

EFL Students' Attitudes towards the Effect of Note Taking Strategies on Academic Achievement: The Case of Libyan Undergraduate Students.

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Abstract

The present study investigated EFL Libyan undergraduate students' attitude towards effect of note taking strategies on academic achievement. The study also explored whether there is a significant difference in students' attitude towards effect of note taking strategies on academic achievement regarding to gender. A total of 80 participants were all EFL undergraduate students from Tripoli University. The data were collected by a questionnaire and analyzed statistically by SPSS Program. The findings indicated that the participants showed positive attitudes towards the benefit of note taking strategies on academic achievement i.e. note taking helps to improve academic achievement. It was also found that there is not a statistically significant difference in students' attitude towards the effect of note taking strategies on academic achievement due to gender. In the light of above results, some recommendations are finally provided for teachers and students to consider.

Key words: note taking strategies, academic achievement, attitude, gender.

1.0 Introduction

Although increasing attention has been paid to the students centered learning in order to replace teacher-centered learning, and the innovation in learning technology, note-taking continuous to be common and essential technique for learners in the classroom and while reading textbooks (willims and Eggret,2002 Brazeau, 2006 ; Castello and Monereo, 2005) . The reason is that note-taking skill exists the most popular as an successfully growing ability to remember, understand keep hold of the content (Kobayashi,2005).

Research on note taking has been created since C.C Crawford (1925) began his studies in the twenties of the last century, He investigated the effects of note-taking during lectures on student achievements. The finding revealed that students who take notes increase their performance. Later on , researchers confirmed Crawford's finding that notes are value material for review (Ladas, 1980). Using NT strategies has an impact on the written material when the student can extract the main and important points from what he reads.

According to Boch and Biolat (2005), students employ NT technique during lectures, increase their retention levels. "The results of taking notes is much more than production of a passive 'external' information store, as the note taking action itself is a part of memorization process and results in a creation of a form of 'internal' a storage " (P 104).

NT techniques are the domination study strategies in higher education and, in many cases, the main foundation for education interaction between teacher and their students (Castello and Monereo 2005).

Therefore many high schools and colleges abroad offer NT courses that include instruction in extracting critical points from lecture, formulating information, and using abbreviations and notations.

1.1 Statement of the Problem:

The weakness of academic achievement and low output among EFL Libyan undergraduate students led many educationists such as (Abushafa 2014) to search for causes of this vulnerability and they place responsibility on the outdated curricula and teaching methods , poor primary and secondary school output , lack of resources and facilities and lack of motivation. Nevertheless, these might not be the only reasons behind the students' low academic achievement and poor performance. There are some other factors that responsible for low academic achievement and poor output like note taking strategies and reading skill used by student .etc. (Babatunde et la. 2014). Because of the above mentioned reason, this study sheds light on the effect of note taking strategies on academic achievement form students' perception.

1.2 Research Questions

- 1-What are the attitudes of EFL Libyan undergraduate students towards the effect of NT strategies on their academic achievement?
- 2-Is there any statistically significant difference in EFL Libyan undergraduate students' attitude towards the effect of NT strategies on their academic achievement in relation to gender?

1.3 Research Hypotheses

H01: EFL Libyan undergraduate students have negative attitude towards the effect of NT strategies on their academic achievement.

H02 : there is not a statistically significant difference in EFL Libyan undergraduate students' attitude towards effect NT strategies on their academic achievement based on gender.

1.4 Aims of the study

1-To determine the attitudes of EFL Libyan undergraduate students towards the effect of NT strategies on their academic achievement.

2- To determine whether there is any statistically significant difference in EFL Libyan undergraduate students' attitude towards the effect of NT strategies on their academic achievement in relation to gender.

1.5 Significance of the Study

The present study is hoped to be beneficial to:

1. learners of EFL, since this study attempts to reveal the significant effect of NT strategies in improving students' academic achievement.
2. instructors and lecturers of English as a foreign language (EFL), many of whom are not sufficiently acquainted with the NT sub- skills, to provide their students with advice and suggestions in this respect, and thus to organize and present lectures accordingly.
- 3.experts and specialists in teaching English as a foreign language (TEFL) who will then be enabled to provide ELT and EFL departments in Libyan universities with advice and suggestions about these techniques and exploit it in teaching.

