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The Impact of Psychological Factors on EFL Learners Academic Performance

Case Study : The Third-Year Primary School Pupils at Kelkouli Hamdane and Ouadani

Ben Aissa Primary School in Khemis Miliana.

Dissertation Submitted to the Department of English in Candidacy for the Master's
Degree in English Language and Communication

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Declaration

We declare that the dissertation titled “The Role of Hands-on Activities in Enhancing Alphabet Learning among Zahia Belhafaf Primary School in Miliana” is our original research. All sources have been properly cited and acknowledged. This work, in whole or in part, has not been submitted for any degree or diploma at this or any other institution. The research adhered to all ethical standards required for conducting scholarly studies.

Mrs Himda Imene

Mrs Hamdaoui Aicha

Dedication

Praise Allah, who has granted me the power to accomplish this work.

I dedicate this work to my dear parents, my beloved husband, and my baby Adam, I am indebted to all you have done for me. Thanks a lot for your love, care, and support. This work would not have come to light without you.

And my brothers and my father-in-law.

May Allah bless them all.

Thanks to all my extended family and friends for their love and kindness. Thanks to all those wonderful people who have stood by my side in challenging moments and never stopped supporting me.

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Abstract

This study examines the role of psychological factors in affecting the academic performance of EFL (English as a Foreign Language) learners, with a specific focus on third-year primary school students. The research used a mixed-method approach to collect data from students and teachers through questionnaires and interviews at a primary school in Khemsi Miliana. The findings reveal that psychological factors such as motivation, self-esteem, anxiety, and attitude toward learning significantly influence students' academic performance in EFL. High motivation and self-esteem were associated with better academic outcomes, while increased anxiety and negative attitudes toward learning were linked to poorer performance. The study underscores the importance of addressing psychological factors in educational strategies to enhance EFL learners' academic achievements. Practical implications suggest that educators and policymakers integrate psychological support and interventions to foster a more conducive learning environment. The research highlights the need for further studies to explore these factors in different educational contexts and age groups to develop comprehensive strategies for improving EFL education.

Keywords: academic performance, EFL, psychological factors, motivation, self-esteem, anxiety, primary school students.

Résumé

Cette étude examine le rôle des facteurs psychologiques dans la performance académique des élèves apprenant l'anglais comme langue étrangère (EFL), en se concentrant spécifiquement sur les élèves de troisième année de l'école primaire. Utilisant une approche mixte, la recherche a recueilli des données auprès des élèves et des enseignants par le biais de questionnaires et d'entretiens dans une école primaire à Khemis Miliana. Les résultats révèlent que des facteurs psychologiques tels que la motivation, l'estime de soi, l'anxiété et l'attitude envers l'apprentissage influencent significativement la performance académique des élèves en EFL. Des niveaux élevés de motivation et d'estime de soi sont associés à de meilleurs résultats académiques, tandis qu'une anxiété accrue et des attitudes négatives envers l'apprentissage sont liées à des performances plus faibles. L'étude souligne l'importance de prendre en compte les facteurs psychologiques dans les stratégies éducatives pour améliorer les performances académiques des apprenants en EFL. Les implications pratiques suggèrent que les éducateurs et les décideurs devraient intégrer un soutien psychologique et des interventions pour favoriser un environnement d'apprentissage plus favorable. La recherche met en évidence la nécessité de poursuivre les études pour explorer ces facteurs dans différents contextes éducatifs et groupes d'âge afin de développer des stratégies complètes pour améliorer l'éducation en EFL.

Mots-clés: performance académique, EFL, facteurs psychologiques, motivation, estime de soi, anxiété, élèves de l'école primaire.

ملخص

تدرس هذه الدراسة دور العوامل النفسية في التأثير على الأداء الأكاديمي للطلاب الذين يتعلمون اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية (EFL)، مع التركيز بشكل خاص على طلاب السنة الثالثة من المدرسة الابتدائية. استخدمت الدراسة نهجًا مختلطًا لجمع البيانات من الطلاب والمعلمين من خلال الاستبيانات والمقابلات في مدرسة ابتدائية في الجزائر. تكشف النتائج أن العوامل النفسية مثل التحفيز، احترام الذات، القلق، والموقف تجاه التعلم تؤثر بشكل كبير على الأداء الأكاديمي للطلاب في تعلم اللغة الإنجليزية. ارتبطت المستويات العالية من التحفيز واحترام الذات بنتائج أكاديمية أفضل، في حين ارتبطت زيادة القلق والمواقف السلبية تجاه التعلم بأداء أضعف. تؤكد الدراسة على أهمية معالجة العوامل النفسية في الاستراتيجيات التعليمية لتحسين الأداء الأكاديمي للمتعلمين في اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية. تقترح الدلالات العملية أن يقوم المعلمون وصناع السياسات بدمج الدعم النفسي والتدخلات لتعزيز بيئة تعلم أكثر ملاءمة. تسلط الدراسة الضوء على الحاجة إلى المزيد من الأبحاث لاستكشاف هذه العوامل في سياقات تعليمية مختلفة وفئات عمرية متنوعة لتطوير استراتيجيات شاملة لتحسين تعليم اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الأداء الأكاديمي، تعلم اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية، العوامل النفسية، التحفيز، احترام الذات، القلق، طلاب المدرسة الابتدائية.

List of Abbreviations

CA: Communication Apprehension

EFL: English as a Foreign Language

L2: Second Language

SL: Second Language

SLL: Second Language Learning

EFL: English as a foreign l

L1: first language

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**Chapter One:
Introduction**

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Language learning ultimately occurs in the learner's mind; mental structure or mechanisms process and organize the language to which the learner is exposed. Looking at the phenomena of the teaching and learning process in Algeria, the problems the students commonly face are linguistic and altruistic problems. Besides, many factors influence learning success, especially learning English as a foreign language. Slameto (1987) states that those factors can be classified into internal and external. The internal factor commonly involves the internal aspects of the learners, such as physics, psychology, and anxiety.

In contrast, the external factor may cover aspects from the learner's point of view, such as environment, school, family, etc. The growing importance of English as a world language, the advance of technology, and education reform are key determinants for new developments in the English language teaching/ learning profession. Studying English as a foreign language is challenging for students whose goal is to be effective.

Teaching and learning English for young pupils is challenging. Therefore, EFL teachers always look for the best ways to help their pupils learn the language effectively. It was noticed that most EFL pupils confront serious difficulties when they learn English, mainly psychological ones. The psychology of the learner plays a significant role in education in general. It became an essential branch in most educational fields as an influential factor in learning/teaching. In fact, it has decisive effects on undertaking the different language tasks.

In primary education, learning and mastering the basis of English is very important to understanding and communicating with this language. However, the majority of EFL pupils suffer from many difficulties during the process of learning English. Most of those problems could be

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the result of psychological factors (attitude, motivation, anxiety) that affect them. These psychological factors may differ from one EFL learner to another.

Communicating effectively in English unlocks a world of opportunities for young learners. English as a Foreign Language (EFL) programs in primary schools are vital in equipping students with this valuable skill. However, the success of these programs extends beyond curriculum and teaching methods. Psychological factors influencing a child's motivation, confidence, and overall approach to learning English can significantly impact their achievement.

