

The Relationship between Saudi EFL Students' Attitudes towards Learning English and their Academic Achievement

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Abstract

This study aimed to explore the attitudes of Umm Al-Qura University students (Al-Qunfudah branch) towards learning English as a Foreign Language (EFL), as well as to study factors affecting their attitudes towards learning EFL. The study also investigated the relationship between the students' attitudes and their grade point average (GPA). The researchers designed a questionnaire to measure the students' attitudes towards learning EFL. The researchers also interviewed a number of English major students to explore the factors that affect their attitudes towards learning EFL. The sample of this study consisted of 112 English major students from Umm Al-Qura University / Al-Qunfudah branch. These students were randomly chosen from different levels (second, third and fourth year students), and the results of the study showed that the students have overall positive attitudes towards learning EFL. The results also indicated that students with high GPAs have the highest positive attitudes towards learning English, followed by the medium GPA students and finally the low GPA students.

Keywords: Saudi students' attitudes, EFL, GPA

Introduction

Developing students' attitudes towards learning is considered to be one of the most important issues that should be taken into account when discussing factors affecting the teaching-learning process. Winne and Marx (1989) note that motivation and attitude are both conditions for, and results of, effective instruction; therefore, studies were conducted in various educational fields to examine strategies and techniques that could contribute to developing students' attitudes towards learning.

Attitudes can be viewed as a tendency to respond positively or negatively towards a certain thing, idea, person, situation, etc. Gardener (1985) defines attitude as an evaluative reaction to some referent, inferred on the basis of the individual's beliefs or opinions about the referent. As for education, Brown (2000) notes that teachers should recognize that all students possess positive and negative attitudes in varying degrees, and adds that the negative attitudes can be changed by thoughtful instructional methods, such as using materials and activities that help students achieve an understanding and appreciation of foreign culture, a fact that might be reflected in the process of learning the foreign language.

Thus, attitudes could highly influence how individuals approach many situations in life, including foreign language learning. It is believed that individuals with positive attitudes usually progress more rapidly in foreign language learning.

Questions of the study:

The problem addressed by this study can be stated in the different attitudes of university students towards leaning EFL. Consequently, the present study attempts to answer the following questions:

- What are the attitudes of Umm Al-Qura University students (Al-Qunfudah branch) towards learning EFL?
- What is the relationship between the students' attitudes and their GPAs?
- What are the main factors affecting the students' attitudes towards learning EFL?

Aims of the study:

The current study aims to:

- Explore the attitudes of Umm Al-Qura University students (Al-Qunfudah branch) towards leaning EFL.
- Explore the relationship between the students' attitudes and their GPAs.
- Reveal factors affecting the students' attitudes towards learning EFL.

Delimitations:

- 1-The study was confined to revealing students' attitudes towards learning EFL.
- 2- The study was confined to revealing attitudes of English major students at Umm Al-Qura University / Al-Qunfudah branch, towards learning EFL.
- 3-The study was conducted in the first term of the academic year 2013- 2014.

Study Sample:

The sample of the study consisted of 112 English major students from Umm Al-Qura University / Al-Qunfudah branch. The students were chosen randomly from different levels (second, third and fourth year students).

Review of Related Literature:

The study of attitudes has been an important area of interest for psychologists. Educators have been interested in attitudes because of their possible impact on learning; they have long been considered an important component of positive educational outcomes.

Attitudes are closely related to our beliefs and are based upon experiences. Thus, the researchers believe that effective language teaching strategies can encourage students to hold more positive attitudes towards the learning process in general and learning English as a Foreign Language (EFL) in particular. Rani (2000) notes that students' attitudes towards learning might be developed through suggesting projects which give students experience in problem solving and by proposing problems that require the collection of evidence for forming conclusions. Hsin and Clyde (1998) found that students can have either fear or unpleasant feelings about their past English learning experiences and that students of different majors had different perspectives about English learning.

Psychologists define attitudes as a learned tendency to evaluate things in a certain way. This can include evaluations of people, issues, objects or events. While such evaluations are often positive or negative, they can also be uncertain at times. For example, you might have mixed feelings about a particular person or issue.