4. the field of research since no previous attempt has been made to study the effect of the NT strategies on improving students' achievements among Libyan students.

2.0 Literature Review

2.1 Theoretical background

Note taking technique is ingrained in cognition and metacognition. Note-takers write down the information and store it in his/her long-term memory. Learning is a cognitive action or process that regulates and controls performance as an internal representation. Children's mnemonic and non-mnemonic notations provide proof that cognition underlies the notations. Cognitively advanced children can produce more functional notation (Bialystock & codd, 1996; Eskritt & Lee, 2002; Eskritt & Mcleod, 2008).

Note taking technique is cognitively demanding task. In this process, the learner has to listen to the lecture and select the required ideas, save these ideas temporarily in working memory, organize and interpret it, and then determine which ideas to record (Bui et al., 2014, Armbruster, 2000).

Metacognitive awareness is essential for effective learning , as it enables learners to understand themselves, select suitable approach for demand learning tasks (Wenden, 2001). Metacognitive refers to learner's ability to be active participant in his/her own learning, such as learning plan, organizing information , self-monitoring and instruction and evaluation of progress. (Zimmerman, 1986).

2.2 What Is NT Strategy

Literature investigation shows that interest in NT has started since the end of the fifties and early sixties. Notes or NT has been used alternatively to both NT and what has recently been identified as NM (note making).

According to Larsen–Freeman and Long (1991: 202) NT strategies are “writing down the main ideas, important points, and outline or summary of information presented orally or in writing”. NT is a creative process with a great degree of discretion to what is to be included, what is to be excluded and what forms of notes are to take (Robertson and Smith, 1987: 36).

NT is considered an active process which involves assessing, re-thinking and restructuring what is presented, making connections, using images and colours, and whatever is at hand, i.e. students take ownership of the content (Buzan, 1993: 23). NT also defined by Kellogg et al. (2005) as a process which involves understanding a written document or a lecture and then writing down the required information.

(Makany, et al. (2009) stated that NT strategy is a method of writing down the information which is taken from another source. By this practice, the learners write down the extract of the information, and then they will free their minds from having to remember all details.

Nguyen (2006) asserted that note-taking strategy is a critical practice that reinforces learning. It is necessary activity for learners to recalling what they have been heard or seen. While Alashker (2014) defined NT

strategies as an efficient skill that helps students to comprehend and recall the information they read or taught in class. This skill helps to improve students' academic achievement; when students record the important points and extract, then they review these notes so that they are beneficial.

2.3 NT strategies and Academic Achievements

According to Kyle et al. (2013) many scholars who interested in how to succeed in university focused on the importance of taking good notes. Research results point out that taking notes during the lecture and then studying those notes has a positive impact on student's level. Dhann (2001:1) pointed out that students learn more effectively when they use multiple activities. By writing notes, they are using both brain and muscles; they are paraphrasing the material into their own words and into a format they are more likely to understand when they review them. Adult learners are more likely to remember what they have read if they take active part in their learning. The notes produced by the learners make them active learners rather than being passive readers. These notes are visible reminders of the efforts they have put into the course.

Note-taking can improve students' academic achievement in many ways: 1) students are able to recall information that is in their notes more accurately than points not in their notes, 2) note taking techniques can help students in general recall of non-recorded points, 3) Reviewing notes well improves recall significantly, 4) the highest exam scores are related to the level of detail of students' notes, 5) note-

taking provide students with opportunity to synthesize information and combine incoming information, integrate it with information already stored in, and promote better performance on critical thinking tasks (Rachel, 2016).

In the study titled “Better note-taking can help students who struggle with English” conducted by Dukhan et al. (2017) on South African ESL students, reported that students who modified their notes generally achieved better score. They were able to fill gaps in their learning independently. Note taking allowed them to expand the necessary insights to improve the level of understanding and, consequently, their academic achievement.

Bohay et al. (2011) also asserted that note-taking helps later performance even without later review because it serves as a real engagement with the material that is recorded. They emphasized that note-taking facilitates learning, and students who take notes are more likely to elaborate on the content. As well as , during NT process , students involve in greater mental organization that helps them to improve their memory and understanding.