This study delves into the world of 3rd year primary school EFL learners. While research exists on psychological factors affecting EFL learners, a gap remains in understanding how these factors influence this crucial age group. The early stages of primary school represent a critical window for language acquisition. Educators can create a more supportive and effective learning environment by identifying the prominent psychological factors in 3rd grade and understanding their impact on learning.

1.1. Background of the Study

In the context of global education, the ability to learn and master the English language is increasingly vital, particularly for non-native speakers. English as a Foreign Language (EFL) programs aim to equip students with necessary language skills, yet numerous factors influence the effectiveness of these programs. Among these, psychological factors such as motivation, self-esteem, anxiety, and attitudes toward learning play a critical role. In Algeria, where French has traditionally been the dominant foreign language, understanding the psychological aspects affecting EFL learners is essential for improving educational outcomes.

1.2.Statement of the Problem

Despite the importance of English language proficiency in today's globalized world, many EFL learners in Algeria struggle to achieve desired academic outcomes. Preliminary observations suggest that psychological factors significantly impact these students' performance. However, there is a lack of comprehensive studies that examine how these factors influence EFL learners, particularly among primary school students. This gap in research hinders the development of effective educational strategies tailored to the psychological needs of young learners.

1.3.Rationale of the Study

This study aims to fill the gap in existing literature by exploring the psychological factors that affect the academic performance of third-year primary school EFL learners in Khemis Miliana, Algeria. By identifying the specific psychological barriers and facilitators to learning, the research will provide valuable insights for educators and policymakers to enhance EFL education. Understanding these factors will enable the creation of more supportive learning environments that foster better academic outcomes.

1.4.Research Aims

The primary aim of this study is to investigate the role of psychological factors in influencing the academic performance of EFL learners in primary schools. Specifically, the research seeks to:

1. Examine the relationship between motivation, self-esteem, anxiety, and attitudes toward learning and academic performance in EFL.
2. Identify the psychological challenges faced by third-year primary school EFL learners.

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3. Propose strategies to address these psychological factors to improve academic outcomes.

1.5.Objectives

1. To assess the levels of motivation, self-esteem, anxiety, and attitudes toward learning among third-year primary school EFL learners.
2. To analyze the correlation between these psychological factors and students' academic performance.
3. To provide recommendations for integrating psychological support into EFL educational strategies.

1.6.Research Questions

1. What is the relationship between motivation and academic performance in EFL learners?
2. How does self-esteem affect the academic outcomes of third-year primary school EFL learners?
3. How do attitudes toward learning impact the academic success of primary school EFL students?
4. What psychological challenges are most prevalent among third-year primary school EFL learners?

1.7.Hypotheses

1. Higher levels of motivation are associated with better academic performance in EFL learners.

2. Increased self-esteem correlates with improved academic outcomes in third-year primary school EFL learners.
3. Higher levels of anxiety are linked to poorer academic performance in EFL learners.
4. Addressing psychological challenges can enhance the academic performance of EFL learners.

1.8. Research Methodology

This study employs a mixed-methods approach, combining both quantitative and qualitative research methods to gain a comprehensive understanding of the psychological factors affecting the academic performance of third-year primary school EFL learners. The research methodology includes the following components:

1.8.1. Quantitative Component:

- **Surveys/Questionnaires:**
 - **Participants:** Third-year primary school EFL students and their teachers.
 - **Content:** Standardized questionnaires measuring motivation, self-esteem, anxiety, and attitudes toward learning.
 - **Data Analysis:** Statistical analysis using software such as SPSS to identify correlations between psychological factors and academic performance.

1.8.2. Qualitative Component:

- **Interviews:**
 - **Participants:** Selected teachers and students.

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- **Content:** Semi-structured interviews to explore in-depth insights into the psychological experiences of EFL learners and their impact on academic performance.
- **Data Analysis:** Thematic analysis to identify recurring themes and patterns.

1.8.3. Research and Analysis Tools

1. Interviews:

- Semi-structured interview guides tailored to gather qualitative data on the psychological experiences and perspectives of students and teachers.

2. Data Analysis Tools:

- **Quantitative Data:** SPSS for statistical analysis, including descriptive statistics, correlation, and regression analysis.
- **Qualitative Data:** Thematic analysis of interview transcripts through coding.

1.9. Ethical Considerations

- Obtain written consent from all participants, including parental consent for minors.
- Ensure participants are fully informed about the study's purpose, procedures, risks, and benefits.
- Protect the privacy of participants by anonymizing data.
- Securely store all data to prevent unauthorized access.
- Ensure participation is voluntary and that participants can withdraw at any time without any consequences.

1.10. Limitations

- The study is limited to third-year primary school students in Khemis Miliana, which may affect the generalizability of the findings to other regions or age groups.
- The reliance on self-reported data from questionnaires and interviews may introduce bias, as participants may not always provide accurate or honest responses.
- Participants may respond differently to questions based on their perceptions or social desirability, which can affect the accuracy of the data collected.
- Limited time and resources may impact the depth of the qualitative data collection and analysis.

1.11. Definition of Key Terminology

1.11.1. EFL (English as a Foreign Language)

It Refers to the teaching and learning of English in countries where English is not the primary language. EFL programs are designed to help learners achieve proficiency in English for academic, professional, or personal purposes.

1.11.2. Psychological Factors

Mental and emotional elements that influence individuals' behavior and attitudes. These factors include motivation, self-esteem, anxiety, and attitudes toward learning.

1.11.3.Motivation

The internal drive or external incentives that stimulate individuals to engage in certain behaviors or pursue particular goals.

1.11.4.Self-Esteem

The overall sense of self-worth or personal value that an individual holds. It reflects a person's belief in their own abilities and worthiness.

1.11.5.Anxiety

A feeling of worry, nervousness, or unease, often about an imminent event or something with an uncertain outcome. In educational contexts, it can be specific to performance in language learning.

1.11.6.Academic Performance

The extent to which a student has achieved their educational goals, often measured through grades, test scores, and overall academic achievements.

1.12.Structure of the Dissertation

This dissertation will be composed of five chapters:

The introduction chapter will provide the background of the study, offering contextual information about EFL learning in primary education and highlighting the importance of psychological factors in academic performance. It will also present a detailed statement of the

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problem, describing the issues EFL learners face concerning psychological factors. The study's rationale will justify the research and explain its significance and potential impact. This chapter will also outline the research aims and objectives, detailing the study's goals. The research questions and hypotheses will be formulated based on the objectives. Additionally, key terms used throughout the dissertation will be defined. The chapter will conclude with an overview of the dissertation structure, briefly describing each subsequent chapter.

The literature review chapter will begin with an introduction, providing an overview of the chapter. It will then discuss the theoretical framework, addressing relevant theories related to motivation, self-esteem, anxiety, and attitudes toward learning. This will be followed by a review of empirical studies, analyzing previous research on psychological factors affecting EFL learners and comparing various studies and their findings. The chapter will also identify gaps in the literature that the current study aims to address. A summary will recap the key points from the literature review.

The research methodology chapter will start with an introduction and outline. It will describe the research design and explain the mixed-methods approach used in the study. Information on the sample size and demographics of the participants will be provided. The chapter will detail the data collection methods, describing the questionnaires and interview techniques. The data analysis procedures will be explained, including statistical and thematic analysis methods. Ethical considerations will be discussed, such as informed consent, confidentiality, voluntary participation, and minimizing harm. Potential limitations of the study and how they were addressed will also be identified. The chapter will end with a summary of the methodology.