Wenden (1991) suggests that the term attitude contains three components: cognitive, affective and behavioral. A cognitive component is made up of the beliefs and ideas or opinions about the object of the attitude. The affective part refers to the feeling and emotions that one has towards an object: the 'likes' or 'dislikes' and the 'with' or 'against'. Finally, the behavioral component refers to one's consistent actions or behavioral intentions towards the object.

Attitudes can also be explicit and implicit. Explicit attitudes are those that we are consciously aware of and that clearly influence our behaviors and beliefs. Implicit attitudes are unconscious but still have an effect on our beliefs and behaviors.

Attitudes and Language Learning:

In addition to the intellectual perspective, the nature of language learning has psychological and social aspects and depends primarily on the learners' motivation and attitude towards learning the target language (Padwick, 2010).

Gardner and Lambert (1972) conclude that the ability of students to master a second language is not only influenced by their mental competence or language skills but also by the students' attitudes and perception towards the target language. They also advocate that attitude concepts could enhance the process of language learning, influencing the nature of student's behaviors and beliefs towards the other language and its culture and community and that this will identify their tendency to acquire that language.

Attitudes are crucial in language growth or decay and restoration or destruction. Attitudes are internal states that influence what the learners are likely to do. The internal state is some degree of positive/negative or favorable / unfavorable reactions towards an object. Attitudes differ in intensity or strength. Language attitude is an important concept because it plays a key role in language learning and teaching. According to Oller (1979):attitudes are merely one of types of factors that give rise to motivation which eventually results in attainment of proficiency in a second language. Stern (1983) distinguishes three types of attitudes in second language learning situation: (a) attitudes towards the community and people who speak the L2, (b) attitudes towards learning the language concerned, and (c) attitudes towards languages and language learning in general.

Tahaineh and Danna (2013) mention that attitudes play an eminent role in determining one's behavior, as the attitude has an impetus which stimulates the behavior and directs it in a particular direction. Attitudes are thus indirectly related to second language achievement. We can say that improving the positive attitude of the students towards a particular academic subject may increase their desire to learn the subject and to develop the ability to apply what they have been taught, as well as leading to an improvement in remembrance.

According to Dörnyei and Csizér (2002), a positive attitude facilitates foreign language learning while a negative attitude acts as a psychological barrier against learning. Thus, attitudes, ranging through negative, natural, and positive states, determine a student's success or failure in his or her learning. This highlights the important role that a positive attitude towards the language being learned plays in learning a second language. Putting it another way, maintaining positive or negative feelings towards a language may increase the ease or difficulty of learning, respectively.

Review of related studies

Alkaff (2013) conducted a study to explore the attitudes and perceptions of Foundation Year (FY) students towards learning English, at the English Language Institute (ELI) of King Abdulaziz University (KAU) in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. After the selection of a random sample of 47 female students of levels 3 and 4 (pre-intermediate and intermediate levels), representing the majority of the students during the time of the study, a questionnaire was developed and the students' responses were tabulated and analyzed. The study showed that most students have a positive attitude towards learning English and that they try to improve their English knowledge and use, even though there are many demands on their time and few opportunities to practice their English.

Tahaineh and Daana (2013) investigated the two most important social psychological variables: the motivation orientations (instrumental & integrative) of the Jordanian EFL female undergraduates and their attitudes towards learning the target language and its community. A stratified random sample of 184 students majoring in English language and literature at Al Balqa' Applied University – Princess Alia University College, in Amman, Jordan, was surveyed using the Attitude/ Motivation Test Battery. The eight domains used to achieve the overall aim of the study were: (1) Interest in Foreign Languages, (2) Parental Encouragement, (3) Motivational Intensity, (4) Degree of Integrativeness, (5) Degree of Instrumentality, (6) Attitudes towards Learning English, (7) Attitudes toward English-Speaking People, and (8) Desire to Learn English. The findings show the subjects' greater support of instrumental reasons for learning the English language, including utilitarian and academic reasons. However, regarding the integrative reasons, the results provide evidence that learning English as a part of the culture of its people had the least impact in students' English language motivation, whereas their attitudes towards the target language community and its members were generally found to be highly positive.

