

Attitudes towards Learning English as a Foreign Language: The Case of Palestinian High School Graduates

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Abstract:

This study explores the attitudes of Palestinian high school graduates towards learning English. The sample of the study included 370 students, (193 males and 177 females) who have finished high school and joined Palestine Polytechnic University. Ninety six of the whole sample started learning English at the first grade while 274 started at the fifth grade. They were surveyed by using a questionnaire to investigate their attitudes towards five aspects in the context of EFL; namely, English as a school subject, English language activities outside the classroom, the importance of English in students' daily life, as well as native speakers of English and English language teachers. The results showed that students have different levels of attitudes towards these five aspects; the highest were attitudes towards the importance of English in daily life, while the lowest were their attitudes towards English native speakers. The study also showed significant differences between males and females and between the first grade starters vs. the fifth grade starters.

Key Words: Palestinian students' attitudes; attitudes towards EFL; attitudes and age differences; attitudes and gender; school graduates attitudes.

Introduction

English as a foreign language (EFL) has been taught in Palestinian public schools as a compulsory subject since the establishment of the educational system in the 1950's of the last century. However, in 2000 the ministry of education decided to start teaching English from the first grade instead of the fifth grade. Students have three forty-minute meetings a week in grades one to four, and five meetings in grades five to twelve. All teachers are nonnative speakers of English, and most of them have graduated from the departments of English Language and Literature at local Palestinian universities. The curriculum is unified in all public schools and is usually designed by the Department of Curriculum and Textbooks in the Ministry of Education and Higher Education. English is the only foreign language taught in Palestinian public schools, and it is the language of instructions in most local universities in scientific disciplines.

In the Palestinian community, English is perceived as a prestigious language and a passport to a good job. It is also seen as an important asset for enrollment in an attractive major such as medicine or engineering at local and regional universities. Teachers and parents, however, always complain about the poor level of students in English.

Although attitude is considered by many researchers as one of the most important variables in learning English as a foreign language (EFL), and in spite of the fact that studies on the effect of attitudes on language learning started more than fifty five years ago by Gardner & Lambert (1959), no study has been published on this issue in the Palestinian context.

Attitude has been defined as “an evaluative reaction to some referent or object, inferred on the basis of the individual's beliefs or opinions about the referent” Gardner (1985, pp.91-93). Brown (2000) introduced attitudes as the beliefs that a learner has about native speakers of a language and its culture. Attitude is considered to be one of the important variables in learning a foreign language and that it can contribute to the learners' achievement (Spolsky, 1969; Ellis 1997; Gardner 2001b). De Bot, Lowie and Verspoor (2005) for example, asserted that learners, teachers and researchers believe that a positive attitude towards language and its native speakers can be a great asset in learning the language. Nunan(2000) explained that attitude as one of the affective factors, in addition to skills and strategies, has an impact on language learner achievement. Attitude could also have an impact on the efforts that learners put in learning a language. Gardner & Lambert (1972) explain that students who have positive attitudes towards learning a foreign language are more motivated and this helps them to put more effort in acquiring the aspects of L2, and becoming good achievers. Several research results showed that learners who have a positive attitude towards a foreign language have an advantage over those who have negative attitudes (Spolsky, 1969; Littlewood, 1984; Holmes, 1992; Norlida, 1997).

Review of Literature

Two important models of L 2 acquisition and learning have included attitude as one of the variables in foreign or second language learning. The first is the socio-educational model of Gardner (1979), where he considered the learner's environment as an important variable that could shape his/her beliefs about the language and its culture. He suggested four individual differences that have an impact on acquiring a second language. One of them is motivation, and the other three are; language aptitude, intelligence, and situational anxiety. Attitude fits in this model as it has an impact on motivation to learn a second language, and motivation can influence the achievement (Gardner2001a). Moreover, the attitude towards a learning environment could include a number of variables such as, the teachers, native speakers, English as a school subject...etc.

The second model is the 'social psychological model' of Lambert(1963b), which included attitude and motivation as affective factors, besides the cognitive factors such as aptitude and intelligence. In the same context Stern (1983) suggested three kinds of attitudes; attitudes towards the speakers and culture of L2, attitudes towards learning L2 and language learning.

Several studies investigated the attitudes of high school or university students towards learning English as a foreign language(EFL)in different contexts, different countries and cultures, and various results were reported.

