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**Faculty of Letters and Languages**  
**Department of the English Language and Literature**

# **MASTER THESIS**

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## **TITLE**

**Exploring First Year EFL Students' Perceptions of Active Listening  
and Its Role in Effective Note Taking: the case of Biskra University**

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A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for a  
Master Degree in English: Sciences of Language

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## **Declaration**

I, **AKILA MESSEDEK**, do hereby declare that this present research which is titled "*Exploring First Year EFL Students' Perceptions Of Active Listening And Its Role In Effective Note Taking: the Case Study At Biskra University*" is my original work and has not previously been submitted for any institution or university for a degree. I also declare that the all cited and quoted information is appropriately credited in the provided list of references. This document has been certified and finalized at Mohamed Kheider University of Biskra, Algeria.

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## **Dedication**

### ***Alhamdulillah***

All praise and thanks be to Allah, whose mercy and guidance gave me the strength to complete this journey.

### ***To my dear father***

You may no longer be with me in this world, but your love, values, and quiet strength live on in everything I do. I carry you in my heart, always. This work is for you. I hope you're smiling from above.

### ***To my beautiful mother***

Thank you for being my light on the darkest days, my biggest supporter, and my safe place. Your prayers and love have carried me through every step.

### ***To my family***

For their constant encouragement, kind words, and comforting presence that helped me stay strong.

### ***To my amazing friends***

Thank you for every laugh, every late-night pep talk, and every moment of shared stress and joy. I'm so grateful to have had you by my side.

### ***To my teachers and supervisor***

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*Thank you, from the bottom of my heart.*

## Abstract

In English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learning environments, especially at the university level, the development of effective listening and writing skills is fundamental for academic success. One of the crucial ways these two skills intersect is through classroom note-taking. This study explores how first-year EFL students at Biskra University perceive the practice of active listening and the extent to which it supports the production of effective, organized notes during classroom sessions. The research aims to identify the challenges students face in maintaining attention, processing spoken input, and translating that into coherent written notes. A mixed-methods design was adopted, incorporating a student questionnaire and teacher interviews to gather comprehensive insights. The findings reveal that students acknowledge the importance of active listening in understanding lectures, yet they often struggle with fast-paced speech, unfamiliar vocabulary, and difficulty identifying key points. Teachers also noted that many students lack listening strategies and note-structuring skills. The results suggest a strong positive relationship between active listening and note-taking performance. Consequently, the study recommends the integration of listening training, verbal cue awareness, and structured note-taking instruction within EFL programs. These measures may enhance students' academic engagement and overall writing proficiency.

**Keywords:** Active Listening, Note-Taking, EFL Learners, Listening Comprehension, Academic Writing, Classroom Interaction, First-Year Students

## **List of abbreviations**

**EFL:** English as a Foreign Language

**L2:** Second Language

**Q/E/C:** Question / Evidence / Conclusion

**ELT:** English Language Teaching

**STEM:** Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics

**NT:** note-taking

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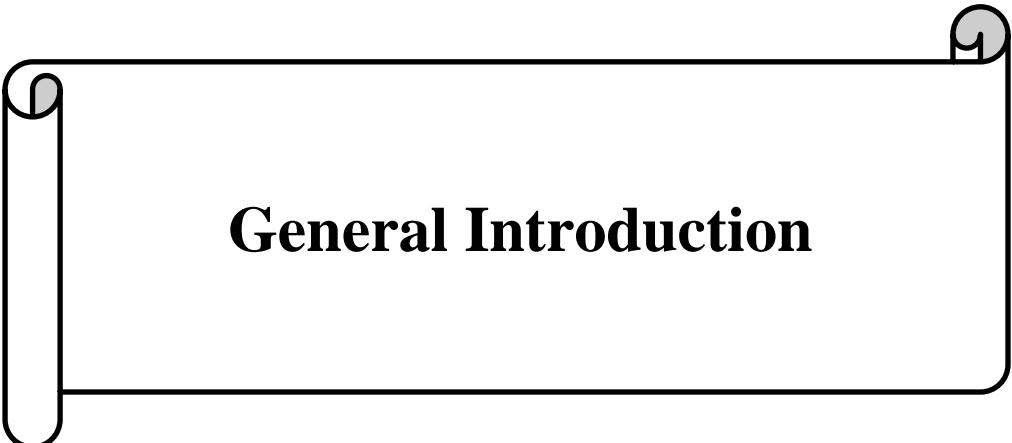
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## General Introduction

## Introduction

Learning a foreign language at the university level requires mastering various skills that support students' academic performance. Among these, listening and writing are essential tools for understanding and communicating knowledge. One important practice that connects both skills is classroom note-taking. At the beginning of their university journey, many students are expected to listen to their teachers and simultaneously take clear and useful notes. This requires not only a good command of the language but also the ability to concentrate, process information quickly, and organize ideas effectively.

However, many first-year students face difficulties in this area. They often find it challenging to follow the flow of speech, recognize key points, or structure their notes in a meaningful way. These difficulties may lead to confusion when reviewing the notes later or preparing for exams. One of the main causes of these challenges is the lack of active listening skills. Without the ability to focus fully on the speaker and identify the most important parts of the lesson, students' notes become disorganized or incomplete.

This study explores how first-year EFL students at Biskra University perceive the practice of active listening and how it helps them take better notes. It also investigates the difficulties they face and suggests practical ways to improve their performance in classroom settings. The purpose is to better understand the connection between listening and note-taking and to support students in developing both skills for academic success.

## Statement of the problem

Many first-year EFL students at Biskra University experience noticeable challenges when it comes to taking effective notes during classroom sessions. Although note-taking is a basic academic skill, its success depends heavily on the student's ability to listen actively, understand the spoken content, and quickly organize it into meaningful written form.

In reality, a large number of students struggle to keep up with the pace of lectures. They may have difficulty recognizing the most important points, understanding unfamiliar vocabulary, or concentrating for long periods of time. As a result, their notes often lack structure, clarity, and usefulness. These issues are often linked to poor active listening habits, including weak attention, limited use of listening strategies, and failure to respond to verbal cues such as tone, emphasis, or pauses.

Despite the importance of both listening and writing in academic life, there is little focus placed on helping students improve these skills together. This study was conducted to address this gap by examining how active listening contributes to the quality of students' notes and what specific problems prevent them from using this skill effectively.

## Aims of the study

This study aims to explore the perceptions of first-year EFL students at Biskra University regarding active listening and its impact on their ability to take effective notes during classroom sessions. It seeks to identify how students engage with spoken input, what listening habits or techniques they apply, and how these influence the quality of their written notes.

In addition, the study aims to uncover the main difficulties students face when trying to listen and write at the same time, and to provide practical suggestions that may help improve their

performance. The broader goal is to highlight the importance of combining listening and writing skills for better academic outcomes in EFL contexts.

## **Research questions**

This study seeks to answer the following two research questions:

1. How do first-year EFL students at Biskra University perceive active listening and its role in effective note-taking?
2. What challenges do students face when trying to listen actively and take organized notes during classroom sessions?

## **Research methodology**

This study follows a mixed-method exploratory approach that combines both quantitative and qualitative data. Two research tools were used to collect information: a questionnaire distributed to first-year EFL students at Biskra University, and interviews conducted with teachers from the English Department.

The student questionnaire was designed to explore learners' perceptions, practices, and challenges related to active listening and note-taking. The teacher interviews provided additional insights into how instructors view their students' listening behavior and note-taking performance. The combination of these tools allowed for a more comprehensive and in-depth understanding of the topic under investigation.

## **Population and sampling**

This framework focused on first-year EFL students at Biskra University. A questionnaire was administered to a randomly chosen sample of 41 students, and 6 teachers with experience

teaching first-year students from the English Department of the same university were selected for interviews.

## **The significance of the study**

This study is important because it highlights the connection between two essential academic skills: listening and writing. By focusing on the role of active listening in classroom note-taking, the research draws attention to an area that is often overlooked in EFL instruction.

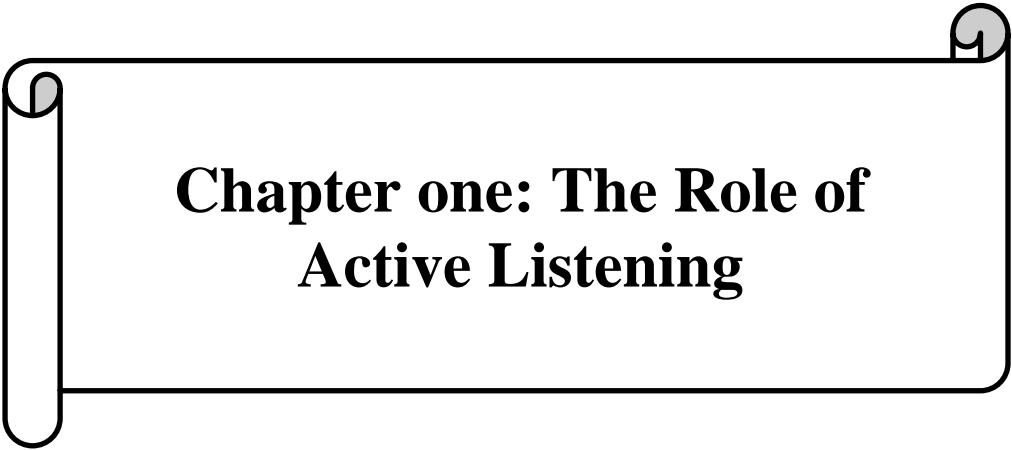
Understanding how students perceive active listening and how it affects their ability to take notes can help teachers design better classroom strategies that support both skills. It can also help students become more aware of their listening habits and improve the way they capture and organize information during lectures.

The findings of this study may contribute to improving classroom engagement, supporting academic achievement, and offering practical recommendations that benefit both EFL learners and instructors.

## **Structure of the study**

This dissertation is divided into three main chapters, in addition to the general introduction and the conclusion. Chapter One provides a theoretical overview of active listening. It discusses its definition, importance in EFL learning, common challenges, and strategies that can help students become better listeners. Chapter Two focuses on the concept of note-taking. It presents different note-taking methods, explains its academic value, and explores how it connects to listening in the EFL classroom. Chapter Three presents the fieldwork. It includes a description of the research tools, data collection process, analysis of the student questionnaire and teacher

interviews, and a discussion of the main findings. The dissertation ends with a general conclusion, pedagogical recommendations, and suggestions for future research.



## **Chapter one: The Role of Active Listening**

## Introduction

Learning a foreign language requires the development of several essential skills that contribute to learners' academic success. Among these skills, listening is often overlooked, even though it plays a central role in classroom interaction and knowledge acquisition.

In university settings, especially for first-year students, listening is vital for understanding lectures, following explanations, and participating in discussions. It is not simply the act of hearing words, but a cognitive process that involves attention, interpretation, and response.

Active listening, unlike passive listening, requires students to concentrate fully on the speaker. It also involves mentally organizing the information received in order to understand meaning, identify key points, and retain content. This makes it particularly useful for taking notes during lectures.

In the context of English as a Foreign Language (EFL), active listening becomes more challenging. Many students struggle with fast speech, unfamiliar vocabulary, or difficulty staying focused. These factors can prevent them from understanding the lesson or taking useful notes.

This chapter presents a theoretical overview of active listening. It explains the nature of listening, defines what active listening means, and compares it to passive listening. It also outlines the importance of active listening in EFL learning and describes strategies that help learners become more effective and engaged listeners.

## 1. Definition of listening skill

Listening is widely recognized as one of the most important skills in language learning, particularly in the context of English as a Foreign Language (EFL). Buck (2001) defines listening as “an active process of constructing meaning by applying knowledge to the incoming sound” (p. 31). This highlights that listening involves more than simply hearing words; it requires the use of both linguistic and non-linguistic knowledge to understand meaning.

Traditionally, listening was viewed as a passive skill in which the listener merely receives sounds. However, Anderson and Lynch (1988) challenge this perspective by arguing that listening is in fact an active process. Similarly, Clark and Clark (1977) distinguish between narrow and broad views of listening. The narrow view regards listening as just understanding speech, while the broad view includes understanding speech and responding appropriately.

Wolvin and Coakley (1985) identify five key components involved in listening: receiving, attending, understanding, responding, and remembering. These components demonstrate that listening is a complex, interactive process that requires attention, interpretation, and memory.

In the context of foreign language learning, listening plays a crucial role. According to Rost (1990), it is central to language acquisition, as it facilitates the development of vocabulary, pronunciation, and comprehension skills. Without strong listening abilities, learners may struggle to keep up with lectures, engage in discussions, or complete follow-up tasks such as note-taking and writing.

## 2. Definition of active listening

The active listening concept has been studied and talked about by various researchers as an effective communication element. Most of those studies and definitions are built upon Rogers' (1959) foundational perspective, who stated the following: "the ability to perceive the internal frame of another with accuracy, and with the emotional components and meanings... as if one were the other person" (p. 210). This definition that is given by Rogers shows how active listening is a whole skill of understanding the person who is talking (the speaker) in a way that shows the speaker the interest of the listener by what is being said and getting all the emotions behind the words and its meaning.