Wang (2013) examined pre-service Non-Native English Speaking Teachers (NNESTs)' attitude towards the recruitment of Native English Speaking Teachers (NESTs) and the collaboration with NESTs in EFL classrooms. The results showed that most participants are not against the presence of NESTs as their teaching partners, although they see qualification as the key criterion in recruiting NESTs. Although the participants believe that team teaching with NESTs is beneficial to English learners, they are concerned about unequal partnerships and communication problems with NESTs. The results suggest that teacher educators need to take greater responsibilities to engage pre-service teachers in team teaching to support pre-service teachers' professional lives.

Abidin, Mohammadi and Alzwari (2012) investigated Libyan secondary school students' attitudes towards learning English in terms of the behavioral, cognitive, and emotional aspects, while factoring in the demographic profile of the students. A total of 180 participants from three specializations, Basic Sciences, Life Sciences, and Social Sciences, took part in the study. Regarding the three aspects of attitude (i.e., cognitive, behavioral, and emotional), the participants showed overall negative attitudes towards learning English. In the demographic profile, there were statistically significant attitudinal differences in regards to gender and field of study, though not year of study.

Ahmed, Yossatorn and Yossiri (2012) investigated the students' attitudes towards activities used in an EFL classroom in one Thai university. The research participants included first year students (bachelor students of medical and engineering faculties) who had studied public speaking as their minor in the second semester. The data were collected through class observations and semi-structured interviews. In classroom observations, EFL learners' perceptions and satisfactions on their teacher using class activities were recorded in field-notes and questions related to EFL learners' attitudes towards target language learning, based on certain factors, including better teaching strategies, classroom activities and social environment, that can help reduce or change negative attitudes. This study found promising results concerning the students' attitudes towards the teacher using activities. More than half of the participants regarded their teacher's use of activities to determine their success in language learning. However, less than half of the participants showed dissatisfaction with the EFL teacher using humor about their cultures as the part of his teaching.

Ibnian (2012) examined the effect of using the group work technique to develop the attitudes of non-English major students at the World Islamic Sciences and Education University (WISE) towards learning English as a Foreign Language (EFL). The study attempted to answer the following question: What is the effect of using the group work technique on developing the attitudes of non-English majors at W.I.S.E. University towards leaning EFL? Tools of the study included a questionnaire to measure the attitudes of non-English major students at W.I.S.E. University towards leaning EFL. The results revealed the effect of using the group work technique on developing the attitudes of non-English major students at W.I.S.E. University towards leaning EFL.

Jacqueline Norris-Holt (2012) investigated the attitudes of Japanese students towards the study of English. Attitudinal measures such as levels of student's interest, study habits and the perceived utility of English were examined. The subjects of the study included two separate age groups, first year junior high school students and third year senior high school students, in the same private girls' school in central Japan. The same study also examined the attitudinal differences of students in the three elective lines in third year senior high school. A total of 577 subjects participated in the study, 379 from third year senior high school and the remaining 198 from first year junior high school. A 34-item Likert scale questionnaire was administered to examine the perceptions and attitudes of students towards the study of English in a foreign language context. A four-point positive/negative scale was utilized in order to encourage students to make an attitude choice.

The findings showed both similarities and differences in the way in which junior and senior high school students responded. Of interest was the importance of studying both English grammar and conversation, without taking into consideration the focus of study for university entrance examinations. Both junior and senior high school students expressed overall agreement with these statements. Students were also found to respond similarly in regard to speaking English during their English class. In response to this statement, both groups displayed overall disagreement, with a total of 89.4% of students indicating that they make few verbalizations in English. Differences were found to exist in the students' general views towards the study of English, with junior high school students indicating that they studied harder in class and enjoyed doing homework more. Senior high school students displayed stronger positive attitudes towards the continued study of English and English classes at school being conducted in the English language.