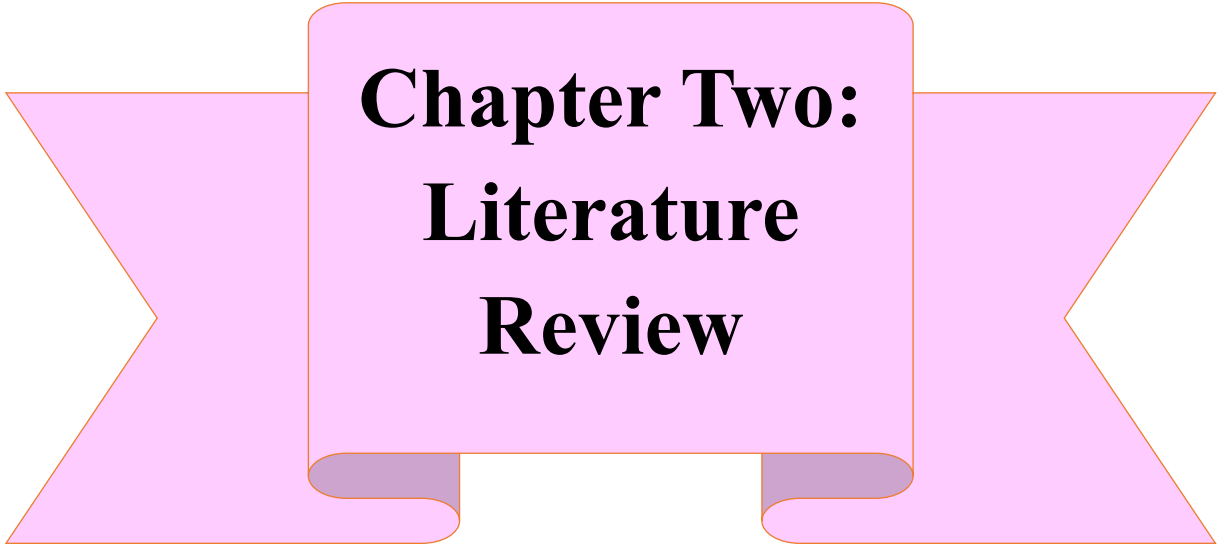
Chapter One: Introduction

The results chapter will begin with an introduction, providing an overview of the chapter. It will present the quantitative findings, showing the results from the questionnaires and the statistical analysis of motivation, self-esteem, anxiety, and attitudes toward learning. The qualitative findings will follow, highlighting the themes and patterns identified from the interviews. The chapter will integrate the findings from both quantitative and qualitative data. A summary will recap the key findings.

The final chapter will start with an introduction and outline. The discussion section will interpret the findings of the research questions and hypotheses, comparing them with previous studies. The conclusion will summarize the main findings and discuss their implications for EFL education. The recommendations section will offer practical suggestions for educators and policymakers and propose directions for future research. The chapter will also revisit the limitations, providing a detailed discussion. The dissertation will conclude with final thoughts on the study's contributions and impact.

1.13. Summary

Chapter one provides a comprehensive overview and foundational context for the dissertation on the role of psychological factors affecting EFL learners' academic performance, focusing on third-year primary school students in Miliana, Algeria.



**Chapter Two:
Literature
Review**

Chapter Two: Literature Review

The world of English language learning presents a unique set of psychological challenges for young EFL learners, particularly those in primary school. According to Elhadi (2015), several psychological factors affect students when practicing their speaking, which are interrelated. Multiple research studies have established the role of psychological factors in the success and failure of learners speaking English. Brown (2001) identified psychological factors such as shyness and anxiety as primary causes of students' reluctance to speak. Similarly, Gebhard (2000) highlighted that students' speaking complications occur mainly due to shyness or anxiety. These studies underscore the importance of teachers in guiding and assisting students to reduce these feelings and encourage their learning to speak English.

2.1. English as a Global Language

English has become the international common tongue, essential for communication in science, business, education, and other areas. This global dominance makes English the world's current lingua franca, leading to its inclusion as the primary foreign language taught in many countries. Consequently, teachers aim to develop students' proficiency in the four basic skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. English is integrated at all educational levels in Algeria due to its global importance, and primary school is a critical period for language acquisition.

2.2. Algeria's Shift Towards English

Algeria is moving away from its francophone history by introducing English instruction in primary schools. Under the instructions of President Abdelmadjid Tebboune, English lessons were added to the primary school syllabus at the start of the 2022-2023 school year. The success of EFL

programs in primary schools depends not only on curriculum and teaching methods but also on addressing psychological factors that influence students' learning experiences and outcomes.

2.3. Challenges in Teaching English

Teaching English in EFL contexts presents challenges for both teachers and students. It was noticed that most EFL pupils confront serious difficulties when they learn English, mainly psychological ones. The psychology of the learner plays a significant role in education in general. It has become an essential branch in most educational fields as an influential factor in learning/teaching. In fact, it has decisive effects on undertaking the different language tasks.

Learning and mastering the basis of English is very important in primary education in order to understand and communicate with this language. However, the majority of EFL pupils suffer from many difficulties during the process of learning English. Most of those problems could be the result of psychological factors (attitude, motivation, anxiety) that affect them. These psychological factors may differ from one EFL learner to another. In this light, studying the effect of psychological factors on the performance of EFL primary school pupils is a multifaceted and evolving area of educational research.

2.4. Psychological Factors Affecting Speaking Skills

Schwarz (2015) states that psychological factors such as fear of mistakes, anxiety, shyness, lack of confidence, and lack of motivation hinder students' speaking skills. The discussion on psychological factors proves their vital role in complicating students' speaking skills. Schwarz's identification of key psychological factors is supported by Burns & Joyce in Nunan (1999), further confirming that these factors significantly contribute to students' reluctance to speak English.

2.4.1. Anxiety

Many researchers have found that second language learners have obstructions and complications when speaking English. Khadija (2016) has stated that learners did not like to take risks in speaking English due to their feelings of anxiety. According to Diao and Shamela (2013), learners fear being negatively evaluated and are apprehensive about public speaking classroom and teacher evaluation. Based on the research done by Ariyanthi (2016), the students were able to involve themselves and exchange ideas, views, and knowledge with their classmates.

However, the obstacle she has encountered in her schools is that they are worried and reluctant to take risks because they are scared by students' laughter and teachers' judgment. Moreover, for learners who speak a second language that cannot understand or are not acceptable, there is a high possibility of being embarrassed and accepting ignorance from others. Heron (2005) has stated in his research that anxiety acts as a part of negative influential affective factors that intercept learners from mastering their speaking skills; it triggers feelings of nervousness and fear, which might be responsible for deficient oral performance.

2.4.2 .Shyness

Elia and Irianti (2015) have clearly defined the internal meaning of shyness by saying that it is an emotional thing that often becomes apparent in the feeling of agitation, uneasiness, or awkwardness experienced when a person is doing something, engaging in conversation or been approached by other people, especially in new situations or with unfamiliar or unknown people. The above statement stipulates that shyness is also counted as an obstacle to students speaking English. In line with this, the above statement was also given further explanation by Baldwin and Caroline (2011), that the feeling of obsessive fear or detestation encountered by the students when

speaking in public or speaking in front of people and feeling of shyness makes their mind go blank or that they will forget what to say. There are also some discussions on the nature of the students, like being too passive and quiet, which leads to their shyness in speaking in English, as stated by Bowen (2005). Their feeling of shyness directly blocks and hinders the students' ability to speak in English.