Purdy (1997) suggests that active listening is about being both conscious (aware and intentional) and effective (achieving the goal of understanding and connecting), which he adds to the active listening principles. He stated that while natural listening is something mature individuals do on a daily basis, like hearing the TV in the background without really paying attention or putting in an effort, conscious listening is not that easy and needs a more focused mind to gather the surrounding information, emotions, and body language that shows when the message is delivered. Based on Purdy, this is why people can enhance their personal situation by building better and stronger human relationships, and also their professional situation when it comes to teamwork or taking better notes while paying attention to teachers in academic settings (Purdy, 1997, p. 2).

Mineyama et al. (2007) look at active listening as a dual-faceted phenomenon, focusing on both attitude and technical skills. Attitude is about the listener giving the speaker the freedom to speak out loud what is in their mind while respecting it without any previous judgmental words or actions. The technical skills are the specific or actual actions showing that the listener

really cares; this can be seen through eye contact, asking questions based on the topic being said, and employing strategic silence, giving more free space to the speaker and encouraging further communication.

Based on the past definitions of active listening in general, “active listening is a specific concept that shows listening as not just hearing words and understanding their phonological and literal meaning but more about grasping every detail around what’s said: the tone, emotions, and body language. By doing that, along with the right techniques, the listener will have great chances to gather better personal and professional relationships.”

### **3. Comparison between active and passive listening**

Active listening is marked by a mindful and engaged manner of hearing and understanding the message delivered by the speaker in communication. The main focus is not only hearing what is being said, which is called passive listening, but to fully understand and grasp its meaning, including the unspoken feelings, intentions, and viewpoints. Even with the newest and most recent investigations on listening, particularly active listening, the concepts presented in Carl Rogers and Richard Farson’s 1957 book, ‘Active Listening,’ are widely considered the primary source upon which much of the current researches in the field are built. Based on that, the following table contains the differences between active and passive listening in terms of definition, goals, characteristics, interaction style, effectiveness, and application.

**Table 1: active listening VS passive listening based on Rogers and Richard Farson's 1957 book, 'Active Listening'.**

Aspect	Active listening	Passive listening
<b>Definition</b>	Fully engaging with the speaker to understand their message deeply, rather than preparing a response.	Hearing information without fully processing or responding to it, often disengaged.
<b>Goal</b>	Clear communication, mutual understanding, and eliminating misunderstandings.	Familiarizing oneself with content or language in a relaxed manner, without full engagement.
<b>Characteristics</b>	Focused attention, empathy, meaningful feedback, and active participation in the Communication process.	Minimal attention, lack of feedback, and potential distractions causing disengagement.
<b>Interaction style</b>	Collaborative and dynamic, involving both verbal and nonverbal expressions of understanding.	Passive and one-sided, with little to no interaction or contribution to the conversation.
<b>effectiveness</b>	Promotes lasting knowledge, meaningful connections, and improved communication.	Provides limited retention and understanding; typically supports learning indirectly.
<b>Application</b>	Useful in personal, professional, and educational contexts requiring clarity and engagement.	Primarily suited for casual exposure, such as language immersion.

#### 4. The importance of active listening in EFL learning

Active listening plays a pivotal role in enhancing EFL learners' language comprehension. By focusing not only on the spoken words but also on accompanying body language and tone,

students develop a more complete understanding of communication. This attentiveness helps them grasp unfamiliar vocabulary, interpret different accents, and retain key information. Strategies such as summarizing and note-taking further strengthen memory and ensure that essential content is captured and revisited effectively.

Moreover, active listening fosters engagement and builds confidence. By processing information deeply and responding with open-ended questions, learners become more involved in class discussions and group work. This active participation improves their communicative abilities and reduces anxiety, especially in oral tasks and presentations. It also encourages learners to connect ideas across lessons, promoting a deeper grasp of overarching themes and aiding the development of more organized, insightful notes.

Beyond language proficiency, active listening cultivates cultural awareness and prepares students for real-world English-speaking environments. Attending to tone, facial expressions, and context sharpens students' sensitivity to cultural nuances, helping them avoid misunderstandings and engage more effectively. This skill not only enhances classroom interaction but also equips learners for personal and professional scenarios where clear and respectful communication is essential.

## **5. Challenges Faced by EFL Learners in Becoming Active Listeners**

Students frequently encounter numerous obstacles that hinder their proficiency in becoming active listeners. Key factors, including the speaker's speech rate, vocabulary limitations, memory constraints, phonological features, prior knowledge, and listening anxiety, collectively contribute to difficulties in understanding and decoding information in spoken discourse. A comprehensive

understanding of these challenges is crucial for formulating impactful pedagogical approaches to address them.

- **Speech Rate and Speed of Delivery:** One of the most consistently reported difficulties in listening comprehension is the speed at which spoken texts are delivered (Osuka, 2008). Even when articulated at a typical or slower rate, learners may experience several challenges due to their information processing abilities. Research indicates that the threshold beyond which understanding is compromised for EFL students is comparatively low (Renandya & Farrell, 2011), rendering the speech rate a notable barrier.
- **Lexical Coverage and Vocabulary Limitations** Students' capacity for understanding is affected by their level of vocabulary knowledge related to spoken texts. Although some studies and researchers claim that 98% lexical coverage is essential for complete comprehension, Zeeland and Schmitt (2012) indicate that just 90% coverage is required to achieve a full understanding of the context. Thus, these students are required to enhance lexical acquisition whilst concurrently developing inferential abilities in order to overcome lexical knowledge gaps.
- **Short-Term Memory Limitations:** In listening tasks, students are required to actively listen in order to encode and retain linguistic information quickly during the processing of incoming data (Call, 1985). Short-term memory limitations mean that without integration with long-term memory, recently received input may be rapidly forgotten (Goh, 2000). The interplay among perceptual parsing and utilization phases complicates the process for learners, obliging them to cultivate mental strategies to optimize information storage.

- **Phonological Features and Connected Speech:** Words are difficult to recognize in situations where oral discourse contains inherent phonetic modifications such as sound deletion or epenthesis (Graham, 2006; Hamouda, 2013). Moreover, L2 students frequently encounter difficulties while listening to assimilation and reduction phenomena in fluent speech (Renandya & Farrell, 2011). Consequently, it is highly recommended for these individuals to cultivate awareness of sound patterns and interaction with real-world listening texts.
- **Lack of Prior Knowledge :** Understanding is influenced by the degree to which the listener's background knowledge matches the presuppositions made within the spoken text (Carrell, 1983; Chiang & Dunkel, 1992; Connor, 1984). In cases where learners do not possess adequate prior knowledge on the delivered topic, they may find difficulty in making sense of unfamiliar data. Additionally, this underscores the crucial role of pre-listening exercises, which aim to activate background knowledge or information in advance of processing oral input.
- **Listening Anxiety and Psychological Barriers:** Listening performance can be detrimentally impacted by a high level of anxiety, leading learners to become excessively preoccupied with their aural comprehension deficits rather than focusing on the meaning of the message (Aneiro, 1989; Chang, 2010, 2016; Elkhafaifi, 2005; Kimura, 2011; Wang, 2010). On the other hand, students' fear of missing or misunderstanding oral content leads to less engagement in the active listening process (Renandya & Farrell, 2011). To overcome these problems, strategies such as self-monitoring, relaxation techniques, and structured listening exercises can contribute to reducing these difficulties.

- **Exposure to Authentic Listening Materials:** The limited interaction with real-world listening resources constrains students' ability to engage with the pronunciation and native speech features (Goh, 2000). Moreover, pedagogical or academic recordings mostly differ from everyday interactions in real-world contexts, thus complicating adaptation for them. In order to mitigate this, it's important for students to practice using different spoken materials: interviews, dialogues, and lastly podcasts.
- **Structural and Contextual Challenges:** Grammatical framework, cohesion, and organization may also generate further challenges for listeners (Richards, 1983; Hamouda, 2013). The way spoken language is delivered, such as pauses, speech errors, abbreviated expressions, and rhythm, collectively influences how the listener processes it. In that case, students are obligated to acquire techniques for recognizing discourse markers and linguistic cues to facilitate accurate interpretation.

In conclusion, students of EFL face multiple challenges toward becoming active listeners. And it's a must to be aware of these difficulties and limitations in order to create strategies and abilities that help in overcoming them.

## 6. Active listening strategies (Broad Approaches)

Listening, as stated in previous definitions in this work, is an essential skill that any student of foreign languages, in this context the English language, needs to give focused attention to, trying to reach the level of being not just a passive listener but an active listener, leading to better academic achievements. Drawing on Tony Lynch's chapter, "Listening: Sources, Skills, and

Strategies" (2012), alongside foundational research in language learning, this section explores key strategies tailored for EFL students.

In the following paragraphs, three active listening strategies are stated. These strategies focus more on the theoretical knowledge with a broader view of this concept, which are: Metacognitive Listening, Cognitive Listening, Social and Affective Listening strategies. Each one of them has some specific strategies under it.

- **Metacognitive Listening Strategies**

Metacognitive listening strategies are important when it comes to a person's own awareness of their listening process, not just listening unconsciously but taking control of it, and they are divided into three main strategies: planning, monitoring, and evaluating. Each strategy can be helpful for students to approach listening tasks systematically and with greater awareness.

The planning strategy is mostly about the pre-action that students need to consider before even engaging in the listening task. Starting with setting specific goals of what the purpose of this listening is or what are the important parts to focus on. Next, the challenges that may occur during this task are the lack of vocabulary or the speaker's rapid accent. And lastly finding solutions for the challenges that may occur. Moreover, learners can plan ahead by explaining the main concepts and accurate vocabulary for a coming lecture. Planning not only helps students prepare for the task ahead but also allows them to listen with a more focused mind and intention, which is prioritized in the academic context where the content is mostly complex.

The monitoring strategy differs from the planning strategy when it comes to the time of happening. In that, the monitoring strategy focuses more on real-time comprehension and self-checking during the listening activity. That involves being actively aware of the errors that occur as they happen and searching for helpful ways to solve these comprehension problems. This

ongoing self-checking process leads EFL students to better understand during the ongoing lesson being taught.

The evaluation strategy is the final step in this metacognitive process. When the listening task ends, an important process occurs which is self-evaluation. In this stage Self-evaluation is recommended to identify and highlight the points of strength and weakness. In that way, a self and academic development occurs. In that way, some useful strategies are built for future tasks.

Research by Goh and Taib (2006) highlights that metacognitive strategies not only enhance the ability of active listening and comprehension but also build the learners' confidence in their ability to navigate complex listening content.

**Example:**

A first-year EFL student planning for the coming grammar session about the past simple tense. The student searches for the most important concepts and vocabulary that may be used during the session. When this lesson starts, the learner will focus and listen actively while self-checking in real-time, trying to identify the comprehension issues that occur. After the lesson ends, he/she will do some self-evaluation in order to overcome any future issues based on the same criteria.

- **Cognitive Listening Strategies**

Cognitive strategies are focused mental processes and actions that can be done during the act of listening – “here and now strategies” – in order to help learners actively engage with the listening material in the most effective way and maximize the process of information gathering. This can be done by using the three cognitive listening strategies which are stated as follows: inferencing, summarizing, and lastly, the note-taking strategy.

The first cognitive listening strategy to go through is inferencing, where learners listen to the auditory input, finding similarities between the new information that's being said and their past and prior knowledge, in order to understand the new terms and words in that specific context. For instance, when an EFL student hears the term "linguistic diversity," they might infer its meaning based on related phrases like "language variety" or "cultural differences." By doing that, students are able to grasp the general meaning without needing a direct translation, linking it to past experiences and knowledge.

Another crucial cognitive strategy is summarizing, which involves taking the spoken material from just hearing it into writing it down as key points or notes based on the most important parts and information. Summarizing helps students focus more on the vital parts without going deep into the unnecessary details. Writing while listening helps in memorizing the content, especially using simple and accurate words, unlike the complex language used on the teachers' handouts.

The last cognitive strategy to go through is note-taking. Summarizing is part of the note-taking process, which is a more structured and organized way to cover and record essential information. Any effective note-taking includes well-organized content in a logical flow by using keywords and highlighting important lesson points. According to Graham and Macaro (2008), teaching cognitive listening strategies such as note-taking significantly improves listening performance because it enables learners to be actively engaged with the auditory content delivered to them and retain knowledge for future use.

**Example:**

A first-year student attending a grammar lesson fifteen minutes in heard the professor ask another student to close the door. Drawing on their past knowledge, they inferred from the

professor's words that no one else would be allowed to enter the classroom from that point onward. Following this, they tried to capture important information by summarizing the key points and then organizing them into well-structured sentences by taking effective notes to help memorize the content.

- **Social and Affective Listening Strategies**

Social and affective listening strategies tackle two important aspects: social listening strategies, which are about how to interact with others, especially during collaborative tasks, seeking clarification to avoid misunderstandings or jumping to conclusions; and affective listening strategies, which help the listener with their own emotions and feelings, and how to manage and deal with them.

Starting with seeking clarification as one important social strategy, it's all about being actively present and the listeners asking questions to confirm their understanding. For example, a student at a linguistic session asking the professor to rephrase what is being said, this seems to be complex for the level of this student. In simpler words to avoid any misunderstanding. This process or strategy makes it easier for learners to follow along in the right direction.

The second effective social listening strategy is collaborative learning. The name "collaborative" shows the core of this strategy, which is learning within peers or more to reinforce comprehension and communication between students. Furthermore, students can engage in group activities, such as discussing a specific topic together during an oral session to get different perspectives and ideas. Collaborative learning not only helps increase the overall understanding but also betters the learning experience and gives chances to different students in order to hear divergent thoughts about the same topic.