Galloway (2011) investigated Japanese university students' attitudes towards English and English teachers in relation to their use of English as a lingua franca (ELF). In order to widen the scope of understanding, this research employed a mixture of quantitative and qualitative measures to obtain data about the participants and their attitudes. Thus, questionnaires, interviews and focus groups were used. The findings suggested that English is seen as a language belonging to native English speakers and those students who want to learn native English. However, the results highlighted that a number of factors influence students' attitudes. The findings also demonstrated that the study of Global English influenced students in a number of ways, including their motivation for learning English, attitudes towards varieties of English and attitudes towards English teachers.

Hussein, Demirok and Uzunboylu (2009) investigated undergraduate student's attitudes towards English language. The instrument used to gather information is a scale developed by researchers. A general research model was used in order to reach the sources. The scale used in this study measured attitudes towards English (reliability: 0.91), and included a personal information form. The views and advice of experts were given for the validity of the used scale. The students who participated were from the Near East University, in the departments of CEIT (Computer Education and Information Technologies) and Nursing (N = 161). To gather the data, the t-test technique was used. According to the results of the gathered information, there was no significant impact on the students' attitudes towards English regarding their gender, nationality and the departments in which they study.

Momani (2009) investigated Jordan's secondary stage students' attitudes towards learning English as a foreign language and their achievements in reading comprehension. The findings showed that the respondents had neutral positive attitudes towards learning English. Additionally, there was a strong correlation between the students' attitudes towards learning English and their performance in reading comprehension.

Al-Omrani (2008) investigated perceptions and attitudes of Saudi ESL and EFL students towards native and non-native English-speaking teachers. The findings of this study indicated that both native and non-native English-speaking teachers offer advantages and disadvantages, as seen from the participants' perspective. The study shows that, while native English-speaking teachers are believed to be best in teaching oral skills, due to their language fluency and accuracy, non-native English-speaking instructors offer advantages associated with having being previous learners of English as a second or foreign language. However, the findings showed that the teacher's qualifications and teaching experience are seen as the most distinctive features of an excellent ESL/EFL teacher, regardless of his mother tongue. Finally, the findings revealed that ESL/EFL programs where both NESTs and NNESTs work cooperatively are considered the most appropriate place for learning English. In conclusion, this study indicates that native and non-native English-speaking teachers can offer many advantages and that training programs can be more aware of areas that should be developed by the inclusion of both types of instructors.

Qashoa (2006) conducted a study to examine Dubai's secondary school students' instrumental and integrative motivation for learning English. The study also aimed at recognizing the factors affecting learners' motivation. A questionnaire and interviews were employed. The sample for the questionnaire consisted of 100 students. For the interviews, on the other hand, the sample included 20 students: 10 Arab English teachers and 3 supervisors. The findings showed that students have a higher degree of instrumentality than integrativeness. Additionally, the results indicated that difficulties with the subject (English) aspects, such as vocabulary, structures and spelling, were found to be the most de-motivating factors for the students.

Al-Quyadi (2000) inspected Sana'a University English majors' motivation and attitudes towards learning English; the aim of the study was to investigate the psycho-sociological variables in the learning of English in the faculties of Sana'a in Yemen. The only research tool used was a questionnaire. The study sample consisted of 518 students representing seven faculties. The results showed that the students had a high level of both instrumental and integrative motivation towards the English language. With regard to their attitudes, the findings indicated that the students had positive attitudes towards the English language and the use of English in the Yemeni social and educational contexts.

Lin and Warden (1998) conducted a study to analyze the results from a survey of 346 college-level English language learners in Taiwan, focusing on some causes that may have hindered English learning in the past for students participating in the survey and the students' perspectives about English learning. The results showed that most of the students had either fear or unpleasant feelings about their past English learning experiences and that students of different majors had different perspectives about English learning.

Finally, **Ismail (1988)** investigated the standard of competence and the degree of some learner variables affecting competence (i.e., exposure, attitudes and motivation), amongst Malay ESL learners. The purpose was to investigate the strength of the relationships between the variables under study. The sample consisted of 441 Form Four pupils from selected schools in Selangor, Peninsular Malaysia, who had learnt English for the past nine years. The instruments used for data collection were an achievement test, an exposure scale, an attitude scale, and a motivation scale. The analysis of data was carried out by using cross-tabulation and correlation procedures. The statistical test of significance used was the chi-square.