2.4.3 .Lack of Confidence

Lack of confidence occurs among the students when they are aware that their conversation partners need to perceive the intended meaning of their message or when they wrongly interpret the message delivered by other speakers. In this situation, the students' lack of confidence to communicate can be seen undoubtedly when they prefer to keep themselves passive or silent while others are talking. Chen (2010) said that the main reason for students' lack of confidence is their incapacity to speak English. In this case, they also stated that the students think their English speaking skills are poor and they cannot speak English fluently.

On the other hand, Brown (2001) explained further that the lack of encouragement from the teacher is also one of the main reasons for the students' lack of confidence. From this point of view, the teacher did not give enough priority to convince students and make them believe they could speak English well. This situation makes the students lose hope in their ability and also indirectly demotivated to speak in English. This indicates that support and encouragement play a major role in boosting and enhancing the students' confidence.

2.1.4. Lack of Motivation

Motivation is a fundamental element in students' learning to achieve success point. Nunan (1999) has stated that motivation can easily influence the students' reluctance to speak in English. In this sense, motivation is scrutinized as an essential factor that leads to successful communication. Many studies have proved that students with high and strong motivation to succeed can persevere in learning and achieve good and better results than those without success. In response to the issue of motivation, Babu (2010) argues that a lack of motivation in learning can hinder students from speaking English in the classroom. Situations like this occurred due to the absence of motivation and support from the teacher towards communication in English. In his further discussion, teachers with passion, creativity, and interest in their students are also fundamental elements for motivating students apart from motivating students to learn well and actively communicate in English.

2.5. Importance of Addressing Psychological Factors

As various researchers have highlighted, anxiety, shyness, lack of self-confidence, and lack of motivation are primary psychological factors affecting students' ability to speak English as a target language. Addressing these factors is crucial for improving EFL learners' academic performance and overall learning experience. Schwarz (2015) states that psychological factors such as fear of mistakes, anxiety, shyness, lack of confidence, and lack of motivation hinder students' speaking skills. The discussion on psychological factors proves their vital role in complicating students' speaking skills. Schwarz's identification of key psychological factors is supported by Burns & Joyce in Nunan (1999), further confirming that these factors significantly contribute to students' reluctance to speak English.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

Addressing psychological factors is essential for creating compelling and inclusive language learning environments. By focusing on these factors, teachers can better cater to the diverse needs of young learners, leading to improved educational outcomes for EFL pupils. Continued research and innovative teaching practices will be crucial in understanding and enhancing EFL education..

2.6. Enhancing EFL Learning Environments

Addressing psychological factors is essential for creating effective and inclusive language learning environments. By focusing on these factors, teachers can better cater to the diverse needs of young learners, leading to improved educational outcomes for EFL pupils. Continued research and innovative teaching practices will be crucial in understanding and enhancing EFL education. This study emphasizes the role of psychological factors in EFL primary school pupils' performance. It aims to highlight the significance of psychological factors (attitude, motivation, anxiety) in learning English and how they could affect EFL learners' academic performance. It would give both teachers and students insights into the most influential factors and how these psychological factors could be overcome.

2.7. Solution to Overcome the Psychological Factor

In terms of solutions, numerous researches (Mas, 2016; Sanchita, 2017; Zua, 2008; Affat, 2008; Pesce, 2011) were conducted to overcome the psychological factors affecting primary school students' speaking performance.

2.7.1. Emotional Rapport

Zua (2008) proposed that students and teachers should build an emotional rapport. Doing this will create a comfortable zone between a teacher and students. A comfortable environment will help the pupils believe in the teacher and feel confident to speak in English. Moreover, a teacher should create an encouraging learning atmosphere where the teacher indirectly develops the pupil's concentration when learning English. For example, by creating an encouraging learning atmosphere, pupils will be able to speak without any hesitation because they will get support from a teacher to speak well in English, and they tend to focus more on their speaking activity. The same solution can be used to motivate the pupils to speak. This notion is further supported by Affat (2008): constant encouragement and support by way of asking questions will encourage the pupils' motivation to overcome their speaking difficulties. In the example given by Sanchita (2017), a teacher must give equal attention to all the pupils in the classroom and encourage everyone to participate in classroom discussions and activities to enrich the pupils' enthusiasm to speak. The encouraging atmosphere provides the pupils with a feeling of security and helps them speak English. Nadeem and Arsyad (2010) also agreed that to reduce shyness problems during speaking, encouragement, motivation, and counseling can be given. That encouragement will help pupils overcome their shyness due to the laughter of their classmates during their speaking activity. The exact solution given by Mas (2016) is that pupils need stable encouragement and sufficient chances to establish their speaking skills. Therefore, creating an encouraging surrounding is very important to help the pupils overcome the psychological factors that affect their speaking.

2.7.2. Friendly and Cooperative Environment

Lai and Seyedeh (2017) state that a friendly and cooperative environment will help pupils overcome their oral performance problems. The same recommendation given by Pesce (2011) is that to lessen the pupil's shyness, it is crucial to create a friendly and open classroom. This friendly environment makes the shy pupils feel acceptable when they make any mistakes during their speaking activity. The shy students will not be concerned about their flaws in terms of pronunciation and grammar. Instead, they will feel motivated to speak. This has been supported by Chinmoy (2007), who said that shy pupils do not consider shyness a problem when they have a friendly atmosphere. Hence, it is essential to form a friendly environment to prevent pupils from having psychological problems with speaking.

2.7.3. Self-Confidence

Liu and Huang (2010) suggested that to overcome psychological factors like lack of motivation, teachers need to boost pupils' self-confidence. Lai and Seyedeh (2017) also agreed that teachers should develop their pupil's self-confidence. They give an example where the teacher can praise their pupils' during or after the speaking activity. By praising them, students will feel motivated and confident to speak more in the following classes. Mas (2016) supported the idea that a teacher should provide motivational feedback to motivate pupils to speak. Motivational feedback stimulates pupil's self-confidence to a greater level. The feedback helps the pupils to get motivated and to speak in English. Dawood (2015) explained that self-confidence generally requires accomplishing self-esteem, persistence, and patience are some important solutions that are vital in increasing students' motivation to speak. Thus, many researchers conclude that self-confidence significantly enhances pupils' motivation to speak.

2.7.4. Authentic Activities and Materials to Motivate Learners

Teachers can motivate the pupils by using authentic activities and materials, which will prompt the motivation for the low-proficiency pupils to speak in the classroom (Rusreena et al., 2018). Lin and Huang stated that teachers can do activities that can stimulate pupils' understanding of the prominence of English and enrich learners' concerns in English. Sakiroglu and Dikilitas (2012) further supported that pupils who are strongly motivated will like to learn the language and make an effort to learn the language. Moreover, they claimed that the learning must be enjoyable, provoking, and enthusiastic. Pupils will feel motivated by participating in various learning activities. Hence, a variety of classroom activities and materials help the teacher motivate the pupils to perform well in their oral performance.