On the other hand, affective listening strategies build upon the learner themselves, their feelings, emotions such as anxiety and shyness, and boosting their confidence in the listening tasks. One of the popular techniques used in this strategy is positive self-talk that helps students stay calm and focus during the difficult situations they face without letting their negative emotions take advantage of them. For example, a student facing difficulty in understanding some complex linguistic terms, in that situation the learner has to take control and remind themselves that “I do not need to understand everything,” “I need to understand the general idea,” “everything is fine, I can figure it out.” Xu and Huang (2018) emphasize that affective listening strategies play an important role in reducing anxiety and making the overall experience of learning and performance better, especially for EFL students that face a lot of challenges while listening.

**Example:**

After attending a linguistic session, the student used social and affective strategies to enhance their understanding. They sought clarification by asking their professor about some unclear spots that were tackled by him during the session. After some time, the professor used collaborative learning by asking them to be divided into groups of two to discuss some points of the lecture to grasp the information better and exchange knowledge. To manage their nervousness and anxiety during this group discussion, students used the positive self-talk technique in order to remind themselves that it’s a normal activity that does not need to be stressed or worried about. This approach helps them remain calm, participate actively, and gain confidence in their listening skills.

## 7. Active listening techniques (specific actions)

Students are required to enhance some techniques in order to follow along with the listening texts provided by the professors and teachers. The table below presents detailed showcases of seven active listening techniques based on the framework stated by Cuncic (2024). These techniques draw a path for students to follow in order to enhance communication by encouraging mindful and meaningful interactions. And each of these techniques includes a definition, a relevant example, and its application in real-world contexts based on the specific requirements of EFL University students, who face numerous challenges in academic listening settings presented earlier in this chapter. By driving through these techniques, students can level up their ability to engage in different university listening activities.

**Table 2: Active listening techniques based on Cuncic's 2024 framework frame work.**

Active Listening	Definition	Example	Application in EFL University
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techniques			Contexts
<b>Be Fully Present</b>	<p>Being fully present involves mentally and physically immersing oneself in the conversation or lecture. It requires complete focus, eliminating distractions like mobile devices or irrelevant thoughts, and using all senses (sight, sound, etc.) to engage with the speaker. By tuning into the speaker's words and emotions, learners create meaningful connections and ensure they absorb the message accurately.</p>	<p>A student attends a linguistics lecture and ensures their phone is put away, avoids daydreaming, and focuses entirely on the professor's explanations while taking notes. They actively resist the urge to multitask.</p>	<p>Helps EFL learners overcome distractions and fully concentrate on complex academic input, such as technical vocabulary or abstract theories in lectures. Staying present enhances comprehension and retention in fast-paced academic environments.</p>

<b>Pay Attention to Non-Verbal Cues</b>	<p>Listening is not limited to spoken words; non-verbal cues, such as facial expressions, body language, and tone, often convey additional meaning. Observing these cues helps listeners interpret emotions and intentions, especially when language barriers exist. For EFL learners, understanding gestures, pauses, and emphasis can provide crucial context.</p>	<p>During a classroom discussion, a professor slows down their speech and gestures toward slides when emphasizing important concepts. The student notices this pattern and focuses extra attention during these moments.</p>	<p>EFL students can use non-verbal cues, such as pauses or stressed syllables, to identify key points in academic lectures, aiding in comprehension even when spoken content is complex or unfamiliar.</p>
<b>Keep Good Eye Contact</b>	<p>Maintaining balanced eye contact signals engagement and attentiveness, making the speaker feel heard. It involves using the 50/70 rule—maintaining eye contact for 50-70% of the time, looking away briefly to avoid discomfort. Effective eye contact strengthens speaker-listener connection while avoiding excessive staring, which can feel awkward.</p>	<p>A student listening to a peer's presentation uses eye contact to show interest, occasionally nodding to convey understanding, but looks away briefly to avoid over-intensity.</p>	<p>Builds rapport during academic interactions, such as group presentations or Q&amp;A sessions. EFL learners gain confidence and demonstrate active participation through proper eye contact.</p>

<b>Ask Open- Ended Questions</b>	<p>Open-ended questions encourage detailed responses and enable meaningful dialogue, fostering deeper understanding. Instead of yes/no queries, these questions invite the speaker to elaborate, which is especially useful for exploring academic concepts.</p> <p>Open-ended questions demonstrate curiosity and respect for the speaker's expertise.</p>	<p>During a seminar, a student asks a guest lecturer: "What do you think are the long-term effects of multilingual education?" instead of asking "Does multilingualism help?"</p>	<p>Encourages EFL students to engage actively in academic discussions, promoting critical thinking and deeper exploration of subject matter.</p>
<b>Reflect What You Hear</b>	<p>Reflecting involves paraphrasing or summarizing the speaker's message to confirm understanding and validate their thoughts. This technique minimizes miscommunication and ensures mutual clarity. It also reassures the speaker that their message is valued and accurately interpreted.</p>	<p>In a study group, a student reflects on a peer's argument by saying: "So what you're saying is that bilingual students have cognitive advantages over monolingual ones?" The peer confirms and adds more detail.</p>	<p>Helps EFL students confirm understanding during group discussions or when interpreting lecture content, ensuring accurate note-taking and mutual comprehension.</p>

<b>Be Patient</b>	<p>Patience means allowing the speaker time to express their thoughts without interrupting or rushing them. It involves listening to understand rather than preparing a response. EFL learners benefit from this approach by avoiding unnecessary pressure during interactions.</p>	<p>During a Q&amp;A session with a professor, a student listens attentively without interrupting or attempting to finish the professor's sentences. They wait until the professor has fully explained their point before asking follow-up questions.</p>	<p>Patience helps EFL students absorb academic discussions at their own pace, especially when processing technical explanations or unfamiliar accents.</p>
<b>Withhold Judgment</b>	<p>Remaining neutral and non-judgmental allows the speaker to share their thoughts freely, creating a safe environment for communication. This skill requires empathy and open-mindedness, which are especially important when engaging in culturally diverse academic settings.</p>	<p>A student participating in a discussion on cultural differences listens carefully to classmates' perspectives without assuming or criticizing their viewpoints.</p>	<p>Fosters meaningful interactions in culturally diverse university settings, encouraging EFL learners to explore different perspectives without bias or assumptions.</p>

## 8. Practical recommendations for teachers to help EFL students become active listeners

Teachers play a crucial role in the students' active listening journey, and they are obligated to create a supportive and low-pressure classroom environment, particularly knowing the negative impacts of the uncontrolled feeling of anxiety, as highlighted in Chang's (2010) research, "Relationship between foreign language anxiety and strategy use: A case of EFL learners' listening comprehension." The following recommendations are some of the ways that professors or teachers can use in order to enhance students' listening comprehension:

- Deliver speech at a modifiable speed to match the students' listening comprehension level and increase the tempo progressively.
- Provide students with pre-listening exercises to activate their background knowledge and offer contextual grounding.
- Present key vocabulary and idioms prior to commencing the session in order to elicit the salient elements within it.
- Use unscripted or real-world auditory resources such as podcasts, interviews, and spontaneous conversations.
- Develop students' metacognitive abilities, including planning, monitoring, and evaluating their auditory comprehension strategies and techniques.
- Train students using specific focused listening activities to enhance their recognition of features of natural spoken language, encompassing reduced vowels and juncture.
- Break down extended listening passages into more concise and understandable units.
- Instruct students on how to use effective note-taking methods to identify the key points, information, and summarize them.

- Offer supportive and developmental feedback to solidify advancements and identify areas for further improvement in the future.
- Foster a learning atmosphere that lowers anxiety and builds strong self-confidence when engaging in listening comprehension tasks.
- Utilize technological and interactivity tools and resources to engage students more in the listening practice.
- Encourage pair or group work listening activities to foster collaborative and shared learning.

## Conclusion

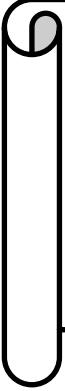
This chapter has explored active listening as a fundamental element in terms of achieving better understanding and comprehensive communication, particularly for EFL university students. Through cognitive, social, and emotional interactions with the spoken content, students are able to develop their capacity and proficiency in processing, interpreting, and remembering information. Nevertheless, although active listening provides students with fundamental skills and abilities for enhancing their understanding of spoken language, it may not be sufficient by itself to secure the recall and organization of this information and these details. Often, active listening is supplemented by other techniques, and the most vital one is note-taking.

Note-taking and active listening are two academic concepts that can't be separated from one another. And when combined, they can create a powerful effect that deepens not only understanding but also enhances long-term memory and academic outcomes. Moreover, active listening allows students to pay attention to the speaker's delivered message, and note-taking ensures that what's being gathered through this process is captured by writing down the key and essential elements for future review. When listening and recording are intertwined, this helps in enhancing engagement with the material, promotes critical thinking, and enables students to address more complex and hard academic assignments.

Moreover, note-taking directly addresses several challenges discussed in the chapter on active listening. For example, the limitations of short-term memory can be mitigated by creating written records that learners can refer to later. Similarly, the challenge of distinguishing between main ideas and supporting details in spoken language can be overcome by developing effective note-taking techniques that help learners identify and prioritize information. As such, note-taking

acts as a bridge between the immediate demands of active listening and the broader goal of mastering academic skills in EFL contexts.

The upcoming chapter will introduce note-taking as a crucial and vital instrument for first-year EFL university students. This section will delve deeper into note-taking, from its definition and importance to its strategies. Through an examination of diverse methods and strategies on how to take effective notes, the goal is to shed light on how learners and instructors can enhance this skill and how active listening can play an important role in this process. Finally, active listening and the techniques used in it are crucial for learning and acquiring English as a foreign language, and the upcoming chapter will explore note-taking as a vital complementary tool in their academic journey.



## **Chapter two: Note-taking in EFL**

## Introduction

Note-taking is a central academic skill that supports student learning across various disciplines. In university settings, especially for EFL (English as a Foreign Language) learners, note-taking serves as a vital tool for organizing, processing, and retaining information presented during lectures. It enables students to capture key points, summarize ideas, and create a written record that can be reviewed for assignments or exams.

For first-year students who are still developing their academic skills, taking effective notes can be challenging. These challenges may be linked to difficulties in understanding spoken language, recognizing important information, or maintaining attention during long lessons. Without the ability to take clear and organized notes, students may struggle to recall information accurately or develop coherent written responses based on lecture content.

This chapter provides a general overview of note-taking as an academic practice. It explores the role of note-taking in supporting comprehension and writing, the techniques commonly used by students, and the cognitive demands involved. The chapter also outlines the benefits of structured note-taking for EFL learners and its potential to improve writing performance.

### 1. Definition of note-taking

Note-taking has been defined in the learning sciences as "a cognitively demanding process that involves selectively identifying, transcribing, and organizing essential information as a personalized memory aid," while combining both external information (e.g., lecture content, textbook diagrams) and internal reflections (e.g., ideas, impressions, hypotheses) (Blair, 2004, p. 331).

Also from a cognitive-psychology point of view, Piolat, Olive, and Kellogg (2005) stated that note-taking is "a complex cognitive activity which requires understanding and selecting important information, transforming it into written form, and simultaneously listening to and processing new incoming information" (p. 294). This multitasking activity needs more focus and can be challenging for some students, especially when the speaker moves so fast between ideas and topics.

On the other hand, an instructional design perspective shows that note-taking contains dual functions: encoding and external memory. Kiewra (1985) argues that note-taking "facilitates encoding and external storage, thereby supporting both comprehension and recall of lecture content" (p. 379). This means that note-taking is a helpful tool to understand the content and remember it, or in other words, it makes it easier to recall the information when taking notes compared to just hearing it.

Looking from a constructivist and metacognitive viewpoint, note-taking is viewed as a tool for self-management, as Boch and Piolat (2005) stated, "note-taking can be seen not only as a support for memory but also as a tool for reflection and metacognition" (p. 103). This takes us to another side of note-taking that allows students who take notes to check their comprehension and adapt active listening techniques.

Finally, note-taking is more than writing down important information; it's a whole system of using different abilities and tasks simultaneously in order to grasp the fullest understanding from the topic presented.

## 2. The Functions and Efficacy of Note-Taking

Note-taking has several functions, but the two most known are highlighted by DiVesta and Gray (1972): encoding and storage. These are commonly known as the process and product

components of note-taking. Going deeply through these two important functions, we find that encoding entails capturing content and information during lessons, enabling learners to develop their understanding of concepts, make logical inferences, and combine prior knowledge with new data obtained. The storage function, in contrast, facilitates learners to review, analyze, and absorb the content subsequently, promoting detailed understanding and better remembrance.

The research initiated by DiVesta and Gray led to many investigations exploring the efficacy of note-taking, specifically in academic fields. To evaluate the effect of encoding on examination scores, these researchers analyze by contrasting students who only listen to the oral content and do not take notes with those who take notes but do not review them. To determine the contribution of storage alongside encoding, contrasts are commonly made between two groups: one that contains an active student who takes and reviews their notes, while the second group is less engaged and mostly listens or reads only.

