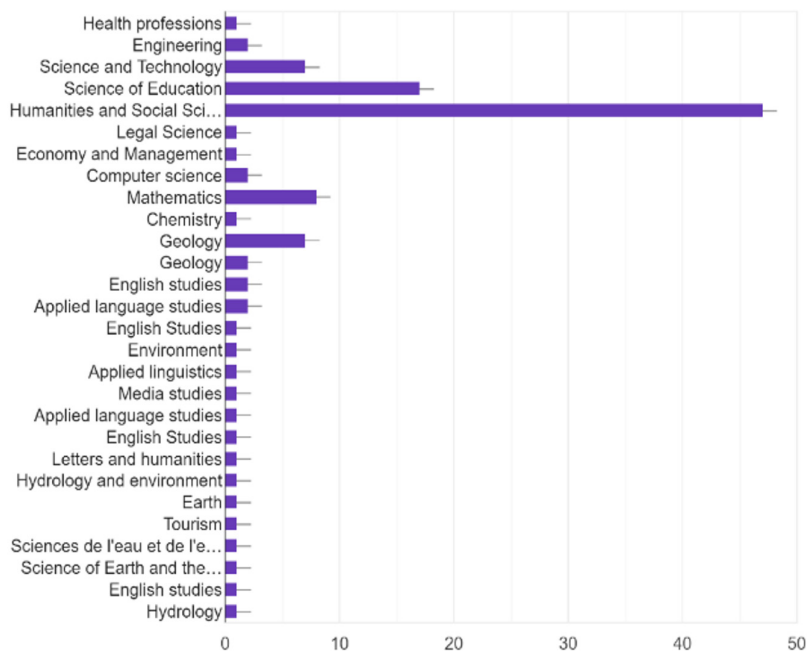
Fig. 3. Distribution of systems of studies

Fig. 4. Distribution of systems of studies

20 years, they are just a few. It is worth mentioning that my respondents are university students, who are working towards their BA, MA, and Ph.D. at the faculty of Letters and Human Sciences as well as the Faculty of Sciences at Moulay Ismail University in Meknes. 63% of respondents are male students while 44% are female ones. As far as the educational level, Figure 1 shows more than 75% are working towards the achievement of their MA degrees, 18% are working towards their BA,

and 10% are working towards the accomplishment of their doctorate degree.

As can be seen in Figure 2, almost all respondents are enrolled in public institutions while a few of them have joined private ones. Most of them are continuing their studies in a system of faculty while few are furthering their studies in a higher school and an engineering cycle as indicated in Figure 3.

Figure 4. shows that the majority of respondents are furthering their studies at the Faculty of Letters and Human Sciences, more particularly in the English department. They are working towards their BA, MA. And Ph. D degrees. In addition to this, the above chart also shows that there are other respondents, who belong to the faculty of Sciences at Moulay Ismail University. They are enrolled in various disciplines, such as geology, biology, chemistry, computer sciences, and physics departments.

Level of Students' Attitudes towards Learning English as a Foreign Language

Table 1. Students attitude toward learning English as a Foreign Language

No	Attitude of students	Agree	Disagree	Neutral
1	You hold a positive attitude towards Learning English as a Foreign Language	100%	0	0
2	You like the culture and the lifestyles of the native speakers of English	54%	29%	24%
3	You believe that English is very important language to be learned by Moroccan university students	100%	0	0

It appears that all respondents hold a positive attitude towards learning English as a foreign language. They believe that it is crucially relevant in their studies and research as well. One of them illustrates the following quotation:

"As a science student, I am required to have very good basics in order to carry out scientific research and deliver talks in English in international conferences in English".

It is obvious that most of my respondents like the culture and the lifestyle of the native speakers of English. 54% opted for agree and 29% chose strongly agree; whereas, 24% selected neutral. One of them responded:

"I have become more open-minded and flexible when I discovered the culture and the lifestyle of the native speakers of English".

All respondents strongly agree that English is a very significant language to be studied by Moroccan university students. One of them states:

"English has become a global language and it is a must in scientific research"

Level of Students' Motivation to Study the English Language

Table 2. Students motivation toward learning English as a Foreign Language

No	Motivation of students	Agree	Disagree	Neutral
1	Want to study English in order to pass the exams succesfully	57%	25%	18%
2	Want to study English in order to become a teacher of English	49%	30%	21%
3	Want to study English in order to settle in a foreign country whose first or second language is English	51%	27%	22%

Table 2 shows that the majority of university students are willing to study English to pass exams successfully while 25% disagree and 18% are neutral.

One of respondents illustrates the following quotation:

" It is genuinely true that we not only want to study English to pass exams successfully and get great marks to further our studies till obtaining a doctorate degree, but we are also tremendously conscious of the importance of English in the job market demands".