2.8. Theory and Definition

Attitude is a learned predisposition that stimulates the individual to reveal certain behaviors and responses against particular objects, conditions, or people; attitudes are often sustained for quite a while and represent a preparatory state for behavior (Demirel, 2001). Almost all scholars admit that how successful people are in their lives is directly influenced by what they think, how they feel, and how they evaluate objects and people surrounding them because they behave accordingly.

Social psychology has long been described as the scientific study of attitudes. Most researchers assumed that social attitudes principally guide human behavior. Gordon Allport was one of the first scholars to define "attitude"; however, the first definitions were quite broad. Allport (1935) states that attitude is "a mental and neural state of readiness, organized through experience, exerting a directive and dynamic influence upon the individual's responses to all objects and

situations with which it is related" (p.810). Equally, cognition, behavior, motivation, and effectiveness components are included in this definition.

Attitude is a theoretical construct formulated by researchers to describe a phenomenon that cannot be directly discerned; therefore, it is deduced from individuals' self-reports and behaviors (Schwarz & Bohner, 2007). The concept of attitude can be explained based on two distinct approaches: behavioral and mentalist.

According to Fasold (1984), under the behaviorist perspective, attitudes are simply individuals' reactions to social situations. Further, he notes that this view facilitates researching attitudes because it requires no indirect inferences or self-reports, which may not be valid since some people contradict themselves by saying something and acting differently. All that is needed is the observation, the tabulation, and finally, the analysis of the explicit behavior. However, some researchers say that this kind of attitude is not interesting because it cannot be used to predict other behaviors.

On the other hand, the mentalist perspective, which is the most adopted in language attitudes research, regards attitudes as an internal mental state that would produce certain forms of behavior. It could be outlined as an intervening variable between a stimulus affecting a person and their response (Appel & Muysken, 1987). To summarize, attitude is not a behavior people do; it is a factor that determines the quality and the intensity of the individual's reaction to the stimuli, i.e., it derives the behavior to a certain extent. Generally, it differs from one individual to another. Thus, it could be conceptualized as an individual difference.

2.9. Attitude Components

According to Agarwal and Malhotra (2005), an attitude comprises three components:

Chapter Two: Literature Review

-Affective Component (Neural) (Feeling/ Emotion)

-Behavioural Component (Readiness) (Response/ Action)

-Cognitive Component (Mental) (Belief/ Evaluation)

Based on this classification, the affective component involves emotional reactions or feelings towards an object or situation. The behavioral component reflects the readiness to act or the actions taken in response to an object or situation, and the cognitive element encompasses beliefs, thoughts, or knowledge about an object or situation, including evaluations and judgments. So, all these components shape an individual's overall attitude.

2.10. Summary

Primary education is a critical stage in a child's development, laying the foundation for future academic success and well-being. Understanding the factors influencing primary school performance is essential for educators, parents, and policymakers. Psychological variables play a pivotal role in shaping a child's learning experience and outcomes.

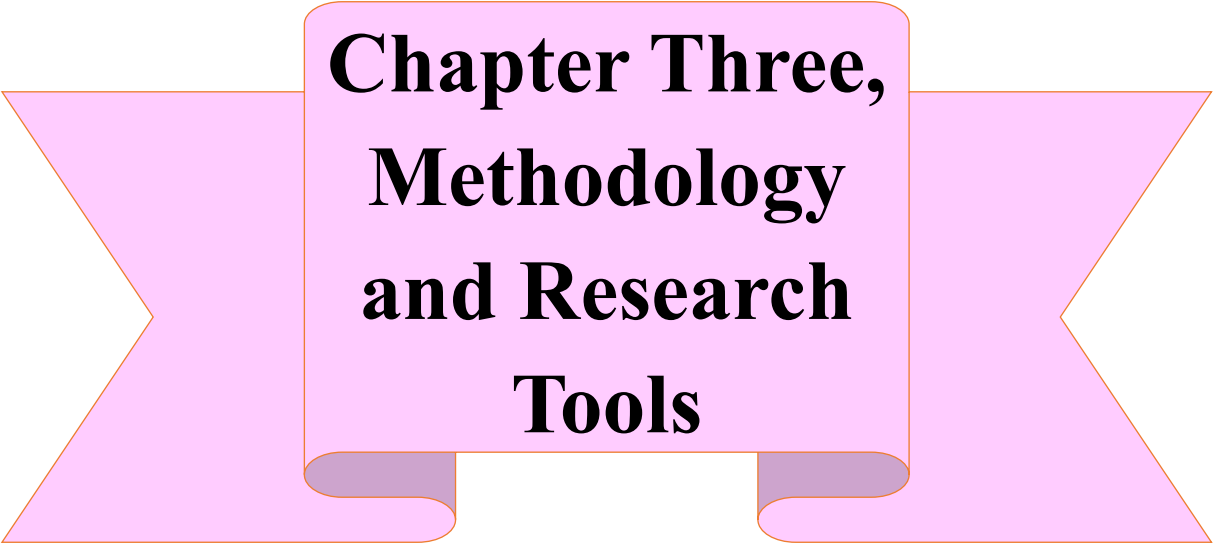
Academic performance and psychological well-being, which include emotional stability, self-esteem, and motivation, significantly impact academic performance. Children with positive psychological health are more likely to engage in learning activities, exhibit resilience, and achieve higher academic success.

Effective emotion and behavior management is crucial for maintaining focus and discipline in the classroom. Psychological factors such as emotional intelligence and self-regulation skills help children navigate social interactions and cope with academic pressures. Moreover, motivation and self-efficacy are critical determinants of academic engagement and persistence. Students who

Chapter Two: Literature Review

believe in their abilities and are intrinsically motivated perform better academically. This study aims to explore how these psychological constructs influence primary school performance.

Positive relationships with peers and teachers and a supportive school environment contribute to a child's psychological health. This study will examine how social support systems within the school setting impact academic outcomes. Therefore, identifying the psychological factors influencing primary school performance can inform early intervention strategies. Educators and policymakers can develop targeted programs to support children's psychological well-being, thereby enhancing their academic performance.



**Chapter Three,
Methodology
and Research
Tools**

Chapter Three, Methodology and Research Tools

This chapter presents the research design, operational definition, subject of the research, research instrument, data collection procedure, and data analysis technique.

3.1. Research design

The method used in this research was qualitative descriptive research. Qualitative descriptive research, also known as survey research, determines and describes how things are. It aims to comprehend the existing phenomena experienced by the subject of the research, such as attitude, perception, motivation, action, etc., in a holistic way by describing them in words and language in the expected particular context and using accepted methods.

The research collected the data by using observation in order to see the effect of anxiety on the student's performance and used interviews as well to reveal the types and the factors causing language anxiety of EFL students in the classroom presentation.

Anxiety is a survival instinct that has evolved over millions of years in order to protect us. It is a series of reflexes and responses that affect our mind and body as we prepare to avoid or deal with dangerous situations. You are scared; your senses are heightened. Your sight and hearing have become more sensitive, and you can pinpoint the slightest movement or sound. Your breathing and heartbeat have become more rapid, you feel lightheaded and dizzy, you want to go to the toilet or throw up, your limbs feel shaky, and your whole body is now charged with energy, total of anxiety, ready to fight or flee, possibly for your life. (Rachman 1993: 99).

Furthermore, according to Nur (1993), the student's condition is like losing face and looking foolish. As a result of anxious feelings of fear of making mistakes, they may end up in situations

where they do not want to speak anymore, particularly by using English. Anxiety is a general symptom that can be rooted in previous failure, being afraid to make mistakes to be a citizen, being afraid to lose face, or lack of self-confidence. This can block the students' performance in speaking inside and outside the classroom.