In summary, most studies established that reviewing notes is the most vital role of note-taking. Although some scholars suggested that note-taking encourages deeper understanding by helping learners make connections between what they know and the new content given to them, the comparatively limited efficacy of it when notes are not reviewed is noticeable. This suggests that enhanced intellectual engagement mainly takes place during the review stage (Kiewra, 1991; Kiewra & Fletcher, 1984).

### **3. The Interconnection between Listening Skills and Note-Taking**

The relationship between Note-taking (NT) and the listening skill is widely recognized as essential parts of successful learning. Researchers like Trzeciak and Mackay (1994) reveal that listening during classes poses distinct difficulties compared to reading, primarily because there is no way to pause or replay the content provided. Furthermore, Al-Musalli (2015) emphasizes the

interdependent relationship between them, claiming that "effective listening is the basic step" for NT and that NT, in turn, enhances concentration during lectures. This interconnection between them exemplifies how closely related both processes are, aiding understanding through auditory information processing and enabling more organized transcribed notes.

Although both involve similar cognitive structures and the capacity to decode information, listening demands students to handle the ongoing process of spoken discourse and interpret components such as intonation, pitch, and pauses to be able to gather the information successfully.

This connection shows that active listening and NT are necessary for each other. Active listening can be completed by taking notes of the information the learner is grasping and understanding effectively; at the same time, NT can't be truly helpful if it's only a bunch of notes taken without fully understanding the topic presented.

#### **4. Traditional vs. Digital Note-Taking**

Handwriting and digital note-taking both offer note-takers different and unique advantages and disadvantages, impacting learners' comprehension, recall, and involvement in distinct manners. Studies indicate that usually handwriting takes more time than typing, which makes the process slower, but it enhances intellectual assimilation. Mueller and Oppenheimer (2014) observed that students who take notes by hand don't capture less content but paraphrase more of it, which is linked to better grasp and understanding of the ideas. On the other hand, Bui et al. (2013) documented that students who take notes using computers write more information and perform better in their tests of factual memory.

Flexibility also plays a critical role in NT performance; numerous students feel that handwriting notes give them more options when it comes to organizing ideas and information

and structuring content in a meaningful and personal way (Reimer et al., 2009). While laptops facilitate the process, capturing information faster, they have more options to organize the notes in various, more clear and clean formats, making it easier to review or edit later.

Investigations show that laptops can be easier and faster to type information, but students are more likely to get distracted, engage less in discussions, and negatively affect the focus of classmates sitting nearby (Sana et al., 2013). While students who take handwritten notes usually retain information more successfully, especially when it comes to using the information learned in application (Mueller & Oppenheimer, 2014).

In conclusion, note-taking is useful in both ways, handwritten or digital, and each one of them has its own ways to benefit the learners. Handwriting gives the learner better and deeper understanding of the content, while digital note-taking using phones or laptops is better when it comes to faster typing and organizing options. In the end, it depends on the student's preference and style and what makes him get the best performance.

## 5. Optimizing Learning Through Note Review

One of the primary benefits of Note-taking is that it allows students to review and revisit their own notes they wrote. Both creating and later examining them leads to enhancing the understanding and deeper learning, helping students to establish new connections or make better understanding between the existing ideas, which facilitates complete content absorption.(Piolat et al., 2005).

Reviewing notes after time of taking them and before an assignment or test helps in reducing disparities in performance associated with various NT techniques including handwritten or digital notes, while still performing better than those who don't take notes(Bohay et al., 2011). Remarkably, reviewing session notes can change NT advantages or push them further,

influencing test or exam results and that is based on the quality of the notes that students take and review(Bui et al., 2013). Creating personal notes that have one's own ideas and understanding then reviewing them also can enhance the long-term learning unlike depending on the notes of someone else because it's about making connections, recalling the information and the whole experience.

Optimizing note reviews involves more than just passive actions like rereading or copying notes but requires engaging methods (Bjork et al., 2013). Also the quality of summaries that are made during note review have a huge effect on the exam or test performance, along with the short-term memory capacity. Encouraging students to actively react with content while reviewing notes booster overall comprehension, even using the notes of a classmate and reviewing them has proven advantages not the same as the one who wrote them in the first place but still better than a general handout.

Finally, reviewing notes is an essential part of note-taking that helps students pass their exams with good markers if the notes are organized, contains personal understanding and reviewed actively just copying someone else's notes without interaction which can make this process less effective.

## 6. Note-taking methods

The fundamental note-taking methods such as the Cornell Method, the Outline Method, and Mapping proposed by Pauk and Owens (2011) in "How to Study in College" are foundational to enhance educational outcomes. These methods focus on coherence, organization and active interaction with the course material. While those core methods are broadly supposed, further effective methods are presented alone with them. Employed in this study both foundational and supplementary methods, as follows:

- **Cornell note-taking method:** The Cornell note-taking method, established over fifty years ago, remains a successful and reliable way to take organized notes. It uses a dual-column layout one column for keywords or questions, and the other for detailed notes—followed by a summary section at the bottom to capture the main ideas of the entire topic. This method is both simple and adaptable across multiple fields of study. By mastering it, students gain a well-structured and consistent note-taking strategy.

**Advantages:**

The Cornell method provides a well-organized structure for note-taking, which facilitates efficient review and enhances comprehension. It is undemanding in terms of time and experience, making it easy to learn and accessible to a wide range of students. Its format is particularly effective for recording the principal concepts and ideas, encouraging learners to extract key information during lectures or readings and to engage more actively with the material.

**Disadvantages:**

Despite its benefits, the Cornell method does come with certain limitations. It requires custom sheets or pre-designed formats, which can be inconvenient or impractical for some students to prepare. Additionally, managing a large number of Cornell notes can become difficult over time, especially without an organized system. It is also not always effective for summarizing content concisely, and research on its overall effectiveness shows mixed results, suggesting that its usefulness may vary depending on the learner and context.

The Cornell Method	
Cue	Notes
Main topic 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Main notes about topic 1</li> <li>Lists</li> <li>Book recommendations</li> </ul>
Main topic 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Main notes about topic 2</li> <li>Quotes</li> <li>Book recommendations</li> </ul>
Summary	<p>A detailed summary of the topics</p>

**Figure 1: Illustration of the Cornell Note-Taking Method. Adapted from NOTTA; Blog, Best Note-Taking Methods, <https://www.notta.ai/en/blog/best-note-taking-methods>**

- **Outline Note-Taking Method:** The outline note-taking method depends on organizing information into a systematic stratification. When applicable, it is recognized as one of the most effective formats for generating well-structured and exhaustive notes. This method can be used in both directions: from general to specific or from specific to general order. Outlined notes are usually simple to revisit, as they show the relationship between themes and topics, helping individuals recognize them easily.

#### **Advantages:**

This method allows for clear and organized note-taking that visually demonstrates the relationship between topics, supported by a logically arranged structure. It is particularly useful for pre-test review, as it promotes clarity without demanding any specially designed paper or complex preparation. Its adaptability makes it well-suited for both classroom activities and

lecture-based learning, offering students a straightforward way to engage with and recall information.

### **Disadvantages:**

Despite its strengths, the method has some challenges. Learners need to receive clear instructions about the topic content in order to apply the approach effectively. Additionally, it requires a deep level of understanding and focused attention during note-taking, going beyond surface-level key points. This demand for cognitive engagement can pose difficulties in fast-paced or cognitively taxing environments.

## *The Outline Method*

### Main topic 1

- Subtopic
  - specific thought on the subtopic

### Main topic 2

- Subtopic
  - specific thought on the subtopic

### Main topic 3

- Subtopic
  - specific thought on the subtopic

**Figure 2: Illustration of the Outline Note-Taking Method. Adapted from NOTTA Blog, Best Note-Taking Methods, <https://www.notta.ai/en/blog/best-note-taking-methods>.**

- **Boxing Note-Taking Method:** The boxing note-taking method is named "boxing" because it divides the paper into distinct boxes, and each box includes a different topic than the others. It was primarily developed for virtual interfaces and is also easily adaptable for handwriting use.

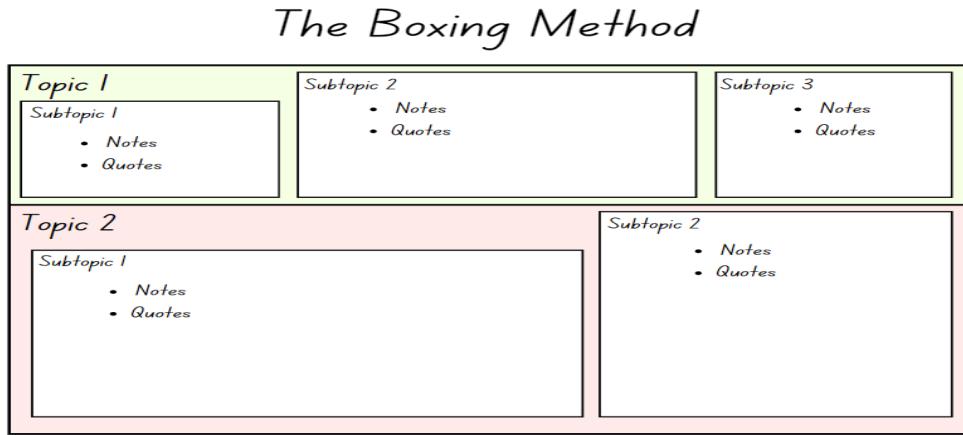
The layout is visually pleasing and easy to process. Since it was originally designed for digital use, it offers more options on that side, such as selecting, adjusting dimensions, repositioning material, and enhancing flexibility making it more suitable for visual learners.

### **Advantages:**

This method is particularly well-suited for virtual learners who prefer typing their notes on laptops, providing a smooth and accessible digital format. Its visually appealing structure adds to its functionality, presenting information in a clean and organized way that makes content easier to scan and review. Even dense or complicated material tends to appear more digestible when arranged through this format, which enhances clarity and motivation for revisiting the notes later.

### **Disadvantages:**

On the downside, this method can be somewhat time-consuming, especially when used in real-time settings such as live lectures or fast-paced discussions. Its emphasis on structure and visual arrangement may slow down the note-taking process, making it less practical when speed and immediacy are required.



**Figure 3: Illustration of the Boxing Note-Taking Method.** Adapted from NOTTA Blog, Best Note-Taking Methods, <https://www.notta.ai/en/blog/best-note-taking-methods>.

- **Charting Note-Taking Method:** The charting method, or "matrix note-taking", includes structuring content in the form of rows and columns (a "table") for efficient classification and organization. While it is not applicable to every discipline, it has proven to be remarkably successful when used in areas containing empirical or quantitative information that can be clearly organized into tables.

However, it can be less practical during live lectures or for any type of notes that require detailed explanations or making connections between topics.

#### **Advantages:**

This method is particularly effective for organizing factual or statistical information, as it allows for straightforward comparisons across different subjects or categories. Its tabular layout enhances clarity, making complex data easier to interpret and relationships between details more visible. Charted notes are especially useful during revision sessions, as the consistent format enables quick retrieval of information, which is valuable when studying comparative material.

#### **Disadvantages:**

However, this method is not broadly applicable across all academic subjects. It is best suited for content that naturally lends itself to categorization, and may be ineffective when dealing with narrative, theoretical, or abstract material. Additionally, it requires a solid understanding of the topic beforehand to properly structure the chart, and the process of setting up and filling in the chart can be time-consuming, particularly during live lectures or discussions.

<i>The Charting Method</i>			
<i>Method</i>	<i>Benefits</i>	<i>Drawbacks</i>	<i>Opinion</i>
<i>Method 1</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Benefit 1</li><li>• Benefit 2</li><li>• Benefit 3</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Drawback 1</li><li>• Drawback 2</li><li>• Drawback 3</li></ul>	<i>Opinion notes</i>
<i>Method 2</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Benefit 1</li><li>• Benefit 2</li><li>• Benefit 3</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Drawback 1</li><li>• Drawback 2</li><li>• Drawback 3</li></ul>	<i>Opinion notes</i>
<i>Method 3</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Benefit 1</li><li>• Benefit 2</li><li>• Benefit 3</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Drawback 1</li><li>• Drawback 2</li><li>• Drawback 3</li></ul>	<i>Opinion notes</i>

**Figure 4: Illustration of the Charting Note-Taking Method.** Adapted from NOTTA Blog, Best Note-Taking Methods, <https://www.notta.ai/en/blog/best-note-taking-methods>.

- **Mapping Note-Taking Method:** The mapping note-taking method, or "concept mapping", often employs visual representation to connect diverse principles, thoughts, and facts. Historical personalities like Leonardo da Vinci and Albert Einstein are reported to have utilized this method in their scholarly writings to mix drawings with written texts.

This method starts with the core subject put in the center of the page, which then extends into subtopics, supporting ideas, and specific particulars. It yields a distinctive visual overview of the topic, proving it especially beneficial for visual students who prefer this kind of specially structured notes over the normal ones. But this nature makes it time-consuming during live lectures.