Chihara&Oller (1978) investigated the attitude of 123 intermediate and advanced Japanese students towards English speakers and towards learning English. They found that there is significant relationship between attitudes and proficiency. The results also showed that Japanese students in general have a positive attitude towards Americans as native speakers of English.

Ghazvini and Khjehpour (2011) found that high school Iranian students have positive attitude towards EFL, and female students have more positive attitude than males. Also in the Iranian context, Slemani and Hanafi (2013), who examined the attitudes of 40 Iranian medical school students' attitudes towards English language learning, and included three aspects of attitudes in

their study; emotional, cognitive, and behavioral, found almost the same results regarding the Iranian medical students. They have high positive attitudes towards learning English, but males attitudes in this study, were higher than those of females. In another study in the Iranian context also, Khoshsaligheh, Jamali and Saeedian (2014) conducted a study to investigate the attitudes of graduate students who is doing MA towards English language by using questionnaire and interviews. They found that although students expressed their dissatisfaction with the English curriculum, used textbooks and teaching methods, they showed positive attitudes towards English. Vaezi (2008) investigated the motivation and attitudes of 79 undergraduate students towards EFL and he also found that Iranian students are highly motivated and have positive attitudes towards learning EFL.

In Turkey, Huseyin Oz (2015) investigated the relationship between attitudes towards EFL and Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL) and the participants were 128 Turkish university students. The study showed that most of the participants expressed positive attitudes towards EFL. Moreover, the study found that there are correlation between attitudes towards EFL and CALL.

Sentruk (2015) conducted a study to explore the attitudes and motivation of Turkish university students towards reading in English. The study revealed that although students recognized the importance of reading, they have neutral attitudes towards reading in EFL. The study also found relationship between level of participants' proficiency in EFL reading and the level of attitudes. It found that those students with intermediate proficiency have the highest attitude. However, the study did not reveal significant differences between male and female students towards reading.

Karahan (2007) conducted a study on the Turkish school students to investigate the complains of parents about the weak performance of their students in English. He found that students have mildly positive attitude towards EFL and females have higher rate than males. Although participants acknowledged the importance of English, they did not show that they are ready to put efforts to learn the language. They also reflected mildly positive attitudes towards English language culture.

In the Arab world, a number of studies have been conducted to explore students' attitudes towards EFL learning in a number of Arab countries. These studies addressed a number of variables connected to attitudes such as, gender and participants' ability in some language skills. Most of these studies found that students have positive attitudes towards EFL. Al-Quyadi (200) for example, found that Yamni University students have a positive attitude towards EFL, and like to use it in the social context as well. Momani (2009) who investigated the attitudes of high school students towards EFL, and Al-Tamimi and Shuib (2009) who explored the attitudes of Petroleum Engineering students' attitudes found that participants have positive attitudes towards EFL, and they also found correlation between students' attitudes towards EFL and their achievements.

Tahaineh and Daana (2013) found that undergraduate female students of English major in a Jordanian university have positive attitudes towards learning English, and they believe that English should be the medium of instructions in high schools. They also found that students have positive attitudes towards native speakers of English and like to have native speaker friends.

All these reviewed studies showed that, in general, students in a number of Arab countries have positive attitudes towards EFL. However, a study by Abidin et al. (2012) revealed different results. This study explored the attitudes of 180 Libyan secondary school students towards EFL, and it included the emotional, behavioral and cognitive aspects. The study revealed that participants showed negative attitudes towards EFL, and males have lower attitude than females. The authors explained this difference between males and females by the differences in teaching methods used by teachers in females schools vs. those methods used in males ones. They also explained that the textbooks themes may not go with the interest of males.

In other parts of the world, Ming, Ling & Jaafar (2011) found that most Malaysian high school students have a positive attitude towards learning English as a foreign language. They also found that positive attitudes correlate to motivation.

Parilah(2002) studied the relationship between attitude and the efforts students put in learning L2, and Liu (2007) investigated the relationship between proficiency and attitudes. The first study found correlation between the negative attitudes and the efforts displayed by participants inside and outside classroom to improve L2, and the second found correlation between the proficiency of Chinese university students and their attitudes towards EFL.

Methodology

Research Design and Context

This is a quantitative study that utilized a questionnaire to collect data from participants. The data was collected at Palestine Polytechnic University during the first week of the enrolment of freshman students. The researcher visited students in their classrooms and explained to them the idea of the research and its purpose. He also explained to them how to respond to the questionnaire and answered their questions.