Getting anxious in certain situations is normal; everyone does. Moreover, most people even experience increased anxiety frequently. Tests, interviews, public speaking, dating, and competitive sports can make anyone anxious.

Qualitative research was adopted to undertake this study. A descriptive

The method would be the most convenient according to the nature of the investigation. It

Permits to describe the psychological factors that could affect EFL learners' academic learning.

To achieve the study's objectives and answer the research questions, we conducted a semi-structured interview with two (2) English teachers at primary schools in Khemis Miliana. The results obtained from this interview showed that teachers use various strategies to help their learners overcome the psychological factors that hinder their learning process. As a result, the alternative hypothesis (H1) was accepted: Psychological factors affect EFL pupils' academic performance, whereas the null hypothesis (H0) was rejected: Psychological factors do not affect EFL pupils' academic performance.

3.2. Population and Sample

The population chosen in this research was limited to 3rd-year primary school EFL students.

And learning lessons, as well as teachers of the elementary primary school Kelkouli Hamdane.

One teacher was chosen To be asked. Therefore, she had more.

Experience with academic learning and its difficulties. Ten teachers were chosen as a Sample for this study.

3.3. Data Gathering Tools

In order to test our hypothesis, the research tool used is:

A semi-structured questionnaire was administered to 3rd-year primary schools.

The study is expected to reveal significant correlations between psychological well-being and academic performance, highlighting the importance of addressing emotional and behavioral factors in educational settings. It will provide evidence-based recommendations for educators and policymakers to create supportive learning environments that foster psychological health and academic excellence.

Teaching and learning English for young pupils is challenging. Therefore, EFL teachers always look for the best ways to help their pupils learn the language effectively. It was noticed that most EFL pupils confront serious difficulties when they learn English, mainly psychological ones. The psychology of the learner plays a major role in education in general. It became an essential branch in most educational fields as an influential factor in learning/teaching. In fact, it has decisive effects on undertaking the different language tasks.

Learning and mastering the basis of English is very important in primary education to understand and communicate with this language. However, the majority of EFL pupils suffer from many difficulties during the process of learning English. Most of those problems could be the result of psychological factors (attitude, motivation, anxiety) that affect them. These psychological factors may differ from one EFL learner to another.

Chapter Three, Methodology and Research Tools

The present study aims to explore EFL primary school teachers' opinions about the main psychological factors (attitude, motivation, and anxiety) that affect their pupils' academic performance. It also intends to propose solutions for teachers and students to overcome these psychological factors.

What is the best way to teach English to EFL students?

-Adopt a communicative language teaching approach

-Use a variety of methods and techniques

-Create a supportive learning environment

How EFL students learn English:

-By being regularly exposed to the language, orally and in writing, in class and at home

-By actively practicing the language in meaningful communication situations

-By receiving constructive feedback and corrections from the teacher

-By being motivated and engaged in their learning, with the support of the teacher and parents

1) Benefits of English in primary school:

-Allows young students to get familiar early on with an international language essential for their future.

-Facilitates vocabulary acquisition and pronunciation at an age where language skills are more developed.

-Stimulates cognitive skills and mental flexibility in children.

Chapter Three, Methodology and Research Tools

- Opens up students to other cultures and perspectives from a young age.
- How to teach English to primary school students:
 - Use playful and interactive methods for children (games, songs, stories, etc.).
 - Focus on oral communication and comprehension before written skills.
 - Create a stimulating learning environment with visual materials.
 - Involve parents in regular language practice at home.
 - Differentiate activities based on students' levels and needs.
- How EFL students learn English:
 - By being regularly exposed to the language, orally and in writing, in class and at home.
 - By actively practicing the language in meaningful communication situations.
 - By receiving constructive feedback and corrections from the teacher.
 - By being motivated and engaged in their learning, with the support of the teacher and parents.
- How to help students overcome the fear of making Mistakes in English: I always tell them that making mistakes is a part of the learning process; through mistakes, you learn and never repeat them. I also told them that all of us commit mistakes, even me as a teacher. We are all here to learn from each other. I never laugh at them while making mistakes, and I never accept my students laughing at each other. I set this as a principle in my classroom.
- How can the teacher help students build self-confidence?

Encourage and motivate them to believe that they are the best students and can do what other students in other schools can not. Positive words and vibes help them build strong confidence that they are able to be the best and that nothing will stop them because they have potential and abilities that are not found in their peers.

In your opinion, what are the benefits of using English at primary school?

Teaching English at primary school is crucial because I believe that learners at an early age better acquire and master the language because their minds are like tabula rasa; they grasp everything.

. Have you received any support in improving your English language skills as a teacher?

We received some training days from our inspector on teaching methods and dealing with young learners. However, I rely on myself by training in private schools on teacher formation and sometimes on YouTube about some teaching methods. In brief, understanding the role of psychological factors in primary school performance is crucial for developing effective educational strategies and interventions. This study aims to contribute to the growing body of knowledge in this field, offering insights that can help improve primary school student's academic and psychological outcomes. By focusing on the psychological aspects of learning, we can ensure that children receive the comprehensive support they need to succeed academically and develop a well-rounded education.

3.4. Research Methodology

This research aims to adopt a descriptive method to meet the scheduled objectives. According to Loucif (2021), this approach to research is an appropriate choice to determine the

problem or topic for the sake of improving outcomes. This study takes the case of third-year pupils at Ouadani Ben Aissa Primary School and teachers of English from the same School.

The sample is detailed in the following table:

Table 2.1: Participants' Division and Sampling

Participants	Total number	Male	Female
Teachers	2	0	2

3.4.1. Research Methodology

This research aims to adopt a descriptive method to meet the scheduled objectives. According to Loucif (2021), this research approach is appropriate for determining the problem or topic to improve outcomes. This study takes the case of third-year pupils at Ouadani Ben Aissa Primary School and teachers of English from the same school.

3.4.2. Population and Sampling

The sample size of this study, taken from the total population, represents 2 teachers selected randomly. After collecting data, the data will be examined through thematic/ content analysis.

The sample is detailed in the following table:

3.4.3. Data Gathering Tools

To be confident of the results obtained and to have more reliable data, one instrument is chosen to collect the data for this study, including a teachers' interview. The aim of using the

interview is to explore the teachers' attitudes towards the topic under investigation. Loucif (2022) said that this technique helped the researcher gain in-depth insights into informants' experiences in the field of teaching. Indeed, this tool is a reliable data collection tool that serves the aim of any study.