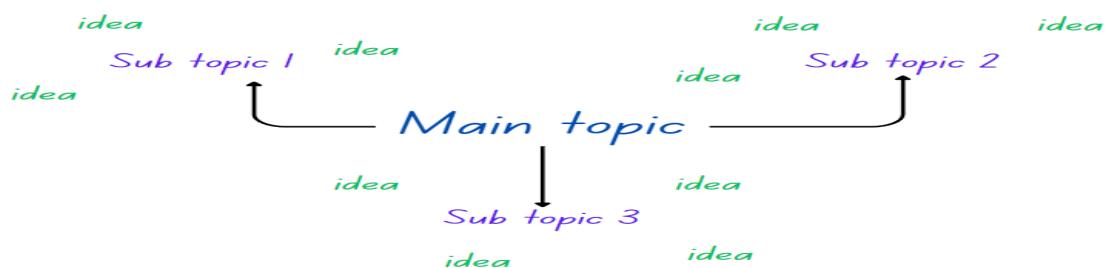
### **Advantages:**

The mapping method is especially useful for visual learners, as it offers a clear overview of broader subjects and highlights connections between individual ideas. It encourages active participation and supports deeper understanding, making it highly effective for reviewing complex material.

### **Disadvantages:**

However, this method is less practical during live classes due to the time needed for creating detailed maps. It also requires a certain level of skill to accurately represent concepts and their relationships, which may challenge some students.

### *The Mapping Method*



*Figure 5: Illustration of the Mapping Note-Taking Method. Adapted from NOTTA Blog, Best Note-Taking Methods, <https://www.notta.ai/en/blog/best-note-taking-methods>.*

- **Sentence Note-Taking Method**

The sentence method includes writing distinct sentences separated by lines to quickly note as much data and information as possible from what is being presented. It requires fast handwriting or typing ability to be efficient, making it a highly adapted note-taking method during live lectures.

Although this method generates extensive notes unlike other techniques, making it challenging to review, it creates notes suitable for fast-paced lessons. Rewriting its **notes** after class can help overcome the unstructured form. In other words, if other methods are possible, it's better to use them over it.

**Advantages:**

The sentence method is highly flexible and adaptable across various subjects. It proves especially beneficial during fast-paced lectures, enabling learners to quickly capture information in a straightforward and efficient manner without the need for pre-structured formats.

**Disadvantages:**

Despite its practicality, the sentence method can be difficult to review due to its lack of visual organization. Since it consists of continuous sentences without clear emphasis on key ideas, important points may become buried and harder to identify compared to more structured note-taking approaches.

## The Sentence Method

### Topic: Keywords on Etsy

1. SEO goal is eligibility to rank, not direct ranking.
2. Etsy looks at titles, tags, attributes, categories, and descriptions for keywords.
3. Fully describe the item.
4. Use descriptive keywords on the left and anchor keywords on the right = Combine them to construct the title.
5. Use 2 words per tag and all 13 tag slots.
6. Avoid repeating keywords.
7. Add image alt text once shop is steadily selling 1 item per day

*Figure 6: Illustration of the Sentence Note-Taking Method. Adapted from NOTTA Blog, Best Note-Taking Methods, <https://www.notta.ai/en/blog/best-note-taking-methods>.*

### • **Blurting Note-Taking Method**

The Blurting method goes beyond rereading and highlighting notes or any of those passive acts. It is a learning strategy where one self-assesses their knowledge to enhance active recall, which has proven to be an effective way to improve comprehension and reinforce information.

This method includes reading a section from a text or notes, then putting them aside and writing down as much information as you can recall from the original text. This happens by actively engaging and encouraging the brain to process the information more deeply, helping store it in long-term memory. It's a simple yet surprisingly effective way to spot knowledge gaps and address them at the same time.

### **Advantages:**

This method enhances comprehension by encouraging learners to rephrase content in their own words, fostering deeper engagement with the material. Its focus on active recall helps reinforce memory retention over time, making it more effective than passive reviewing. Additionally, its

flexible nature allows students to adapt the strategy to match their personal learning preferences and study habits.

**Disadvantages:**

On the downside, this method functions more as a rewriting exercise after class rather than a real-time note-taking technique, which limits its standalone use. It also requires considerable mental effort and dedication, which can be taxing, particularly when applied to dense or complex subject matter.

- **Q/E/C Note-Taking Method**

The Question/Evidence/conclusion (Q/E/C) method provides direct surprisingly impactful way to structure the notes from lectures by focusing on main ideas and their connections. This method is based on principles demanding claims backed by evidence leading to explicit brief overviews. Every notion is partitioned into three unique sections: Question, the supporting evidence and lastly the conclusion.

This note taking method is mostly suitable for humanities subjects like literature and history; it can also be adapted for other certain technical courses. Furthermore, it acts as an advantageous instrument for drafting and organizing written arguments, assisting students in constructing and pinpointing additional questions or opposing viewpoints throughout the process.

**Advantages:**

This method works well across most subjects, especially in the humanities, where organizing content is essential. It's particularly effective for planning argumentative essays, helping students

grasp broader themes and understand the connections between overarching ideas and supporting points.

### Disadvantages:

However, it is less suitable for technical subjects that require precision and detail. Additionally, its structured nature makes it impractical for fast-paced, live lectures where there's little time to organize thoughts into outlines in real time.

## *The QEC Method*

### *Question:*

*Are dogs loyal?*

### *Evidence:*

- Pack instinct*
- Follow you around*
- Make eye contact*

### *Conclusion:*

*Dogs show a level of trust and see you as a leader of a pack, therefore they are loyal.*

*Figure 7: Illustration of the Q/E/C Note-Taking Method Adapted from NOTTA Blog, Best Note-Taking Methods, <https://www.notta.ai/en/blog/best-note-taking-methods>.*

### • Morse code Note-Taking Method

The Morse code note-taking method, a recent evaluation of the Q/E/C method, has seen increased adoption among researchers for its productivity in noting educational materials. Regardless of the name, it is actually different from the actual Morse code, utilizing dots to signify key points and dashes for supporting details (arguments, examples).

This method enables users to record without pausing their reading, which helps in reducing the amount of missed information.

**Advantages:**

This method is valuable for identifying keywords, main points, and supporting details, which makes it especially effective for test preparation. By requiring students to interpret and summarize content, it fosters critical thinking and strengthens their understanding of the material.

**Disadvantages:**

However, its effectiveness is limited to certain types of reading materials, particularly those with a persuasive or structured scholarly format. Additionally, because it involves condensing information, there's a risk of omitting essential context, which may reduce the depth of understanding.

## **7. Suggestions for Students and Instructors to Improve Note-Taking Practices**

Taking effective notes is crucial for both students and their teachers for more beneficial learning and teaching along with educational efficacy. Using the correct methods, students can capture and recall important information, while instructors should create a positive environment that supports students to take meaningful notes. The coming recommendations are based on Pauk and Owens' (2011) "How to Study in College," providing some instructions to improve their notes.

- **For Students:**

Students should aim to write content in their own words rather than copying it directly from the source. This method of paraphrasing promotes deeper understanding, encourages active engagement, and enhances the ability to recall information later.

Reviewing notes after class is essential. It allows learners to correct mistakes, fill in any gaps, and reorganize the content in a way that makes it more coherent and useful for revision during exams.

To reinforce memory, students should actively test themselves using their notes. Unlike passive review or simple rereading, self-testing strengthens long-term retention and helps identify areas that need further review.

Choosing between handwriting and typing depends on the individual's learning preferences and strengths. While handwriting aids in mental processing and focus, typing is quicker and may suit students who need to capture information rapidly. However, it also comes with a greater risk of distraction.

Taking notes should become a habit, even when the material feels easy or familiar. Recording information using effective strategies reinforces memory and ensures learners have reliable resources to return to when studying.

- **For Instructors:**

Instructors should clearly communicate their teaching approach so that students understand how information will be delivered and how to follow along effectively. This transparency

enables learners to adapt their note-taking methods in ways that align with the lesson structure and pace.

Providing pre-class readings—such as a short introduction to the topic and key vocabulary—can help students prepare more effectively. Having this foundational context allows them to concentrate on key ideas during the session and take more focused, relevant notes.

Teachers are encouraged to promote active learning by urging students to reflect on and write their own interpretations, rather than copying verbatim. This strategy enhances comprehension and leads to notes that are more meaningful and personalized.

Facilitating connections between different lessons and broader themes is also essential. When students can identify how topics interrelate, they are more likely to construct organized, coherent notes that reflect deeper understanding.

Finally, instructors should occasionally monitor students who use digital devices for note-taking. Ensuring that laptops are being used purposefully and not as a source of distraction helps maintain focus within the classroom and supports a positive learning environment.

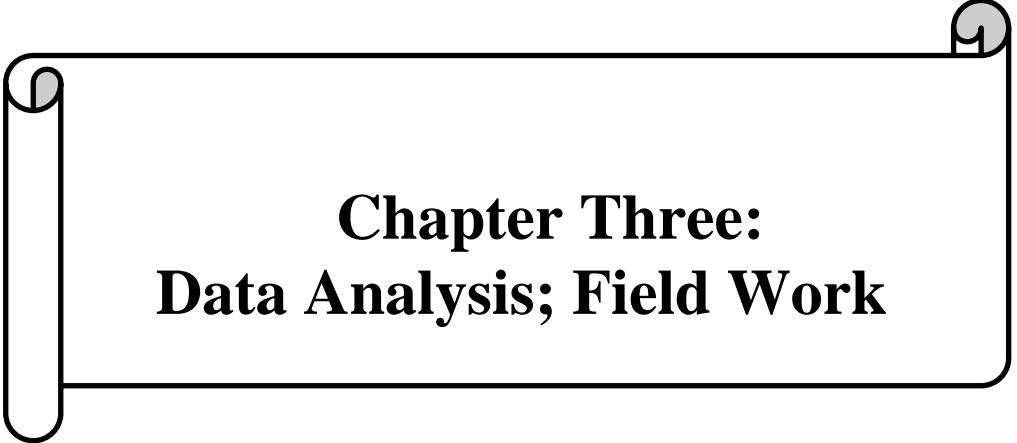
## Conclusion

The function of note-taking in learning EFL is undeniably substantial, acting as both a technique for capturing content and a dynamic cognitive process that helps in improving understanding and retention. Across this chapter, we discussed various sides of note-taking, starting with definition, function, its relationship with active listening, traditional vs. digital note-taking, NT review, and lastly, the methods and suggestions. Additionally, the methods are

explored from different angles, providing the strengths, weaknesses for different subjects and learning styles. Also proving the importance of note review for different reasons and scholars' perspectives.

By giving practical recommendations or suggestions for both students to improve their notes and teachers to provide a positive learning environment to help their students succeed in their note-taking and learning journey. Learners are advised to implement constructive NT practices, frequently review their notes, participate in self-testing in order to connect the disparity between comprehension and implementation. Similarly, teachers hold a vital position in assisting learners by providing unambiguous instructions, promoting links between ideas and the overall class environment.

Lastly, note-taking is not about writing a large amount of information and copying what is being said word by word only without understanding the content, but before that it is a cognitive practice that involves using the brain to comprehend the content first. In that case, the notes are meaningful and last in the memory for a longer period.



## **Chapter Three: Data Analysis; Field Work**

## Introduction

After discussing the theoretical background of active listening and note-taking in the previous chapters, this chapter presents the practical part of the research. It aims to describe the methodology used to collect and analyze data, and to explore how first-year EFL students and their teachers perceive the relationship between active listening and note-taking in classroom settings.

The fieldwork focuses on investigating students' attitudes, habits, and difficulties related to listening and note-taking during lectures. It also gathers teachers' views on their students' listening behavior and the quality of their written notes. The research tools used in this study include a questionnaire administered to students and interviews conducted with teachers from the English Department at Biskra University.

This chapter begins by describing the research population and sampling method. It then explains the design of the data collection tools and how they were implemented. After that, the results of both the student questionnaire and teacher interviews are presented, analyzed, and interpreted in relation to the study's objectives. Finally, the chapter concludes with a summary of the key findings and their relevance to the research questions.

### 1. Research design:

- **Methodology**

This research study employs an exploratory approach, which aims to investigate and understand the perspectives of EFL freshmen at Biskra University regarding active listening and its role in taking effective notes during classroom sessions. Rather than

testing hypotheses, the study seeks to gain deeper insight into real classroom experiences by examining students' and teachers' views.

It utilizes a mixed-method exploratory design. This strategy combines qualitative data gathered through open-ended questions in both student questionnaires and teachers' interviews, alongside quantitative data obtained from the closed-ended items in the student questionnaires. By combining both qualitative and quantitative data collection methods, the study provides a more comprehensive and nuanced understanding of the participants' opinions and classroom practices.

- **The sample of the study**

In this research, the participants were 41 first-year EFL students at the Department of English Language, Faculty of Letters and Foreign Languages at the University of Mohamed Khider, Biskra, and 6 teachers from the same department. The students, who were in their initial year of university English language studies during the 2024-2025 academic year, were randomly selected to participate in the questionnaire phase of the study. The students' participation was motivated by the common difficulties and challenges they face in gathering oral information and how to take effective notes during those sessions. Moving to the teachers, they were chosen based on their experience in teaching first-year university students and their insights into strategies and practices that they used or they see that are beneficial for students, which can help improve both active listening and note-taking abilities.

- **Data analysis procedures**

The data obtained were analyzed in an analytical manner; the quantitative data from the closed-ended questionnaire questions are analyzed using frequencies and

percentages and presented in tables and pie charts, followed by comments on the key findings and a discussion of the responses within each section. On the other hand, the qualitative data from the open-ended questions and the teachers' interview questions are analyzed using thematic analysis in order to identify the similarities and differences.