Sample of the Study

The sample of this study included 370 high school graduates from different geographical areas in Palestine who have enrolled in Palestine Polytechnic University, 193 males & 177 females. All of them finished twelve years of education in public schools; however 274 of them started English from the fifth grade and 96 started English from the first grade. All of the participants have been taught by nonnative speakers of English language teachers who have been graduated from the departments of "English Language and Literature" in local Palestinian universities. All of participants have passed the high school exit exam that is called, General Secondary Exam (GSE), and got an average more than 65%, as it is the minimum average required by the Ministry of education and Higher education for joining Palestinian university programs. According to the regulations of Palestinian Ministry of Education and Higher Education, students should get at least 65% average in the high school exit exam (GSE) to be eligible to apply for any Palestinian university. However, university programs are offered on competitive bases and there is a minimum average required for each college. For example, the minimum average required for applying to college of Engineering is 80%.

Instruments and Data Collection

The data was collected by a questionnaire survey developed by the researcher and built on Gardner & Lambert battery of attitude and motivation. The questionnaire has 52 statements that cover five domains related to the context of teaching English as a foreign language. These domains are; English language as a school subject, outside-classroom activities related to learning English, the importance of English in students' lives, the native speakers of English and English teachers. Students responded to the statements by choosing a degree of agreement from one to five, where one mean strongly disagree and five strongly agree. The questionnaire was first translated into Arabic, the native language of participants and piloted on a group similar to the participants of the study so as to validate the text and be sure it is clear for all participants. Some minor adjustments were made on specific items that needed some clarifications. Moreover the reliability of the items was calculated by using Krunbachalpha formula and found to be .78.

The data was collected during the first week of students' enrollment at the university in four colleges, Engineering, Administrative Sciences, Applied Sciences and Information Technology.

Research Questions

This study aims at investigating the following research questions:

1. What is the attitude of Palestinian high school graduates towards English Language teaching (ELT) in their schools in terms of?
 - A. English as a school subject.
 - B. English language activities outside the classroom
 - C. The importance of English in their lives.
 - D. English native speakers.
 - E. English language teachers.
2. Are there differences between the attitudes of students who started learning English at the first grade and those who started at the fifth grade?
3. Are there differences between the attitudes of males vs. females?
4. Is there a relationship between students' attitudes and their estimations of their ability in English language skills?

Findings

The results presented in this section follow the same order of the research questions.

Research Question One

What is the attitude of Palestinian high school students towards the following aspects?

English Language as a school subject, English language activities outside the classroom, the importance of English in their lives, English native speakers and English teachers?

The results showed that the highest mean is for students' attitudes towards the importance of English in their daily lives ($M=3.98$). This reflects the awareness of students with regard to the importance of English language in getting a job either in None Profit Organizations (NGO's) or public services, and the good social status of people around them who are proficient in English. However it seems that this degree of awareness is not reflected in their attitudes towards English as a school subject ($M=2.95$), or their English language activities outside the classroom ($M=3.22$). It could be argued that although students believe that English is very important for their future, the learning and teaching activities practiced in schools failed to motivate them to interact with English as a school subject or to put efforts to improve their English abilities by practicing language activities outside the classroom. It could be said that the school environment is not stimulating for students in general, and in English language in particular. The highest academic value is given to the results of traditional exams that appreciate rote learning where the emphasis is on grammar and knowledge about facts copied from the textbooks. School exams and tests are, in most cases, copies of the official ones, such as the General Secondary School Examination (GSE) or those prepared at the district level. Such exams have a negative backwash effect on students' motivation and learning practices as they encourage and reward learning by heart. All teachers compete to qualify their students to pass and get high grades in these exams, especially GSE by training them on specific skills and tricks needed for this purpose.

The mean of attitudes towards English language teachers is also not high, ($M=3.19$). This also could be explained by the negative teaching and learning environment in schools as the relationship between teachers and students is built on the results of the exams and the official communication activities inside the classroom. Moreover, the methods of teaching, in most cases, are traditional and emphasize teaching grammar in discrete-point kind of teaching without paying any attention to contextualization. This may contribute to have a boring classroom for students and leads to a very limited rapport between students and teachers.