The analysis of quantitative data revealed that (1) the standard of English competence among the pupils was low; (2) pupils in urban schools performed better in English than pupils in rural schools; (3) generally, the pupils received a low amount of exposure to written English, radio and television English, and unscripted spoken English; (4) their attitudes towards English and its speakers were generally favorable; and (5) their motivational orientations, desire to learn, and motivational intensity were strong. Their integrative motivation seemed slightly stronger than their instrumental motivation. The correlation analysis revealed that (1) the relationships between competence and exposure to written English, radio and television English, and unscripted spoken English were positive and significant; (2) the relationship between competence and attitude towards English was positive and significant, but the relationship between competence and attitude towards its speakers was insignificant; and (3) the relationships between competence and integrative motivation, desire to learn, and motivational intensity were positive and significant. However, the relationship between competence and instrumental motivation was insignificant.

Commentary:

Having reviewed a number of studies related to the purpose of the current study, the researchers of this current study observed that most of the previous studies were aimed at exploring the learners' attitudes towards the learning process in general and EFL in particular. The studies also tried to highlight the impact of students' attitudes on their performance and academic achievement.

The researchers found that some studies measured university students' attitudes towards learning EFL (Tahaineh and Danna 2013, Al Kaff 2013, Ibnian 2012, Galloway 2011, Hussein, Demirok, and Uzunboyly 2009, Al-Quyadi 2000, and Lin and Warden 2008).

Other studies focused on school students' attitudes towards learning EFL (Abidin, Mohammadi and Alzwari 2012, Jacqueline Norris- Holt 2012 and Qashoa 2006).

Additionally, some studies examined EFL students' attitudes towards native and non-native English speaking teachers (Wang 2013 and Al Omrani 2008).

On the other hand, the related studies enriched the current study in the following ways:

- 1 - Defining attitudes and recognizing the components of attitudes and their impact on the teaching-learning process.
- 2 - Guiding the researchers to design the instruments used in the current study.
- 3 - Highlighting attitude-related areas that have been covered by other researchers in their studies.

Instruments

The instruments of this study included an attitudes scale to measure the attitudes of the Umm Al-Qura University students / Al-Qunfudah branch towards learning EFL. The researchers also conducted a number of semi-structured interviews with some students chosen randomly from the second, third and fourth year students to explore factors affecting their attitudes towards learning EFL.

The Attitudes Questionnaire

- Purpose of the questionnaire

The questionnaire aimed at revealing attitudes of the Umm Al-Qura University students / Al-Qunfudah branch towards learning EFL.

- Design of the questionnaire

Having reviewed a number of studies on students' attitudes towards language learning, the researchers designed a 24- item questionnaire, taking into account the following points:

- Using items that cover the four language skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing.
- Using positive and negative items to avoid bias.
- Using clear items.
- Using simple and direct items.

The students' attitudes on the scale were calculated as follows:

- For the Positive Items:

Strongly Agree	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
5	4	3	2	1

- For the Negative Items:

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly Agree
5	4	3	2	1

-Validity of the questionnaire

To ensure validity of the instrument, the researchers submitted it, in its initial form, to specialized jury members in the fields of curricula and instruction (TEFL) and educational psychology. The jury members were asked to comment on:

- Suitability of the scale's items to measure attitudes towards learning EFL.
- Clarity of the scale items.
- Clarity of the scale instructions.

The Jury members suggested modifying some items such as:

(I can understand when others speak in English) to (I can understand what others say in English)

They also proposed the following items:

- I don't like English lessons.
- I like learning English because it helps me travel abroad.
- Mastering English develops my friendships.
- I like to master English to help me resume my education.

The questionnaire was modified according to the jury members' comments and suggestions. In its final form, the questionnaire consisted of 24 items (as shown in appendix 1) classified as follows:

- 12 items on attitudes towards learning English Language
- 3 items on attitudes towards listening.
- 3 items on attitudes towards speaking.
- 3 items on attitudes towards reading.
- 3 items on attitudes towards writing (see appendix #1 for the scale in its final form).