## 2. Surdents questionnaire

- **Description of the questionnaire**

The questionnaire was given by hand to 41 first year EFL students from the department of English language at the University of Mohamed Khider, Biskra, during the academic year 2024-2025. Before the questions section a brief introduction was given, and the questionnaire ended with thanking the participants for their time. Divided into five sections with twenty questions as a whole, it employed a variety of types, including multiple choice, frequency scales, and open-ended questions, seeking to get thoughtful answers and data.

The five sections of the questionnaire and their purpose are summarized as follows: Section one (2 questions): the purpose is to get demographic data about the participants. Section two (“Active Listening in Classroom Sessions” – 4 questions): in this section, we explore the habits and practices of listening made by those students. Third section (“Challenges in Active Listening” – 3 questions): exploring the difficulties in becoming active listeners faced by them. Fourth section (“Note-Taking in Classroom Sessions” – 9 questions): it's the same purpose as the second one, but it investigates note-taking habits. Fifth section (“Relationship Between Active Listening and Note-Taking” – 2 questions): this section aims to understand how the two concepts are related based on the students' perspectives.

- **Aim of the questionnaire**

The designed questionnaire aims to investigate the EFL students' views about the role of active listening in effective note-taking and the importance of these two skills in enhancing their comprehension and overall understanding. Moreover, exploring the experiences, perceptions and self-reported practices relevant to the two skills in terms of the classroom environment, to provide valid proof to stand for the research questions.

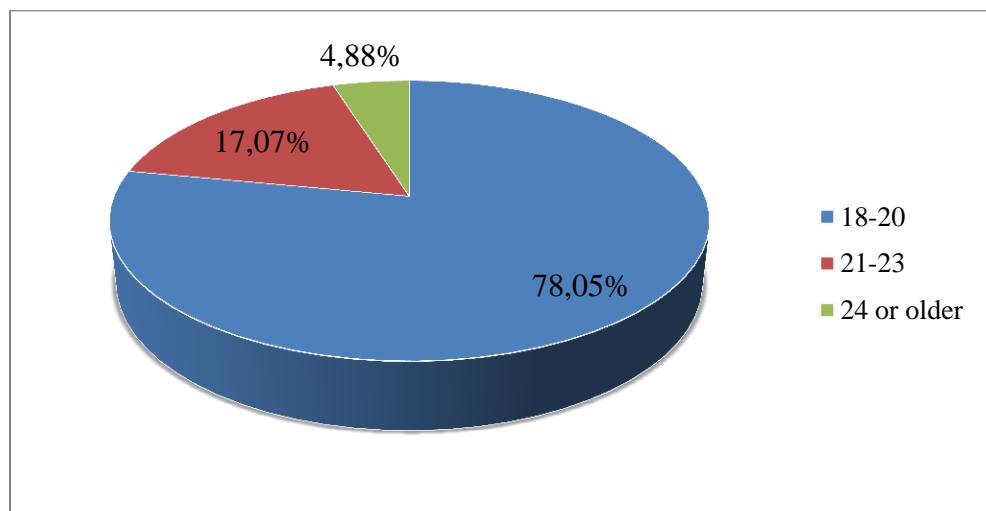
- **Result analysis of students' questionnaire**

- **Section one: general information**

**Item 1: what is your age?**

*Table 3: Age distribution of the participants.*

Age group	Participants	Percentages (%)
18-20	32	78.05%
21-23	7	17.07%
24 or older	2	4.88%
<b>Total</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>100%</b>



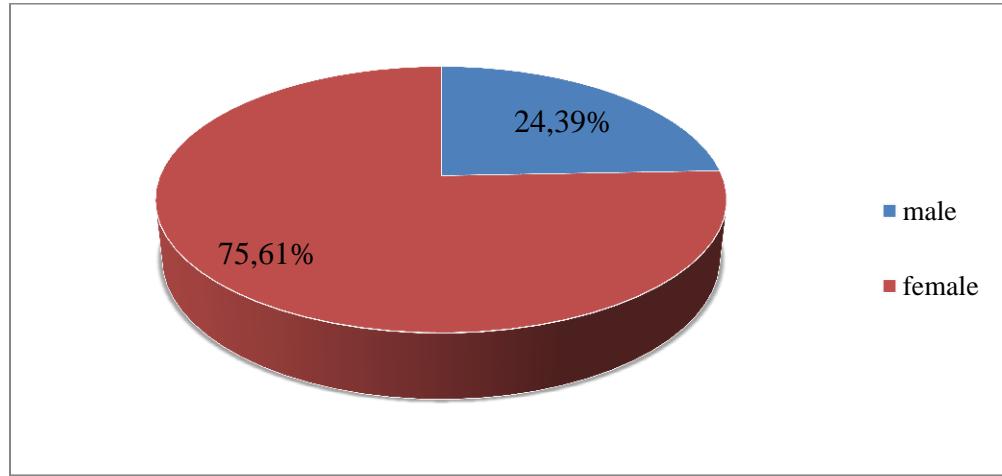
*Figure 8: Percentage distribution of the participants by age number.*

The provided **table 3** and **figure 8** show the 41 participants' age demography. The majority, with 78.05% (n = 32), were between 18–20 years. Next, 17.07% (n = 7) were between 21–23 years old, while the participants that are 24 or older are 4.88% (n = 2), which includes that the majority of participants in this study were between the ages of 18 and 20, indicating a younger demographic within the sample.

### **Item 2: what is your gender?**

*Table 4: gender distribution of participants*

Gender	Participants	Percentages (%)
Male	10	24.39%
Female	31	75.61%
<b>Total</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>100%</b>



*Figure 9: percentage of participants by gender.*

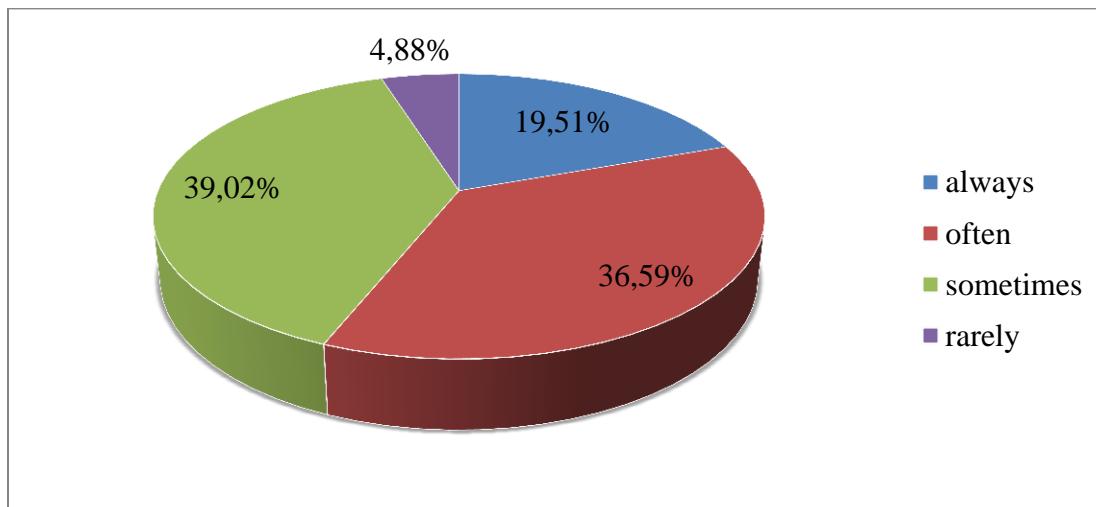
**Table 4** and **Figure 9** presented above regarding the gender distribution of the students show that the female group is higher (75.61%, n=31). On the other hand, the male group comprises less than half of the participants (24.39%, n=10). This should be taken into consideration when interpreting the findings and their generalization

- **Section two: Active listening in classroom sessions**

**Item 3: how often do you actively focus on understanding others (e.g.; teachers or classmates) during English classroom sessions, such as discussions or group tasks?**

**Table 5: frequency of focusing on understanding others during English classroom sessions**

Response options	Frequency	Percentages (%)
Always	8	19.51%
Often	15	36.59%
Sometimes	16	39.02%
Rarely	2	4.88%
Never	0	0.00%
<b>Total</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>100%</b>



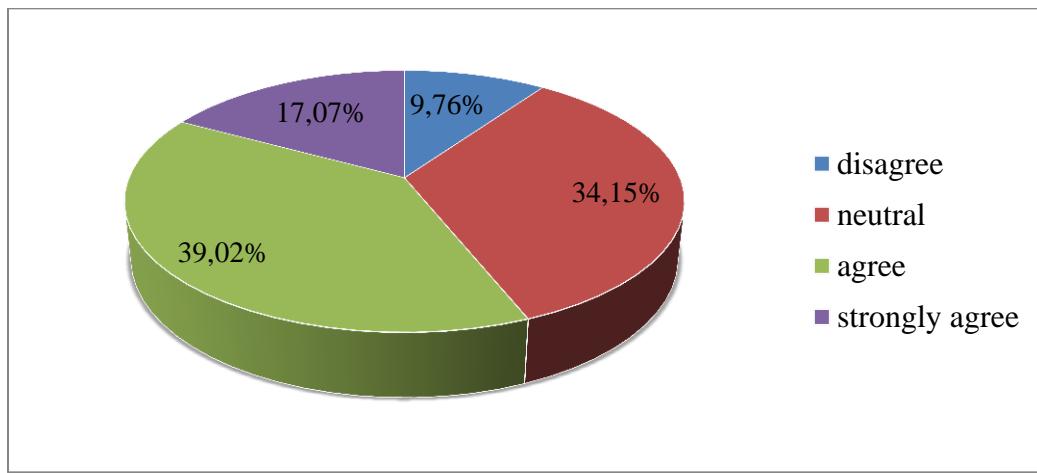
**Figure 10: percentage of participants by frequency of focusing on understanding others.**

**Table 5** and **Figure 10** illustrate that the majority of participants reported actively listening to others during classroom sessions, though in a moderate manner with 'sometimes' (39.02%, n=16) and 'often' (36.59%, n=15), followed by 'always' (19.51%, n=8). On the other hand, only two students chose 'rarely' (4.88%). This indicates that active listening is a common practice among EFL students, occurring mostly but not consistently.

**Item 4: to what extent do you agree with this statement: " I prepare for classroom sessions by using strategies like reviewing vocabulary or thinking about discussion topics."**

**Table 6: students' agreement on preparing for classroom sessions**

Options	Students count	Percentages (%)
Strongly disagree	0	0.00%
Disagree	04	9.76%
Neutral	14	34.15%
Agree	16	39.02%
Strongly agree	07	17.07%
<b>Total</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>100%</b>



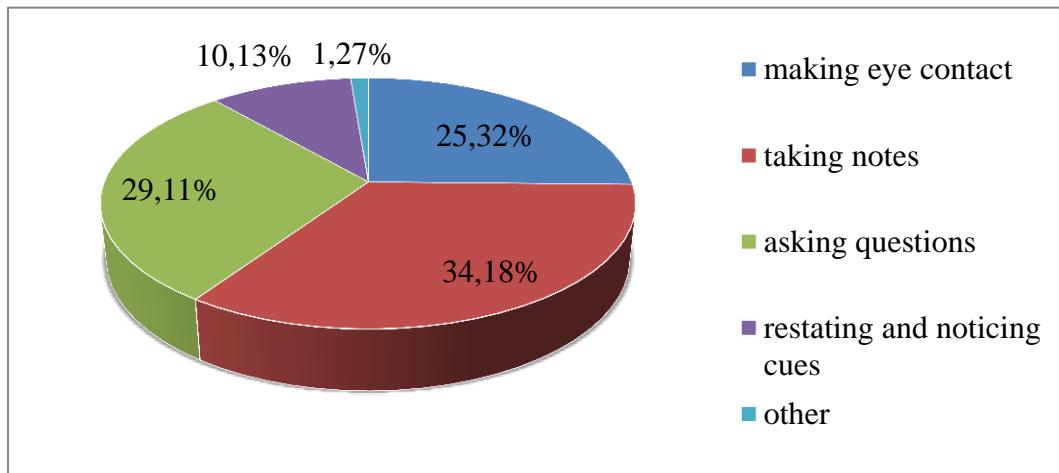
**Figure 11: percentages of students' agreement on preparation strategies**

**Table 6** and **figure 11** shows that among the 41 participants do agree with the statement about class preparation using some strategies. If we combine the "agree" and "strongly agree" categories, we find that (56.09%, n=23). Moreover, a notable number of students (34.15%, n=14) hold a neutral stance, meaning they don't constantly prepare for their class using those strategies or are not sure about their effectiveness. But only a small number of them disagree (9.76%, n=4), and none strongly disagree. This suggests that most students do this practice not that usually but they recognize its importance which is discussed in chapter one.

**Item 5: which active listening techniques do you use during English classroom session? (Select all that apply)**

*Table 7: students' use of active listening techniques during*

Active listening techniques	Times of selection	Selection Percentages (%)
1. Making eye contact with the speaker (teacher or peer).	20	25.32%
2. Taking notes to capture key ideas from discussion.	27	34.18%
3. Asking questions to understand classmates' or teacher's points.	23	29.11%
4. Restating what others say in my own words noticing gestures or tone from peers or teacher.	8	10.13%
5. Other.	1	1.27%
<b>Total time of selection</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>100%</b>



*Figure 12: distribution of active listening techniques among EFL students*

**Table 7** and **Figure 12** illustrate the active listening techniques used by participants. The dominant technique, with 27 selections representing 34.18% of responses, is note-taking. The second most selected technique is asking questions, chosen 23 times (29.11%), which shows that students seek clarification during sessions. Followed by making eye contact, selected 20 times (25.32%), this indicates an awareness of the importance of non-verbal communication. In

contrast, restating what others say was the last chosen one with only 8 selections (10.13%). We see that note-taking is really common and used among EFL students.