The lowest mean is for the students' attitudes towards native speakers of English, ($M=2.90$). This result is expected in light of the political situation in Palestine where students experience the Israeli military occupation on daily basis, and they believe that a big support comes to this situation from the two main groups of native speakers of English, USA and UK. They do not have the sophistication to distinguish between the beliefs and attitudes of the general public and the policies of the governments.

Table 1

Means and SD of Students Attitudes towards the Five Aspects of English Language

Aspect	N	Mean out of 5	Std. Deviation
English as a school subject	370	2.95	.51
English language activities outside the classroom.	370	3.22	.99
The importance of English in their lives.	370	3.98	.77
Native speakers of English	370	2.90	.93
English language teachers	370	3.19	.91

Research Question Two

Are there significant differences between the attitudes of students who started learning English at the first grade and those who started at the fifth grade?

Age as a variable in second language a question and in foreign language education programs has been a focal issue in research worldwide during the last two decades. Many countries have implemented teaching a foreign language at very early grades even from the kindergartens in some countries (Enever, 2012; Nunan, 2003). The assumption that the early is better has been built on the critical period hypothesis, whereas it is believed that there is a certain age where children can learn or acquire the language easier and after that age it will be hard to learn a language. Researchers do not have a consensus over the specific age where this critical period ends, even some studies point out that it is extended to the age of more than seventeen years old (Hartshorne, Tenenbaum & Pinker, 2018). In Palestine, although teaching English from the first grade started in 2000, the discussion about the starting age of teaching EFL has not been concluded. There are a few studies that have been conducted on the differences between the first-grade starters and the fifth-grade starters in terms of some skills and general attainment, (Shehadeh & Dwaik, 2010; Dwaik & Shehadeh 2015) but none has addressed the attitudes of both groups.

Results showed that there are differences in some aspects while in others there are no differences. The significant differences are shown in three aspects; two of them in favor of the fifth grade starters and one in favor of the first grade starters. Those two of the fifth grade starters

are the attitude towards English language activities outside the classroom ($M=3.46$ and $M= 3.13$) and $t= 2.82$. This means that the fifth grade starters are more motivated and tend to work on themselves by practicing English through activities outside the classroom.

The second difference is in the attitude towards native speakers of English. Although both groups have low attitude towards native speakers of English, the attitude of the fifth grade starters is higher than the first grade starters ($M=3.00$ and $M= 2.62$) and $t. =-3.43$. This rate of attitude could be a result of the changes in the political situation in the Palestinian territories during the last years where students believe that the USA and UK are responsible for the deteriorated circumstances of the Palestinians because of their support to Israel.

The aspect that results showed has a significant difference between the two groups in favor of the first grade starters is the attitude towards English language teachers, ($M=3.41$ and $M= 3.12$) and $t.= .29$. The reason for this result could be the long period that students have to stay in touch with EFL teachers, twelve academic years, compared to eight years for the fifth grade starters, where they have abundant opportunities to communicate with their teachers in various contexts.

This also may reflect a change in the teachers' methods in dealing with students as a result of being involved in different training programs. The Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MOHE) has been working on a strategic plan since 2008 to qualify all teachers including English language ones through conducting pedagogical training for all teachers who have not got such training before. It's worth mentioning that until 2014 most English language teachers did not have pre-service pedagogical training. In most cases they finish their BA degree in English Language and literature, then start their profession as teachers. (MOHE publications 2008)

The results showed no significant differences between the attitudes of the two groups in the other two aspects; the first is the importance of English in daily life and the second is English as a school subject (see Table 2). However, it is worth mentioning that fifth grade starters have higher attitudes towards these two aspects than the first grade starters. The means of the attitudes towards the importance of English in students daily life is ($M= 4.0$ & $M= 3.93$). This result reflects the importance of English for all students, and may be for the society in general, as it plays a vital role in getting a job or joining a prestigious academic disciplines either at a local or international university. The means of the two groups towards English as a school subject are ($M=2.98$ & $M=2.87$). This could be explained by the general attitude towards schools and the feeling that education is no longer has great value as a result of the high percentage of unemployment among university graduates.