Apparently, it is obvious that most of my respondents wanted to become university students after getting their degrees. 30% opted for disagree and 21% for neutral.

The majority of my respondents seem to be eager to study English in order to settle in a foreign country whose first or second language is English. 22% disagree, 5% strongly disagree and 22% opted for neutral.

One of them points out:

" I believe that a foreign country will be more advantageous to us in looking for decent job opportunities that would allow us to have a better life"

Level of Students' Involvement in the Classroom Setting

Table 3 indicates the students involvemetn in the classroom setting in learning English language. It is clear that 45% of respondents consider themselves as active participants in the classroom. 30% opted for strongly agree, which means that

Table 3. Students' involvement in the classroom setting

No	Involment	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Neutral
1	Consider yourself as an active participant in the classroom	30%	45%	10%	5%	20%
2	Do not care about making mistakes while talking in the classroom	18%	36%	32%	8%	15%

Table 4. Students' Proficiency in Learning English

No	Level of Proficiency	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Neutral
1	Practice English inside and outside the campus	35%	35%	10%	2%	10%
2	Watch movies in English on a dialy basis	20%	50%	23%	5%	15%
3	Read English novels outside the syllabus program	28%	45%	15%	9%	18%
4	Have an English dictionary at home	55%	37%	15%	5%	0%
5	Usually talk in English with your classmates to improve your level	33%	41%	22%	2%	15%

they share the same opinion as the previous ones. 10% chose disagree, 5% for strongly disagree, and 22% for neutral. One of the respondents argues:

" I believe that participation is very crucial in order to achieve effective learning of English. If I do not make mistakes while participating in the classroom, I will never improve my level in English".

It is clear that the majority do not care about making mistakes while talking in the classroom. In the same line, 18% opted for strongly agree, 32% for disagreeing, 8% for strongly disagree and 15% selected neutral. One of the respondents maintains the following citation:

" Caring about making mistakes will prevent students' motivation to learn efficiently"

Level of Students' Proficiency in Learning English

Table 4 students' profieciency in learning English. Apparently, it shows that 55% assume that they practice English inside and outside the campus. 35% chose strongly agree, 10% opted for disagree, 2% for strongly disagree, and 10% for neutral.

The majority of my respondents admit the fact of watching movies in English on a daily basis. 20% opted for strongly agree, 23% selected disagree, 5% for strongly disagree, and 15% for neutral. One of the respondents says:

" Watching movies is very significant for us to enhance our learning process. Movies help

us boost our listening and speaking skills. While watching a movie, we grasp words unconsciously and our pronunciation of words becomes efficient"

45% claim that they have read English novels outside the syllabus program. 28% chose strongly agree. 15% disagree. 9% strongly disagree and almost 18% are neutral. One of them points out the following quotation:

" I do remember once that one of my former professors told me that the best way to enhance my level in English is through reading novels outside the syllabus. He argued that reading a handful of books or ten ones will improve my level in an effective way. I did follow his advice and thank God my level in English is excellent because I took reading as my favorite hobby"

Actually, it appears that 55% strongly agree on the fact that they own English dictionaries at home, 37% agree, 15% disagree and 5% strongly agree. One of the respondents illustrates the following citation:

"It is obligatory to own an English dictionary in order to learn any language. If a student does not have it or is not aware about its necessity, his learning of English will not be flourishing"

The majority of my respondents agree that they usually talk in English with their classmates to enhance their level. Almost 33% chose strongly agree, 22% for disagree, 2% for strongly agree, and 15% for neutral. One of them points out the
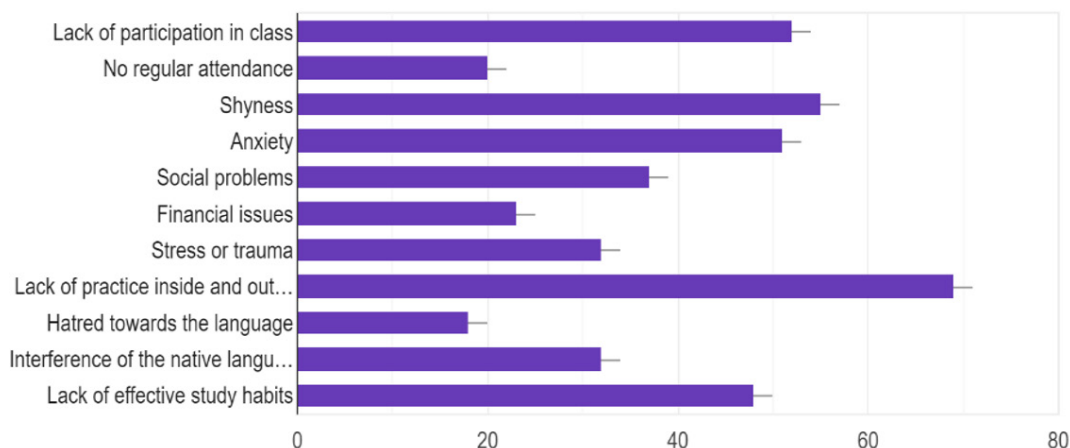
Fig. 5. Students' Challenges towards learning English

following quotation:

> *"We have created groups on WhatsApp and Facebook as well in order to encourage our classmates to join us and practice the language. As the English proverb states: practice makes perfect"*

Level of Students' Challenges towards learning English

Figure 5 shows the chllanges the participants encounter in learning English. Apparently, students assume that they have encountered various problems namely, the lack of practice inside and outside the classroom setting 70%, 58% shyness, 50% lack of participation in the classroom, 55% anxiety, 45% lack of effective study habits, 30%

interference of the native language. In addition to this, some of them have faced financial problems 23%, stress or trauma 30%, and hatred toward the language 19%.

Level of Students' Personality Characteristics in Learning English as a Foreign Language

The majority claim that they are extrovert people, 25% opted for strongly agree, 19 for disagree, 9% for strongly disagree, and 22% for neutral. The majority believe that they are active inside and outside the classroom. According to them, being active is one of the best characteristics of good students, who are highly motivated to learn effectively.

The majority disagree about being introverted

Table 5. Students' Proficiency in Learning English

No	Students' Personality	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Neutral
1	You are extrovert person	25%	37%	19%	9%	22%
2	You are introverst person	12%	25%	32%	19%	22%
3	You do not care about being includeed while making mistakes in the classroom	18%	40%	25%	8%	15%
4	You are a sociable person	25%	47%	11%	5%	22%
5	You are highly determined excel in learning English	47%	49%	5%	0%	8%
6	You always think in a critical way	33%	58%	10%	1%	9%
7	You are a risk-taker person	22%	40%	25%	1%	19%
8	You are a proactive person	18%	54%	10%	2%	22%
9	You are a self-confident person	28%	49%	8%	5%	22%
10	You are passionate about learning English	60%	39%	0%	2%	7%
11	You are a computer literate person	25%	53%	10%	2%	15%
12	When you encounter psychological problems, you become anxious and depressed	12%	46%	5%	23%	25%
13	You friends help you by listening to you when you face problems	38%	8%	22%	6%	32%

people, 25% agree about being introverted, 12% strongly agree, 19% strongly disagree and 22% opted for neutral. Most of them assume that an introverted person will not be able to learn effectively because of his or her reluctance toward classroom interaction.

It is obvious that the majority of my respondents agree of being careless about being ridiculed while making mistakes in the classroom. 18% strongly agree, 25% disagree, 8 strongly disagree, and 15% are neutral. One of my respondents claims that:

> "If I care about what my classroom would say with regard to my mistakes, I will never learn. Therefore, students should trust themselves and believe that it is thanks to making mistakes that the learning process will be highly fruitful"

Apparently, it is clear that 47% agree of being sociable people, 25% strongly agree, 11% disagree, 5% strongly disagree and 22% are neutral. One of my respondents says:

> "Being sociable is an important personality characteristic of a good learner. Learning requires students to interact among themselves in order to learn in an effective way; otherwise, the learning process will fail".

It appears that 49% agree of being highly determined to excel in learning English, 47% strongly agree, 5% disagree and 8% are neutral. One of them points out:

> " Determination is a must for students if they want to achieve their objectives. Learning English certainly necessitates motivation and hard work; however, if students are determined to face all the challenges in language learning, they will obviously excel in learning it".

The chart reveals that the majority of my respondents agree on the fact of thinking in a critical way. 33% strongly agree with the statement. 10% disagree and 9% are neutral. One of the respondents illustrates the following citation:

> " I believe that university students must have acquired the skill of critical thinking throughout their academic studies. It is this skill that differentiate a passive student from a very active one. They should be conscious learners and able to analyze and question all the information they receive whether it is related to their studies or their personal life".

40% agree that they are risk-taker people. 22% strongly agree. 25% disagree and 19 % are neutral. Most of them assume that taking risks while learning is very advantageous because it motivates them to learn positively and vividly.

The majority agree in being proactive people, 18% strongly agree. 10% disagree. 2% strongly disagree and 22% are neutral. They all claim that being proactive is fundamental in learning. One of them clarifies:

> " I believe that I am a proactive student because I highly believe that leaning and acquiring new skills will always be my priority. I would not be a doctorate student if I was not an ambitious person who was and is always looking for new objectives to achieve as long as I am alive. I always strive for a change and a new information to enhance my soft and hard skills"

According to Table 5, 49% agree of being self-confident people. 28% strongly agree, 8% disagree, 5% strongly disagree , and 22% are neutral.

The majority of my respondents strongly agree of being passionate about learning English. 39% agree, 2% strongly disagree ,and 7% are neutral. They all pointed out that passion is an important characteristic that students should have in order to be referred to as good learners. If there is no love or passion towards learning, it will certainly fail.