In the same vein, a study conducted by Abraham et al. (2010) indicated that high test results were accompanied with learners who used to take notes during lectures. Their study explored that note-taking strategies can facilitate learning process by helping students to recall better, and keep them alert during the lecture.

2.4 Note taking and Gender.

A few researches have been conducted on students' attitudes towards the effect of NT strategies on academic achievement and its instruction with gender as an independent variable. Alshakar (2014) investigated the student's attitude towards effect of NT strategies on academic achievement. The study also explored the effect of gender on students' attitude. The participants were (130) EFL students. The data were collected by a questionnaire. The results of the study underlined that the students have high positive attitude towards effect of NT strategies on their academic achievement. It was also found that there were significant differences on students' attitude due to gender.

similarly, Haghverdi, et al. (2010) conducted a survey study on the effect of note taking strategies on the students' academic achievement individually and regarding to gender. The sample was undergraduate students (N=120) majoring in Translation. A survey and a true experiment were used to collect the data. The study reported that the students' had high positive attitude towards the benefits of NT strategies. The results also revealed that there is no statistically significant differences between male and female on their attitudes.

3.0 Methodology

3.1 Design

The research was a quantitative in nature (descriptive and inferential). A questionnaire was used to collect data from the participants. The researcher attempted to determine students' attitudes towards the effect of NT strategies on their academic achievement as well as to

investigate whether there is a significant differences in students perceptions' towards the effect of NT strategies on academic achievement in relation to gender.

3.2 Participants

The participants were 80 EFL undergraduate students, 45 students were female and 35 students were male. They were selected randomly from two faculties in Tripoli university, namely faculty of education and faculty of languages. They were from all university levels, and their ages range from about 18 to 23 years old. The sample was divided into two groups according to gender for the purpose of the study.

3.3 Instrument

The instrument used in this study was an attitudinal questionnaire which focused on discovering students' attitudes towards the effect of NT strategies on academic achievement. The study also aimed to determine the differences in the participants' attitudes by gender. All items of the questionnaire were adopted from a study employed by Haghverdi, et al. (2010). See appendix. The questionnaire was divided into two parts, the first part was on participants' gender and the second part was on attitudes towards the effect of NT strategies academic achievement . The number of the questionnaires' items were 20. 10 items were positive and 10 items were negative. The items of the questionnaire used a 5-point Likert scale (1- Strongly agree 2- agree 3- neutral 4- disagree-5-strogly disagree).

3.4 Reliability

A pilot study was conducted before the main study to measure the reliability of the instrument. A random selection of 30 undergraduate students were invited to participate in the pilot study. The participants were given enough time to answer the questions and give their comments and suggestion on the questionnaire. (SPSS) program was used to determine the alpha value of the items. The internal consistency Cronbach alpha was 0.870. This indicates that the questionnaire items were totally appropriate for study aims.

3.5 Data Analysis

SPSS Program version 23.0 was used to analyze the collected data. Since the first research question was aimed to determine the students' attitude towards the effect of NT strategies on academic achievement, the researcher used descriptive statistics to identify the frequency, the mean, the variance and the standard deviation. The independent sample T- test was used to explore whether there is any significant difference in students' attitude towards the effect of NT strategies on academic achievement in relation to gender.

4.0 Findings and Discussion

4.1 Attitude towards Effect NT Strategies on Academic Achievement

The first research question is “ what are the attitudes of Libyan undergraduate students towards the effect of NT strategies on their academic achievement?” the result of descriptive analysis(Table 1.1) indicates that the average total mean score of students' attitude

towards the benefit of note taking strategies (NT) is 34.82 (SD=5.310). This result reveals that the participants have a positive attitude towards note taking strategies (NT). This result is in line with some researches as (bohay et.al 2011) & (Lee, Lan, Hamman & Hendricks, 2008).

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics of Students' Attitudes towards Effect of Note Taking (NT) Strategies on Academic Achievement.

N	Minimum	Maximum	Sum	Mean		Std. Deviation	Variance
Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Statistic
80	26	47	2786	34.82	.594	5.310	28.197

The results of the this study disclosed that the majority of students are well aware of the importance of note taking as a study tool to improve their academic achievement. From the researcher's perspective, the rationale of students' positive attitude towards benefits of note taking strategies is due to the fact that recently, the higher education in Libya has given more attention to the student-centered approach which put responsibility of learning on the student. This is supported by Almagbrok. (2017) who claimed that lecturers at Sebha University used communicative approach to teach English.