Table 2

Means, SD and T. test Results of the Attitudes of First Grade Starters vs. Fifth Grade Starters towards EFL

Aspect	grade	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)																																															
English language as a school subject	Grad1	96	2.87	.44	-1.768	368	.078																																															
	Grad5	274	2.98	.53				English language activities outside classroom	Grad1	96	3.13	.98	2.827	368	.005	Grad5	274	3.46	.98	the importance of English in their lives	Grad1	96	3.93	.80	-.762	368	.447	Grad5	274	4.00	.76	English native speakers	Grad1	96	2.62	.92	-3.431	368	.001	Grad5	274	3.00	.92	English teachers	Grad1	96	3.41	1.01	2.755	368	.006	Grad5	274	3.12
English language activities outside classroom	Grad1	96	3.13	.98	2.827	368	.005																																															
	Grad5	274	3.46	.98				the importance of English in their lives	Grad1	96	3.93	.80	-.762	368	.447	Grad5	274	4.00	.76	English native speakers	Grad1	96	2.62	.92	-3.431	368	.001	Grad5	274	3.00	.92	English teachers	Grad1	96	3.41	1.01	2.755	368	.006	Grad5	274	3.12	.86	2.755	368	.006								
the importance of English in their lives	Grad1	96	3.93	.80	-.762	368	.447																																															
	Grad5	274	4.00	.76				English native speakers	Grad1	96	2.62	.92	-3.431	368	.001	Grad5	274	3.00	.92	English teachers	Grad1	96	3.41	1.01	2.755	368	.006	Grad5	274	3.12	.86	2.755	368	.006																				
English native speakers	Grad1	96	2.62	.92	-3.431	368	.001																																															
	Grad5	274	3.00	.92				English teachers	Grad1	96	3.41	1.01	2.755	368	.006	Grad5	274	3.12	.86	2.755	368	.006																																
English teachers	Grad1	96	3.41	1.01	2.755	368	.006																																															
	Grad5	274	3.12	.86				2.755	368	.006																																												

Research Question Three

Are there differences between the attitudes of males vs. females?

A big question has been circulating in the last ten years about the reasons or explanations behind the high achievement of female students vs. males in most of the Palestinian Educational institutions including high schools. Hence, this variable is worth being researched in an attempt to find answers for this important aspect of the Palestinian education context.

The results showed that there are differences between males and females in four aspects out of five concerning EFL attitudes included in the study, and all of them are in favor of females. However, in only two of them there are significant differences between males and females (Table 3). The two aspects that have significant differences are; attitudes towards the importance of

English in their daily lives, (M=4.0 and M= 3.9) and $t. = -2.156$, and attitudes towards English language teachers, (M=3.32 and M= 3.07) and $t. = -2.64$. It may be said that this result reflects the high commitment of females to education in general and their beliefs that English is very important in their lives and future especially in a high competitive situation where little number of jobs are available. Moreover, males in general, have other interests besides education such as political activities and parties in a society that is highly politicized as a result of being under military occupation.

The results also revealed the good relations between female students and their teachers, and may be the positive educational atmosphere in girls' schools. It's worth mentioning that most of girls' schools have only female teachers. Another variable that may explain this kind of relationship is the quality of female teachers, whereas a high percentage of females who get high grades in the GSE in Palestine go to the colleges that lead to teaching profession, while their counterpart males go to Medicine and Engineering colleges.

However no significant differences have been found in the attitudes towards the English language as a school subject, EFL activities outside the classroom and native speakers of English.

Table 3

Means, SD and T. test Results of the Attitudes of Males vs. Female

Aspect	gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	df.	Sig. (2-tailed)
English language as a school subject	male	193	2.91	.52	-1.456	368	.146
	female	177	2.99	.49			
English activities outside the classroom	male	193	3.25	.93	.597	368	.551
	female	177	3.19	1.05			
Importance of English in their lives	male	193	3.90	.83	-2.156	368	.032
	female	177	4.07	.68			

	male	193	2.86	.90	-.804	368	.422
English native speakers	femal						
	e	177	2.94	.96			
	male	193	3.07	.83	-2.648	368	.008
English teachers	femal						
	e	177	3.32	.97			

Research Question Four

Is there a relationship between students' attitudes and their estimations of their ability in English language skills?

It is interesting to see the relationship between students' perspectives about their ability in English language and their attitudes towards learning the language. The results showed that there is significant correlation between the students' estimation of their ability in the four skills in English and their attitudes towards three aspects out of the five included in this study. The three aspects are; English language activities outside classroom ($p=.000$), native speakers of English, ($p=.447$) and the English language teachers ($p=001$). This means that the outside classroom activities are very important to give students a kind of confidence to estimate themselves as high or low in language skills. So, we can argue that helping and encouraging students to practice English by dealing with some authentic activities such as watching movies, TV reports and listening to songs will be a great asset in having a positive attitude towards EFL.