53% agree of being computer literate people, 25% strongly agree, 10% disagree, 2% strongly disagree, and 15% are neutral. Most of them believe that technology has become a part of their learning process. Knowing how to manage a computer is highly demanding among university students because they are required to write research papers, scientific articles, and dissertations; hence, if they are computer illiterate, they will be stuck and fail in their studies and research as well.

Apparently, it seems that most of my respondents agree in becoming anxious and depressed when they encounter psychological problems. 12% strongly agree, 23% disagree, 5% strongly agree and 25% are neutral. They assume that psychological issues prevail the moment when they start preparing for their exams in addition to the negative impact of their personal and family issues on the process of learning. One of them quotes the following citation:

> "I encounter anxiety mainly during the period

of exams"

Furthermore, the above chart reveals that the majority of my respondents agree that their friends support them by listening to them the moment they encounter issues. 8% strongly agree, 22% disagree, 6% strongly disagree, and 32% are neutral. Most of them assume that their friends play a huge role in their lives. They claim that thanks to the college challenges, they have met great friends who will always be resent when they are needed.

4. DISCUSSION

As far as the results of the fieldwork are concerned, they can be tackled in a number of categories. For the first category, it is related to the level of students' attitudes towards learning English as a foreign language.in this section, respondents believe that English has become a global language in the 21st century. Therefore, they should have a good level in order to carry out scientific research and deliver talks in international conferences in English. Most of them seem to hold a positive attitude towards the learning of English. Besides, they like to study the language to become more open-minded, tolerant, and flexible when dealing with the native speakers of English. This reveals that they embrace intrinsic and integrative motivation in this section.

Concerning the level of students' motivation to study the English language, the majority appears to be highly motivated to study it. Some of them claim that they are learning English to get good marks and pass their exams successfully while others argue that they are willing to settle in a foreign country and have a decent job and a decent life too. Thus, it can be said that students carry two other types of motivation, which are extrinsic and instrumental motivation.

Regarding the level of students' involvement in the classroom setting is concerned, my respondents believe that participation is very crucial to accomplish effective learning of English; otherwise, if they do care about making mistakes, they will not be motivated to learn efficiently because they assume that making mistakes is part of an effective learning process. Besides, they also illustrate that group work is a great method to enhance their learning process. When students work in groups, they not only benefit a lot by encouraging their team members to communicate freely and openly, but they also support them by raising their self-esteem and by correcting their mistakes as well.

For the Level of Students' Proficiency in Learning English, most of them are aware that being proficient in English necessitates the mastery of the four skills namely, speaking, listening, reading, and writing. They are conscious that proficiency requires hard work and practice. Likewise, the first two skills which are speaking and listening can be developed through watching movies, series, and documentaries in English continuously; as for the skills of reading and writing, they could be improved by reading novels, short stories, plays, and articles regularly. It is by reading that they can see how words, paragraphs, and essays are written. Also, in order to be excellent in writing, they ought to have a diary and start by writing their daily activities without caring about making mistakes. And with time and practice, they will become excellent writers and improve their level in English.

As far as the Level of Students' Challenges in learning English is concerned, the majority claim that they have encountered various problems in their learning process namely, the lack of practice inside and outside the classroom setting, anxiety, shyness, the lack of effective study habits, hatred towards the language, and financial problems.

Concerning the level of students' personality characteristics in learning English as a foreign Language, along with a positive attitude and motivation towards the learning of English as a foreign language, respondents assume that they should be active inside and outside the classroom setting. They are required to practice the Language without caring too much about making mistakes. It is also necessary for them to gain personality qualities, such as being proactive, self-determined, risk takers and critical thinkers as well. And lastly, they should never give up on the process of learning English.

5. CONCLUSION

To conclude, it is obvious that students are consciously aware about the necessity of improving their level in English. Most of them hold a positive attitude towards the language since it is not only a global language, but it is also necessary for them to have very good basics in it in order to take part in international conferences and write articles to be published in internationally indexed journals, which

have a good impact factor. They assume that they like studying the language because it allows them to be more open-minded and tolerant towards the native speakers of English. Consequently, they are adopting an intrinsic and integrative motivation.

Likewise, For students' motivation to study the English language, there are some of them whose major aim behind studying the language is to get good marks and pass exams successfully while others' purpose is to settle in a foreign country and have a decent job. Thus, this type of motivation is related to extrinsic and instrumental motivation.

In addition to this, concerning students' involvement in the classroom setting, according to their feedback, the majority illustrates that participation is very mandatory to achieve an effective learning process of English. Also, they argue that practice makes perfect, meaning that if they do not practice the language inside and outside the classroom followed by not caring about making mistakes, they will certainly reach an efficient learning process.

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