3.4.4. Data Analysis

3.4.4.1 Teachers' Interview

The interview includes (9) questions about teaching English at Algerian primary schools and the psychological factors affecting pupils while learning English. The analysis of these questions is as follows:

3.4.4.2. Teachers' Interview

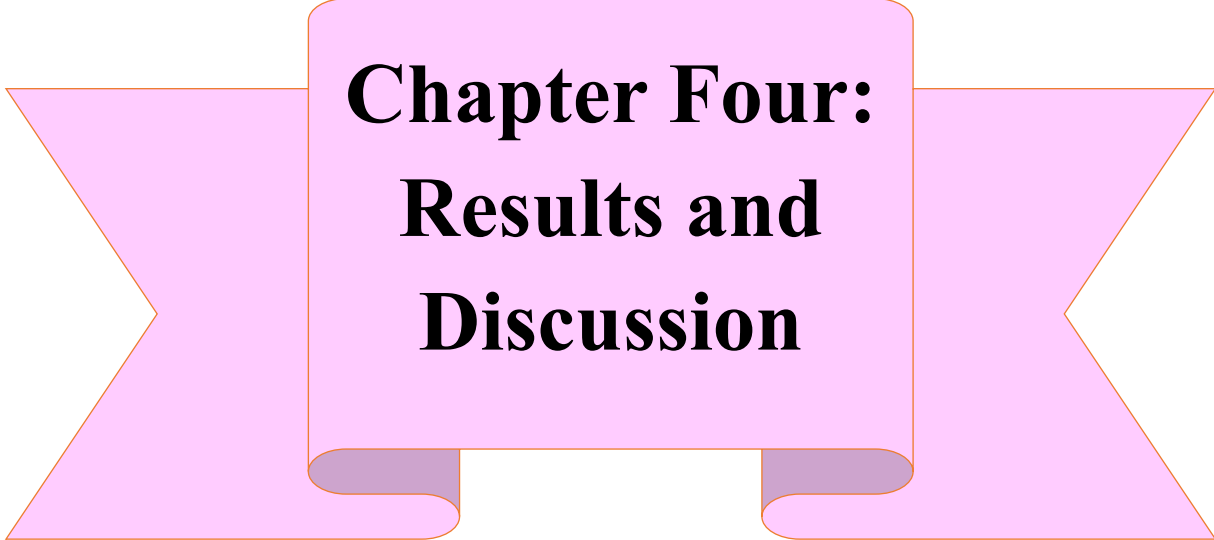
The interview includes (9) questions about teaching English at Algerian primary schools and the psychological factors affecting pupils while learning English. The analysis of these questions is as follows:

Teaching and learning English for young pupils is challenging. Therefore, EFL teachers always look for the best ways to help their pupils learn the language effectively. It was noticed that most EFL pupils confront serious difficulties when they learn English, mainly psychological ones. The psychology of the learner plays a major role in education in general. It became an essential branch in most educational fields as an influential factor in learning/teaching. In fact, it has decisive effects on undertaking the different language tasks.

Learning and mastering the basis of English is very important in primary education to understand and communicate with this language. However, the majority of EFL pupils suffer from many

Chapter Three, Methodology and Research Tools

difficulties during the process of learning English. Most of those problems could be the result of psychological factors (attitude, motivation, anxiety) that affect them. These psychological factors may differ from one EFL learner to another.



**Chapter Four:
Results and
Discussion**

Chapter Four: Results and Discussion

We interviewed primary school English teachers in the fieldwork to test the hypothesis and their opinions about the discussed topic. Overall, the results obtained from the interview analysis showed that teachers used different strategies to enhance their pupils' English language abilities and reduce psychological factors such as negative attitudes, low self-esteem, lack of motivation and confidence, anxiety, and others. These results helped us to answer the research's first question (Would attitude, motivation, and anxiety affect EFL pupils' academic performance?).

In addition, teachers suggested different methods, such as creating an enjoyable learning atmosphere, using visual aids, and incorporating techniques like songs, stories, dialogues, games, role-playing activities, repetition, and drills. As a result, these effective classroom strategies help teachers manage those psychological problems successfully. This fact provided us with an answer to the sent research question (How can teachers manage these psychological factors?).

4.1. Data Analysis

4.1.1. Teachers' Interview

The interview includes (9) different questions about teaching English at Algerian primary schools and the psychological factors that can affect pupils while learning English. The analysis of these questions is as follows:

4.1.1.1. Theme One: Teaching Basic English to EFL Students

This question aims to explore the teaching strategies used by primary school teachers to enhance their pupils' language abilities and reduce the psychological factors that may affect their

learning process. All the teachers questioned suggested different methods and strategies for teaching basic English to young learners as follows. First, they usually create an enjoyable learning atmosphere that supports pupils to grasp the language. They also use praise and positive reinforcement to build their confidence. Besides, they implement visual aids such as flashcards, pictures, and natural objects to illustrate vocabulary and concepts. In addition, they use various techniques like songs, stories, dialogues, games, role-playing activities, repetition, and drills to practice pronunciation and sentence structures. Thus, by combining these teaching strategies with understanding psychological factors, teachers can effectively support EFL pupils in their journey to learn English.

4.1.1.2. Theme Two: Classroom Strategies for Effective Education

In this question, we identify the effective classroom strategies teachers use to facilitate the English learning process for primary school pupils. One teacher said she focuses on raising pupils' motivation, engagement, and attention. By doing so, pupils will be active and encouraged to use the language. However, the other teacher reported that she varies in the use of interactive activities and the teaching approaches that provide opportunities for all pupils to get involved and participate during the lesson.

4.1.1.3. Theme Three: Best Practices for Teaching English to EFL Students

Considering their unique learning needs and challenges, this question explores the best practices for teaching English as a Foreign Language (EFL) to primary school pupils. The interviewees stated that by creating a supportive and encouraging learning environment, providing

opportunities for success, and addressing individual learning styles, pupils will reduce anxiety and increase their self-esteem and confidence.

4.1.1.4. Theme Four: The Importance of Using English in the Classroom

Through this question, we highlight the importance of using English as the primary language of teaching in the classroom and its benefits for students' language acquisition and proficiency. The participants asserted that exposing children to English is an excellent way to help them master their skills early. Nevertheless, psychological factors such as language apprehension and fear of making mistakes can hinder their willingness to use English actively.

4.1.1.5. Theme Five: Overcoming Fear of Making Mistakes

This question addresses strategies for helping pupils overcome their fear of making mistakes while learning the English language. The informants confirmed that the fear of making mistakes is a common psychological barrier in language learning. However, they always do their best to help students overcome this fear by promoting a positive attitude towards errors and providing constructive feedback.

4.1.1.6. Theme Six: Building Pupil Self-Confidence

This question focuses on teachers' strategies to build students' self-confidence in their English language abilities. Teachers said they do so by acknowledging their progress, setting achievable goals, and providing opportunities for success.

4.1.1.7. Theme Seven: Benefits of Teaching English in Primary School

In this question, we explore the benefits of introducing the English language at primary school. The respondents affirmed that early exposure to English can have numerous benefits, including cognitive, academic, and socio-cultural advantages. However, language aptitude and learning motivation can influence students' language learning outcomes. Thus, teachers should select the strategies that suit students' developmental stages and individual needs to ensure their learning progress.

4.1.1.8. Theme Eight: Teacher Support for Improving English Skills

Through this question, we focus on providing teachers with support and professional development opportunities to enhance their English language skills and teaching effectiveness. The teachers declared that language proficiency could impact their ability to introduce practical teaching courses and support students' language learning. They also suggested that professional development programs consider psychological factors such as self-efficacy and motivation when designing training initiatives.

4.1.1.9. Theme Nine: Language Teaching Classroom

This question focuses on the characteristics and practices of effective language teaching classrooms and emphasizes interactive and student-centered approaches. The interviewees proposed that language-teaching classrooms should prioritize student engagement, active learning, and meaningful language use.