-Reliability of the questionnaire

To establish the reliability of the scale, it was administered to a sample of 25 students other than the sample of the study. Then, the same scale was administered to the same group after 15 days, under relatively the same conditions in terms of the time and place. The reliability coefficient was estimated using the Cronbach's Alpha Formula. The estimated value was (0.89), which is considered reliable for the purpose of the current study.

Procedures

To answer the questions of the study, the researchers:

- 1 - Reviewed the related literature in the field of attitudes towards learning EFL.
- 2 - Designed a questionnaire to measure students' attitudes towards learning EFL.
- 3 - Submitted the questionnaire to specialized jury members to ensure its validity.
- 4 - Ensured the reliability of the questionnaire.
- 5 - Chose a random sample from Umm Al-Qura University / Al-Qunfudah branch.
- 6 - Administered the attitudes questionnaire to the sample.
- 7 - Conducted a number of interviews with a number of English major students.
- 8 - Collected and analyzed data.
- 9 - Discussed results of the study.
- 10 - Introduced recommendations and suggestions for further research

Findings and Discussion

Having designed the questionnaire and checked its validity and reliability, the researchers distributed it to 126 English major students chosen randomly from different levels. The researchers used the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) to analyze data, excluding 14 incomplete questionnaires due to incomplete responses.

First Research Question

The first research question is: What are the attitudes of the Umm Al-Qura University students (Al-Qunfudah branch) towards learning EFL?

To answer this question, descriptive statistics were obtained to decide students' mean attitude towards learning English and their mean GPA. Table 1 shows that students' mean attitude is 3.85 which falls in the "Mid" category.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics

	Mean	Std. Dev.	N
Attitudes	3.85	0.48	112
GPA	2.32	0.70	112

Based on the above table, it is clear that the Umm Al-Qura University students (Al-Qunfudah branch) have positive attitudes towards learning English as a foreign language (EFL). These results were in line with findings of Alkaff (2013), Tahaine and Daana (2013) and Al-Quyadi (2000), which indicated that most students have positive attitudes towards learning EFL. On the other hand, the current study's findings disagreed with results of Lin and Warden (1998) and Abidin, Mohammadi and Alzwari (2012), which indicated that most students had either fear or unpleasant feelings about their past English language experiences.

Second Research Question

To answer the second research question (What is the relationship between the students' attitudes and their GPAs?), Pearson product moment correlation analysis was performed. Preliminary analyses were performed to ensure no violation of the assumptions of normality, linearity and homoscedasticity.

The researchers used Cohen's (1988) classification of correlation strength. Cohen (1988) suggested that a correlation is considered small when $r = .10$ to $.29$, medium when $r = .30$ to $.49$, and large when $r = .50$ to 1.00 . In this first analysis, there was a strong positive correlation between the two variables (Saudi EFL students' attitudes towards learning English and their GPAs) $r = .79$, $n = 112$, $p < .01$, with high levels of attitude towards learning English associated with high level GPA. This result is shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Pearson Product-Moment Correlations between Attitude towards learning EFL and GPA.

		Attit.	GPA
Attit.	Pearson Correlation	1	.786**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	112	112
GPA	Pearson Correlation	.786**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	112	112

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The findings of the study showed that the high GPA students have the most positive attitudes towards learning English, followed by the medium GPA students, and finally the low GPA students. These results were in line with results of Momani (2009), which indicated that there was a strong correlation between students' attitudes toward learning English and their performance. The results also accorded with outcomes observed in a study conducted by Ismail (1988), which reported positive and significant relationship between competence and attitude towards learning English. The findings were also supported by other research, such as that by Zimmerman, Bandura, and Martinez-Pons (1992) who found direct effects of attitude on performance, and also by Pajares and Miller (1994).

Third Research Question

To answer the third research question: What are the main factors affecting the students' attitudes towards learning EFL?, the researchers conducted a number of interviews with students from different levels to explore factors that affect their attitudes towards learning English.