**Other (specify):** the one participant that chose this option specify it with writing “**sharing ideas and information about the session (the subject we study).**

**Item 6 (open-ended):** what is one active listening strategy that helps you participate in English classroom sessions (e.g., **group discussions**)? Why does it work for you?

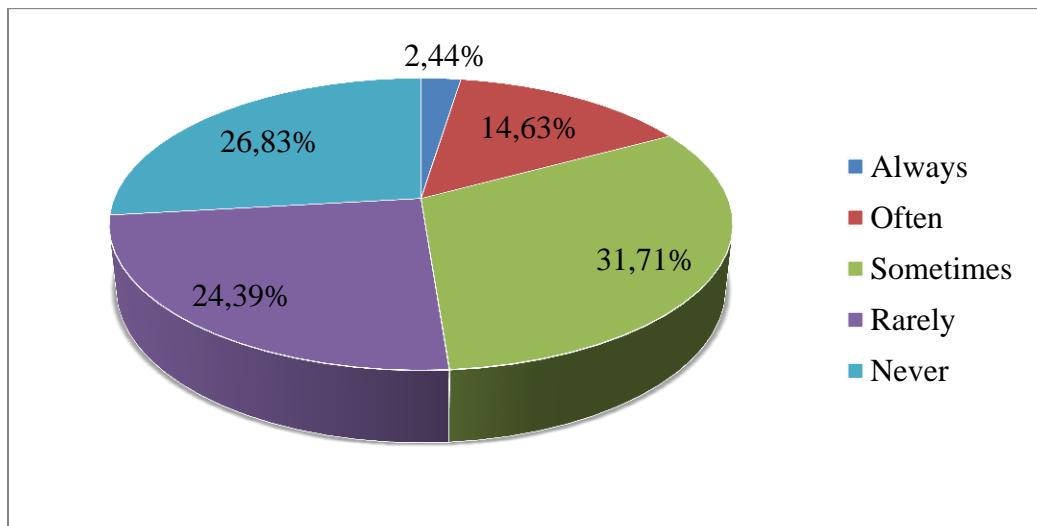
Out of 41 participants, 29 of them shared their active listening strategies that help them participate in the classroom sessions. Group discussions, peer interactions, and classroom presentations were the most frequent responses, with participants mentioning that these strategies helped them improve their understanding, confidence, and idea exchange. Others mentioned listening to music and podcasts to enhance language exposure, while some relied on asking questions, note-taking, or paying attention to the speaker to better follow the lesson. This supports the claims provided in chapter one that active engagement and interaction are key to successful active listening practices.

- **Section three: challenges in active listening**

**Item 7: how often do you feel nervous when trying to understand spoken English in classroom sessions?**

**Table 8: students' frequency of nervousness when comprehending spoken English in class**

Frequency of nervousness	Number of students	Percentages (%)
Always	1	2.44%
Often	6	14.63%
Sometimes	13	31.71%
Rarely	10	24.39%
Never	11	26.83%
<b>Total</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>100%</b>



**Figure 13: percentages of students' nervousness level while listening**

**Table 8** and **Figure 13** reveal that most students (31.71%, n=13) “sometimes” feel nervous when listening to spoken English in class, followed by (26.83%, n=11) who “never” feel nervous and “rarely” experience this feeling with (24.39%, n=10). We recognize that fewer reported frequent nervousness by “often” having (14.63%, n=6) and lastly only one student responded with “always” representing 2.44% of the participants.

The results suggest that even though students get nervous sometimes but not at a high level that can cause anxiety. Meaning that first year EFL university students actually have a sense of self-confidence that can be improved by positive self-talk that we discussed in chapter one.

**Item 8: how hard are these aspects of listening during classroom sessions? (Mark the appropriate box for each aspect).**

**Table 9: students' perceived difficulty with aspects of classroom listening**

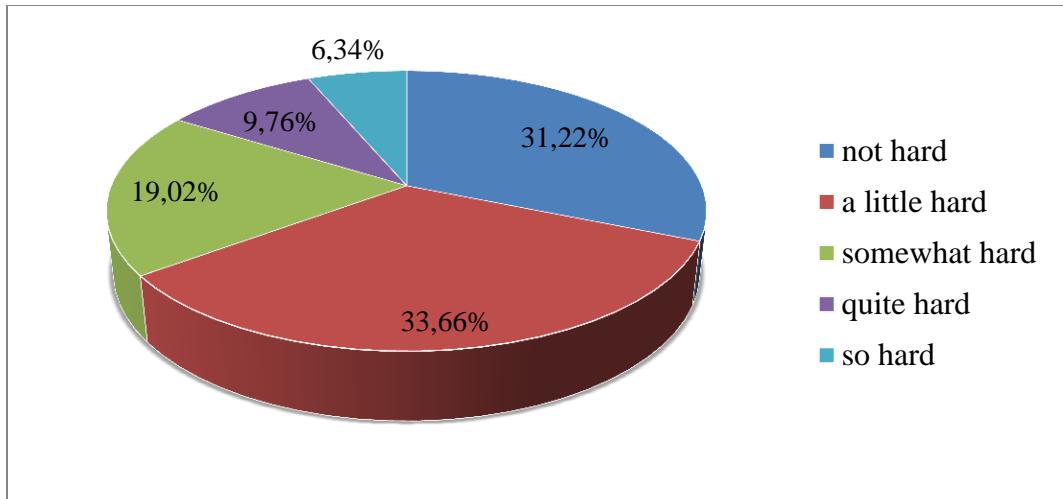
The aspects	Not hard	A little hard	Somewhat hard	Quite hard	So hard
1. Fast speech from peers or teacher.	7	15	11	4	4

<b>2.</b> New or unfamiliar vocabulary.	3	18	9	9	2
<b>3.</b> Understanding different accents.	17	12	7	3	2
<b>4.</b> Remembering key points from activities.	18	12	5	4	2
<b>5.</b> Staying focused during group tasks.	19	12	7	0	3

The results from **Table 9** show that many students find unfamiliar vocabulary and fast speech to be the most challenging aspects. On the other hand, remembering key points and staying focused during group tasks seems less difficult, followed by understanding different accents. These results suggest that teachers play an important role in students' active listening performance by paying attention to their delivery speed.

**Table 10: overall perceived difficulty of classroom listening**

<b>Choice</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentages (%)</b>
Not hard	64	31.22%
A little hard	69	33.66%
Somewhat hard	39	19.02%
Quite hard	20	9.77%
So hard	13	6.34%
<b>Total</b>	<b>205</b>	<b>100%</b>



**Figure 14: distribution of students' perceived difficulty levels in classroom listening**

The summary **Table 10** and **Figure 14** show that the majority of participants found the various active listening activities only slightly difficult. The most selected response was “a little hard” (33.66%), followed closely by “not hard” (31.22%). About 19.02% of students felt the tasks were “somewhat hard,” while only 9.77% chose “quite hard,” and just 6.34% selected “so hard.” One repeated challenge was the speed of spoken language, which many students identified as affecting their active listening. However, overall, most students did not report major difficulties or find the activities extremely hard.

**Item 9 (open-ended): what is the biggest challenge you face when listening actively during lessons?**

Out of 41 students, 26 answered this question about challenges during active listening. The most frequent responses were “staying focused for a long time” (approximately 6 students), “understanding the teacher's fast speech” (approximately 6 students), and “the unfamiliar vocabulary” (approximately 6 students). Additionally, some students mentioned different reasons, including environmental distractions like high noises from classmates or outside the

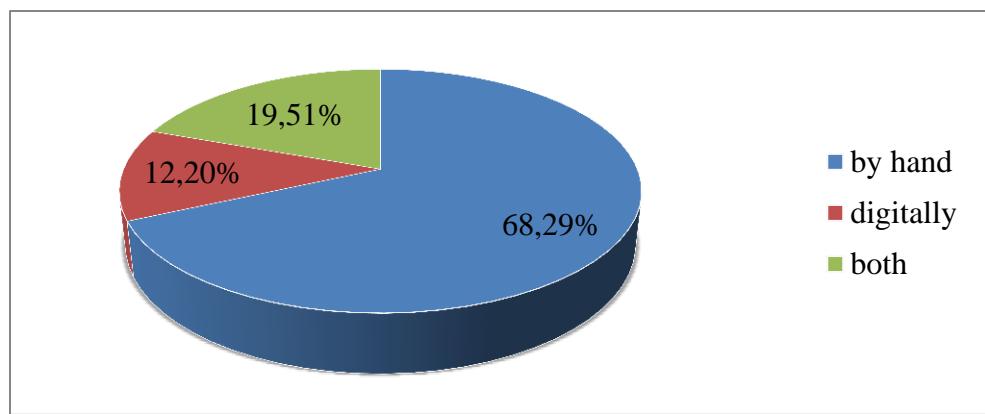
class. These challenges highlight the importance of active listening techniques, which can help students overcome them, as mentioned in the active listening chapter in the theoretical part.

- **Section four: note-taking in classroom sessions**

**Item 10: how do you usually take notes during classroom sessions?**

**Table 11: students' preferred ways for note-taking during classroom sessions**

Options	Students number	Percentages%
By hand (using a notebook or paper).	28	68.29%
Digitally (using a phone, tablet, or laptop).	5	12.20%
Both.	8	19.51%
I don't take notes.	0	0.00%
<b>Total</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>100%</b>



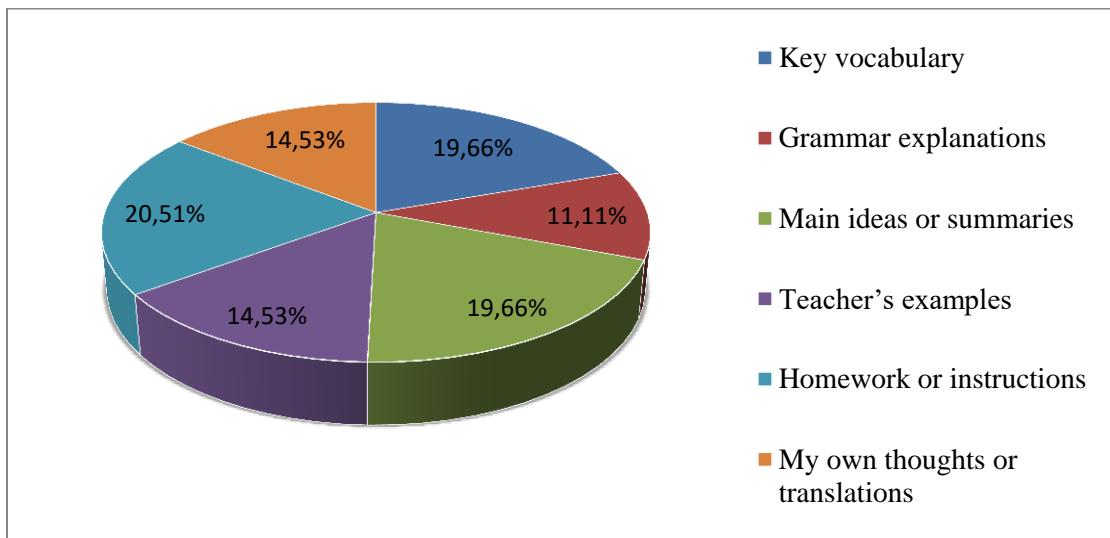
**Figure 15: percentages of note-taking methods used by students in classroom sessions**

**Table 11** and **Figure 15** show if students take notes and what they use to take them. From 41 participants, 28 (68.29%) said they take notes by hand, which is the majority of answers. On the other hand, just (12.20%, n=5) use digital tools to write their notes, while (19.51%, n=8) use both types. From the table, we can see that all students take notes, although the ways are different, meaning that students are aware of the importance of this practice for their learning process.