4.2. Discussion of the Results

We interviewed primary school English teachers in the fieldwork to test the hypothesis and their opinions about the discussed topic. Overall, the results obtained from the interview analysis showed that teachers used different strategies to enhance their pupils' English language abilities and reduce psychological factors such as negative attitudes, low self-esteem, lack of motivation and confidence, anxiety, and others. These results helped us to answer the research's first question (Would attitude, motivation, and anxiety affect EFL pupils' academic performance?).

In addition, teachers suggested different methods, such as creating an enjoyable learning atmosphere, using visual aids, and incorporating techniques like songs, stories, dialogues, games, role-playing activities, repetition, and drills. As a result, these effective classroom strategies help teachers manage those psychological problems successfully. This fact provided us with an answer to the sent research question (How can teachers manage these psychological factors?).

4.3. Suggestions and Pedagogical Implications

Based on the insights from the literature review and the factors examined in this study, we propose recommendations concerning the psychological factors affecting EFL primary school pupils' academic performance in Khemis Miliana, Ain Defla-Algeria. These suggestions may guide teachers, students, and administrators within the English department at the University of Khemis Miliana.

- Teachers should be aware of the importance of the learners' psychology and how it can affect their productivity and the entire learning/teaching process. In this context, professional seminars and conferences should be organized for teachers. These meetings would enrich their knowledge

Chapter Four: Results and Discussion

and update them on the latest progress in teaching and how to overcome the psychological factors that may affect their students.

Teachers have a crucial role in reducing students' anxiety. They should behave in a friendly way with their students and clarify that making mistakes is natural and a part of the learning process. Moreover, teachers need to choose the appropriate, effective, and manageable feedback for the students.

The school administration should minimize the number of students in each class and provide larger classrooms. This would effectively provide the needed relaxing atmosphere, keeping anxiety at a minimum and overcoming the stressful environment in which most EFL learners are undertaking their language assignments.

The research sample was all females. It can be fruitful to conduct the same study using a sample of equal numbers of male and female students.

-This research investigated the psychological factors affecting EFL pupils' academic performance. It could also be beneficial if it is conducted at the university level.

This study focused on the effect of the three main psychological factors: attitude, motivation, and anxiety. A study that focuses only on one factor could yield more consistent and generable findings.

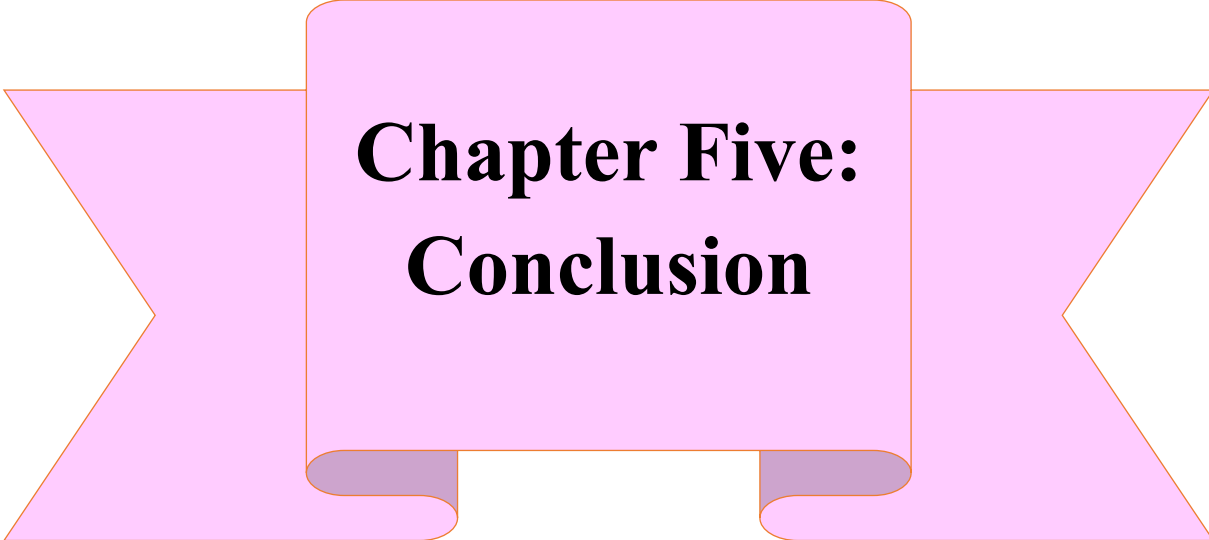
- This research focused on academic performance; it could be conducted to investigate the psychological factors affecting listening, reading, writing, or speaking skills.

4.4. Limitations of the Study

Like any study, the current research design has some limitations. First, more than time was needed to address this issue deeply and thoroughly. Second, there needs to be more access to useful paid resources and books.

4.5. Summary

This chapter outlines the methodology used in the research. It has described the research method chosen based on the topic's nature. The chapter also discusses the target population, sampling methods used for fieldwork, and the interview process. Furthermore, it has presented the analysis and discussion of the results obtained. Finally, the chapter acknowledges the study's limitations and proposes some pedagogical implications in addition to some recommendations.



**Chapter Five:
Conclusion**

Chapter Five: Conclusion

The present study attempted to explore the Ouadani Ben Aissa primary school teachers' perceptions of the psychological factors affecting their pupils and how they manage to reduce them. Its main objective was to discover those factors and identify teachers' strategies to reduce their effects on learners.

5.1. Recommendations

Speaking in a foreign language can be heavily influenced by psychological factors such as anxiety, motivation, and self-confidence. Students experiencing high levels of anxiety and low self-confidence in foreign language classes may struggle to develop their speaking abilities. Second-language learners often face obstacles in achieving target-language competence, with motivation, self-confidence, and anxiety being significant barriers. Motivation refers to the personal drive or desire to learn the target language, while self-confidence pertains to learners' belief in their ability to succeed. Anxiety involves the nervousness or worries students experience when confronted with challenging or uncomfortable situations. This research aimed to determine whether there is a significant correlation between language learners' reading proficiency and anxiety, motivation, and self-confidence.

5.2. Limitations

Teaching and learning English as a foreign language has always been challenging for both students and teachers. EFL learners often encounter many difficulties while learning the language, and Algerian EFL primary school pupils are no exception. They particularly struggle with mastering skills such as listening and speaking. This research investigated the main psychological factors,

attitude, motivation, and anxiety, affecting third-year pupils at Ouadani Ben Aissa in Khemis Miliana as they learned English in their classes.

5.3. Summary

The study underscores the importance of addressing psychological factors in language learning to enhance students' performance. Anxiety, motivation, and self-confidence are pivotal in determining the success of EFL learners. Understanding and managing these factors can significantly improve language acquisition and academic outcomes. Teachers' awareness and intervention in these areas are crucial for fostering a supportive and effective learning environment for young language learners.



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Appendix

Appendix

Appendix

Teachers' Interview

- 1- How can you teach basic English to EFL students?
- 2 - How can education take place in the classroom?
- 3- What is the best way to teach English to EFL students?
- 4- Why we should use English in the Classroom?
- 5 How can you help students overcome the fear of making mistakes in English?
- 6-How can the teacher help students build self-confidence?
- 7- In your opinion, what are the benefits of using English at primary school?
- 8- Have you received any support for improving your English language skills as a teacher?
- 9-How can education take place in a language-teaching classroom?

Table 2.1: Participants' Division and Sampling

Participants	Total number	Male	Female
Teachers	2	0	2