The second finding in this respect is the significant correlation between attitudes towards native speakers and self-estimation in English language skills. It seems that those who estimate their ability as high have positive attitudes towards native speakers. This result is further evidenced by Liu(2007) who found correlation between achievement in English and attitudes towards native speakers.

Moreover, the results showed correlation between attitudes towards teachers and students estimation of their ability in language skills. Students who feel that they are good in a specific subject may attribute this success to their teachers and develop a positive attitude towards them. This means that teachers should be trained in a way that helps them to be approachable by their students and to treat them in a friendly and encouraging manner.

However, the results did not reveal significant correlation between the attitudes towards English as a school subject and towards the role of English in their lives.

This reflects the students negative attitude towards English as a school subject, and this may explain the complains of teachers and parents about the students poor abilities in EFL. It seems

that they do not feel that learning English inside the classroom as a school subject has a significant role in their English language ability. This could be discouraging for them to put efforts either inside or outside the classroom to improve their ability in English. This result could be related to Phrilah (2002) who found correlation between attitudes and the efforts students put inside and outside the classroom to improve their achievement in English.

It also showed the high awareness of all students, regardless what they think of their ability in English language skills, concerning the important role of English in their lives.

Table 4

Correlation between Students' Estimation of their Ability in English and the Five Aspects of their Attitudes towards EFL

Aspect	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Correlation	Significance
Estimation of English skills	3.42	370	.82	-.005	.923
Attitude towards English as a school subject	2.95	370	.51		
Estimation of English skills	3.42	370	.82	.218	.000
Attitude towards English language activities outside the classroom.	3.22	370	.99		
Estimation of English skills	3.42	370	.82	.071	.172
Attitude towards the importance of English in their lives .	3.98	370	.77		
Estimation of English skills	3.42	370	.82	.040	.447

Attitude toward English native speakers	2.90	370	.93			
Estimation of English skills	3.42	370	.82	.176	.00	1
Attitude toward English language teachers	3.19	370	.91			

Conclusion

This study was conducted to investigate the attitudes of Palestinian school graduates towards five aspects of EFL teaching and learning context. The five aspects are, English as a school subject, English activities outside the classroom, English importance in their lives, native speakers of English and English language teachers. Two independent factors were included in the study; namely, gender and the grade of starting EFL.

The results showed that the highest attitude is for English in students' lives, then attitude towards English activities outside the classroom. The lowest mean, however, was in the attitude towards native speakers of English and English as a school subject.

The study revealed differences between first grade starters and fifth grade ones in favor of fifth grade starters in terms of their attitude towards outside classroom activities and native speakers of English. Results were in favor of the first grade starters in terms of their attitudes towards English language teachers. This could reflect the dramatic change in the attitudes towards EFL between the two cohorts. This could be explained by the difficulty that first grade starters face in dealing with English and the difficulty that faces the teachers in keeping them motivated for 12 years, which is also reflected in their achievement compared to the achievement of the fifth grade starters as reported in (Shehadeh & Dwaik, 2010 ; Dwaik & Shehadeh 2015).

Both groups have low attitudes towards English as a school subject and this could reflect students' dissatisfaction regarding school environment in general and teaching English in particular in spite of the training programs and efforts of the MOHE during the last 10 years to develop teaching and learning environment in the public schools.

Regarding the differences between males and females, the study revealed that males have higher attitude than males in terms of the importance of English in their lives and English language teachers. In recent years, females have been encouraged to join various nontraditional fields of work as part of the policy of several international as well as national organizations. Thus, we can find them working in jobs that require high proficiency in English such as reporting, broadcasting, managing or directing programs in NGO's projects, and they feel that English is a great asset in such positions. This may help females have better attitude towards the importance of English in their lives. They are also better achievers than males in most of Palestinian educational institutions, and achievement can contribute to the positive attitude towards EFL and English language teachers. We may need further research to explore the rapport between students and teachers both males and females and its relationship to attitudes and achievement.

Finally, it is worth mentioning that the sample and population of this study included only the school graduates who joined the university. This means that they have passed the general exit exam (GSE) and got good grades. It may be very beneficial to conduct further research to explore the attitudes of high school students towards EFL before graduation.

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