The interviews revealed a keenness of the students to learn English and master its skills, due to its vital role in finding a suitable job in the future. The students noted that English is widely used in various sectors, including business, education, trade, etc., and stressed that mastering English would provide them with a great chance to find a job easily after graduation. Moreover, the students noted that mastering English would enable them to travel abroad and resume their graduate studies.

One of the students (fourth year) said: *“English is an international language and very important. I like English because it provides me with an opportunity to find a job in the future. English also helps me to travel abroad to resume my education”*. These results were in line with a study conducted by Alkaff (2012), where the students said that learning English could help them find better job opportunities, adding that English was essential for their undergraduate and post-graduate studies

On the other hand, the current study participants affirmed that they face some problems while practicing their oral skills (listening and speaking), due to a lack of acquired vocabulary. The students said that one of the problems they face while practicing English is that nobody around them can correct their mistakes, especially in areas of pronunciation, and added that people do not tend to use English in the street.

One of the students (third year) said: *“the main problem that face me while practicing English outside the class is that nobody can correct my mistakes, especially in terms of pronunciation”*. Additionally, the students underlined the importance of technology in improving their language skills; they said that they make use of the internet to communicate in English with friends in Saudi Arabia and abroad. A third-year student said: *“I practice English outside the class; I watch movies and read newspapers in English. I also communicate with my friends through the internet, but I face some problems while practicing the oral skills (listening and speaking), because I don't have enough vocabulary.”*

These results were in line with findings of Ahmed, C., Yossatorn, Y. and Yossiri, V. (2012), where some EFL students expressed their attitudes towards activities in EFL class saying: *“the use of EFL creates problems for us to speak. It seems hard for us and we hesitate and feel nervousness when we are called for presentations. I think students can play well in their mother tongue instead of English in the class presentation. Teacher should give choice of using mother tongue or English to the students in class activities”*.

Recommendations of the Study

Based on the findings of the study, the researchers recommend:

- Holding further conversation classes for the English major students to help them practice their oral skills (listening and speaking) and develop their attitudes towards learning EFL.
- Designing more technology-based activities with the aim of developing the students' attitudes towards learning EFL.
- Following different strategies and techniques in the class to motivate the students and encourage them to get involved the learning process.

Conclusion

Based on findings of the study, it is clear that the Umm Al-Qura University students (Al-Qunfudah branch) have positive attitudes towards learning English as a foreign language (EFL), as evidenced in their responses to the questionnaire that was distributed to the sample of the study.

As for the relationship between the students GPA's and their attitudes towards learning EFL, the results showed that there was a clear correlation between the students' GPAs and their attitudes towards learning EFL. The high GPA students showed the most positive attitudes towards learning English, followed by the medium GPA students and finally the low GPA students.

Concerning factors that affect their attitudes towards learning English, the students affirmed that English is a key to success in their future, highlighting the need to master its skills to open new horizons in various domains. They noted that they make use of technology to practice English, especially in terms of speaking and listening.

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Appendixes

Appendix #1: The Attitudes Scale in its Final Form

No.	The items	Strongly Agree	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1-	I feel happy when I learn English.					
2-	I don't like English lessons.					
3-	I like to master English because it helps me get a suitable job in the future.					
4-	Learning English helps me use the new technologies such as the internet and databases.					
5-	Learning English is not important.					
6-	I think learning English is very hard.					
7-	I feel bored when I listen to others while they speak in English.					
8-	I feel unwilling to speak in English.					
9-	I like to master English to help me resume my education.					
10-	I like learning English because it helps me travel abroad.					
11-	Mastering English develops my friendships.					
12-	I like listening to English.					
13-	I can understand what others say in English.					
14-	Studying English causes fear and unpleasant feelings.					
15-	I try to speak in English.					
16-	Speaking in English increases my self confidence.					
17-	English is one of my best subjects					
18-	I don't like reading notes, instructions and advertisements in English.					
19-	In the future, I like to read more stories, plays and poetry in English.					
20-	Writing in English is a hard task.					
21-	I don't enjoy watching English programs on T.V.					
22-	I feel happy when I write in English.					
23-	I try to write English correctly.					
24-	I like learning English because it helps me know more about others' cultures.					