4.2 Students' Attitude towards effect NT Strategies on Academic Achievement Regarding to Gender.

The independent sample T- test was used in order to answer the second question "Is there any statistically significant difference in EFL Libyan undergraduate students' attitude towards the effect of NT

strategies on their academic achievement in relation to gender? Table 2. Explains Levene's Test for Equality of Variances. The finding showed that the p-value is .521 ($F=.416$). As the p-value is greater than Alpha level (0.05), the assumption of equal variances is met. Moreover, the T-test for Equality of Means showed that the p-value is $.504 > 0.05$. Hence, the p-value is greater than Alpha level (0.05), the second hypothesis fails to be rejected. i.e. there is no a statistically significant difference in attitude between male and female towards note taking strategies.

Table 2. Independent Sample T- test of Students Attitude by Gender

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
								Lower	Upper
Equal variances assumed	.416	.521	.671	78	.504	.800	1.192	-1.572	3.172
Equal variances not assumed			.671	77.710	.504	.800	1.192	-1.572	3.172

Similarly, Ahankoobnezhad (2001) & Donyavizadeh (2001) advocated that gender variable is not a significant moderator in their studies on attitude towards effect of note-taking strategies (NT). This is overlapping with the current research. The findings highlighted the similarity between male and female on their attitude towards the benefit of note-taking on the academic achievement. Both male and female agreed that using note-taking strategies improve their academic achievement. The similarity between the male and female attitudes may be due to the same agree of awareness about the significant effect of note-taking strategies

on academic achievement. Furthermore; they exposed to the same approach of teaching .

5.0 Conclusion and Recommendation

In agreement with previous literature, the current study indicates that EFL undergraduate students showed positive attitude towards the effect of note-taking strategies on their academic achievement. Besides, the research results showed that students' gender does not affect students' attitude towards the usefulness of note-taking strategies. Since taking notes has a major impact on students' academic achievement, teachers are recommended to train students on using different types of not-taking strategies that help to facilitate students' understanding. Furthermore, teachers are advised to be aware of up-to-date note-taking techniques and adopt them in the class. Moreover, curriculum makers may be advised to integrate note-taking strategy instruction in the syllabus.

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APPENDIX**Questionnaire.**

Dear students,

This questionnaire was adopted to carry out a research about note-taking strategies. Please read the statements below carefully and tick (✓) the appropriate choices honestly.

A) Gender:

1. Female () 2. Male ()

B) Students' Attitudes towards Effect of Note Taking Strategies on Academic Achievement.

NO	Items	Strongly Agree	agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
1	Taking notes, while studying, causes academic achievement.					
2	Taking notes from the important points causes academic achievement.					
3	Taking notes, while teacher is teaching, causes academic achievement.					
4	Comparing our class notes with the course contents causes academic					

	achievement.					
5	Taking notes, using a specific method, causes academic achievement					
6	Using abbreviations, while taking notes, causes academic achievement					
7	In taking notes, separating the main points from the peripheral ones, causes academic achievement					
8	Asking questions, while taking notes, increases academic achievement.					
9	Underlining the important points of notes causes academic achievement.					
10	Summarizing the concepts of the notes increases academic achievement.					
11	Revising the course notes does NOT result in academic achievement.					
12	Reviewing the class notes does					

	NOT help academic achievement.					
13	Writing the class notes expressively does NOT affect academic achievement.					
14	The legibility of course notes is NOT necessary for academic achievement.					
15	Being expert/skilled in note-taking does NOT affect desirably academic achievement.					
16	There is NO relationship between organizing notes and academic achievement.					
17	Taking notes and writing them on the white margin of the pages of book does NOT affect academic achievement.					
18	There is NO relationship between adapting note-taking methods to different courses and academic achievement.					
19	Creating enough					

	space between notes does NOT affect academic achievement					
20	Comparing one's own notes with those of the classmates has NO effect on academic achievement					

Thank you very much for your cooperation.