**Item 11: what kind of information do you usually write down? (Choose all that apply)**

*Table 12: information that students usually note*

What students note	Number of selection	Percentages %
Key vocabulary	23	19.66%
Grammar explanations	13	11.11 %
Main ideas or summaries	23	19.66%
Teacher's examples	17	14.53%
Homework or instructions	24	20.51%
My own thoughts or translations	17	14.53%
<b>Total selection number</b>	<b>117</b>	<b>100%</b>

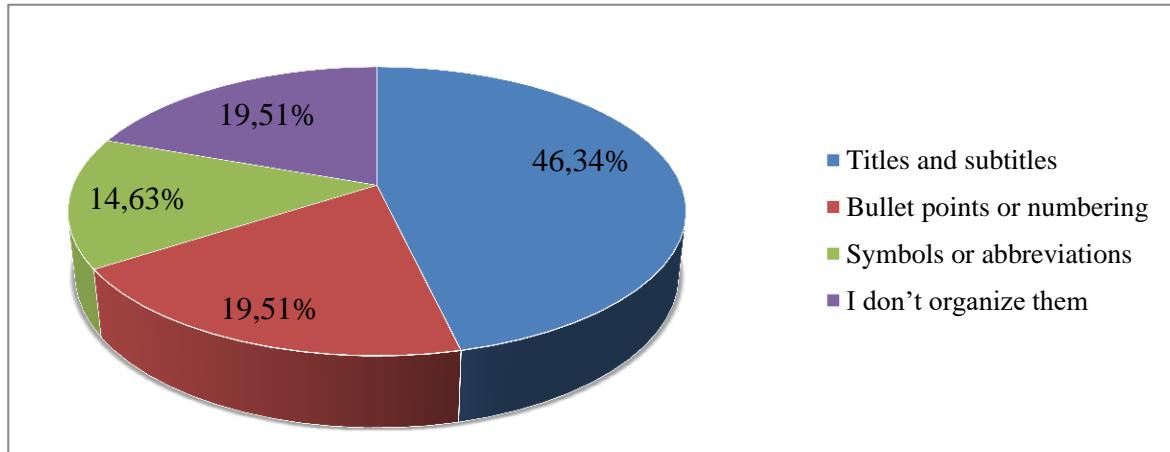
*Figure 16: distribution of information students usually note*

The data in Table 12 and Figure 16 show that first-year EFL students at Biskra University usually note down homework or instructions (20.51%), key vocabulary, and main ideas or summaries (both 19.66%). This means that they focus mainly on what can help them get better marks and essential content. Less selected options, with 14.53%, are the teacher's examples and their own thoughts, while grammar explanations were the least selected, with only 11.11%. This suggests that students are more engaged with the information that is really important for overall understanding.

**Item 12: do you organize your notes using: titles and subtitles, bullet points, symbols or abbreviations or you don't organize them?**

*Table 13: students' methods of organizing notes*

Ways of Organizing notes	Students number	Percentages%
Titles and subtitles.	19	46.34%
Bullet points or numbering.	8	19.51%
Symbols or abbreviations.	6	14.63%
I don't organize them.	8	19.51%
<b>Total</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>100%</b>

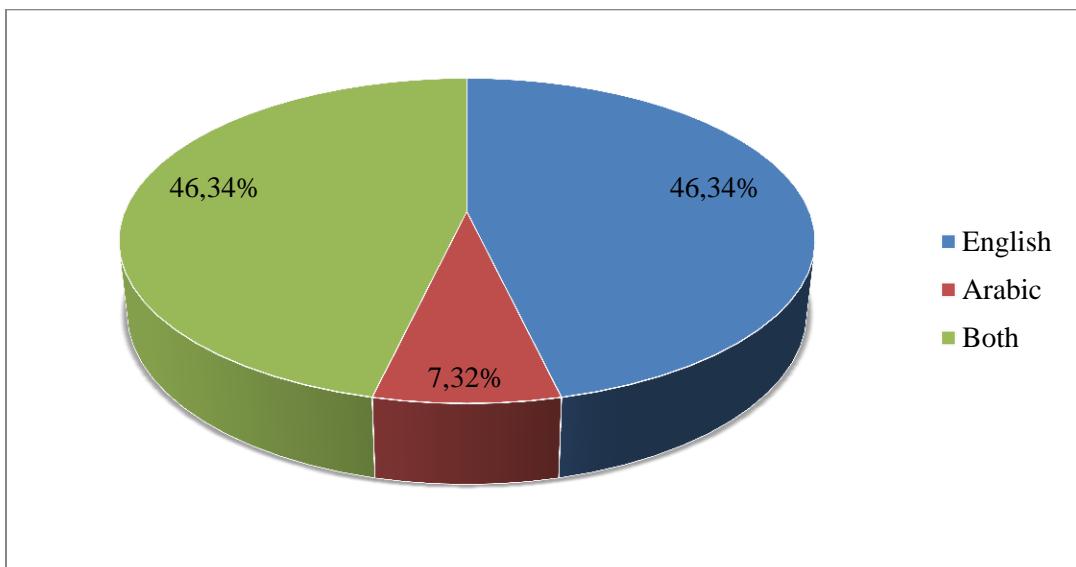
*Figure 17: percentages of students' methods of organizing notes*

**Table 13** and **Figure 17** discussed if students organize their notes and how. The majority do organize notes using titles and subtitles (46.34%, n = 19). While bullet points or numbering and no organizing at all were equally chosen (19.51%, n = 8), the last chosen one was symbols or abbreviations with just (14.63%, n = 6). Although most students try to organize their notes, they don't use that much of a structured form, which shows that they need better strategies, as organizing notes improves understanding and retention.

#### **Item 13: in which language do you mostly write your notes?**

*Table 14: language preference of students for note-taking*

Notes language	Students number	Percentages%
English	19	46.34%
Arabic	3	7.32%
Both	19	46.34%
<b>Total</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>100%</b>



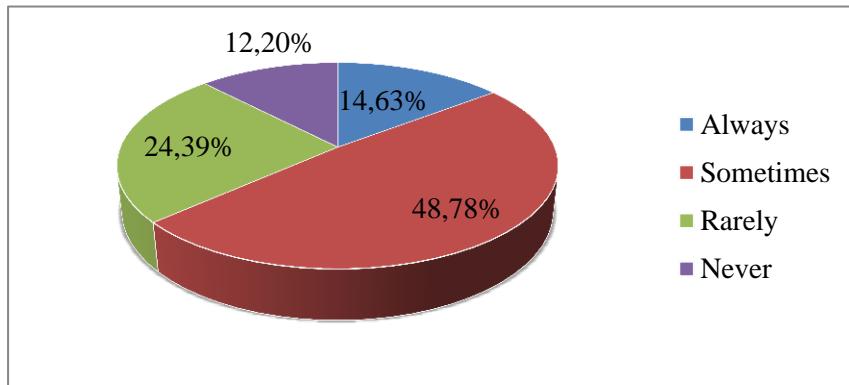
*Figure 18: percentages of language preference of students for note-taking*

**Table 14** and **Figure 18** results provide that the language used by students in writing their notes is mostly English or a combination of English and Arabic, and the number of students in both cases is the same (46.34%, n = 19), with only a fewer number of them writing using Arabic alone (7.32%, n = 3). This can show how first-year students attempt to stay engaged with the learning language—in this case, English—even with the help of their mother tongue. As Helgesen and Brown (1995) state, “using English actively helps learners become more confident and competent users of the language.”(p. 22).

**Item 14: do you review your notes after class?**

*Table 15: frequency of notes review after class*

Frequency of notes review	Participants number	Percentages%
Always	6	14.63
Sometimes	20	48.78
Rarely	10	24.39
Never	5	12.20
<b>Total</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>100%</b>



*Figure 19: frequency of notes review after class*

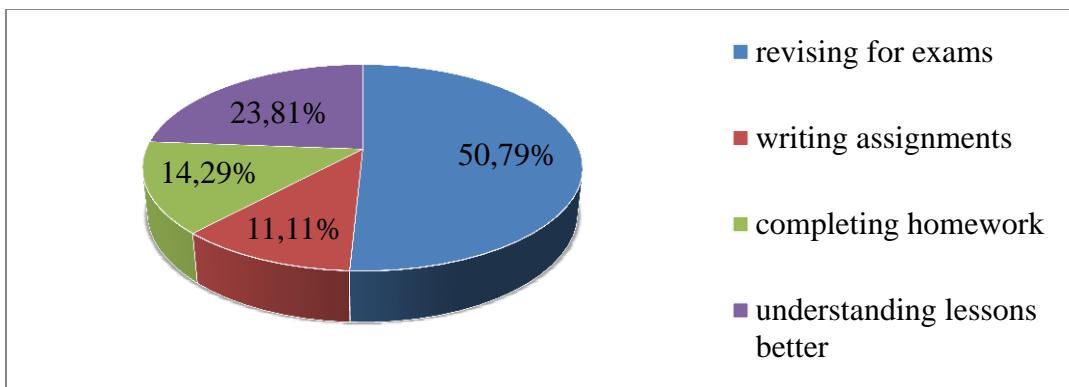
**Table 15** and **Figure 19** show how frequently students review their notes after class.

Most responded with "sometimes" (48.78%, n = 20), followed by "rarely" (24.39%, n = 10). A small number of them "always" review their notes (14.63%, n = 6), while only (12.20%, n = 5) "never" review them. Although students do review their notes, they do not do it regularly, while doing so can help with long-term memory and better understanding.

**Item 15: when you review your notes, what do you use them for? (Choose all that apply)**

*Table 16: uses of note review and their frequency*

The use of notes review	Number of selection	Percentages%
Revising for exams	32	50.79%
Writing assignments	7	11.11%
Completing homework	9	14.29%
Understanding lessons better	15	23.81%
<b>Total number of selection</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>100%</b>



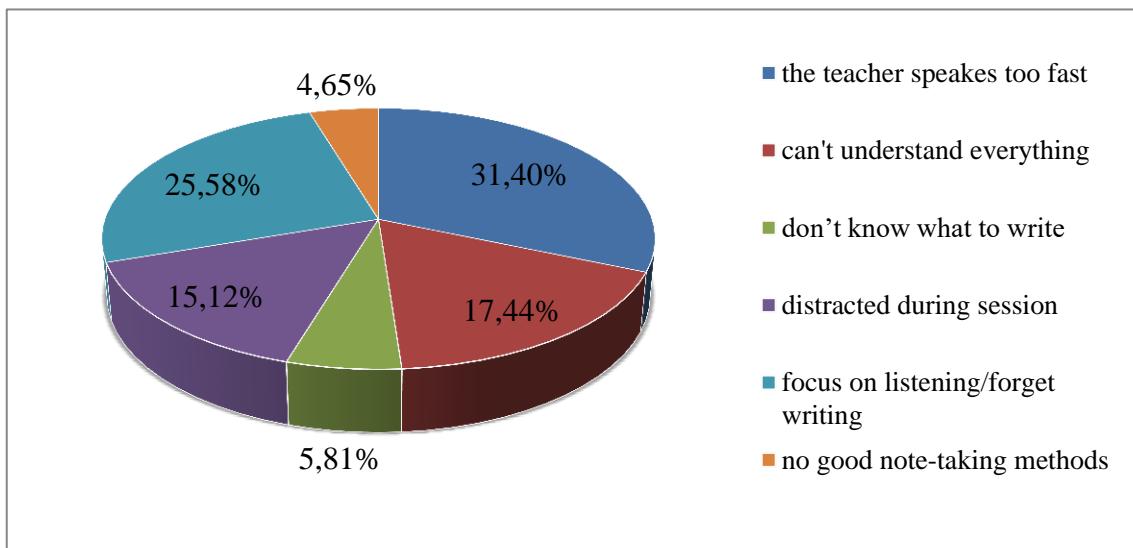
**Figure 20: distribution of notes review**

**Table 16** and **Figure 20** show that only 36 students answered this question, as 5 reported not reviewing their notes. Among the 63 total selections, most students use their notes for revising for exams (50.79%), followed by understanding lessons better (23.81%), completing homework (14.29%), and writing assignments (11.11%). This suggests that note review is mainly exam-focused. However, as Kiewra (1985) states, “frequent review of lecture notes enhances learning and long-term retention far more than last-minute cramming” which proves that the regular review of them can be really helpful for long-term memory.

**Item 16: what are the main challenges you face when taking notes during sessions? (You can choose more than one)**

**Table 17: challenges faced during note-taking sessions**

The challenges	Times of selection	Percentages%
The teacher speaks too fast.	27	31.40%
I can't understand everything in English.	15	17.44%
I don't know what is important to write down.	05	05.81%
I get distracted during the session.	13	15.12%
I focus on listening and forgot to write.	22	25.58%
I don't have a good note-taking method.	04	4.65%
<b>Total number of selection</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>100%</b>



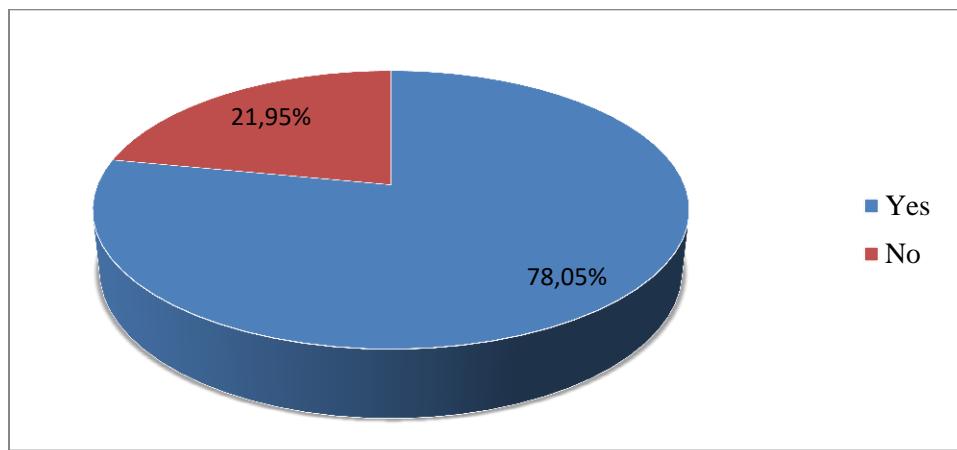
**Figure 21: distribution of challenges faced during note-taking sessions**

**Table 17** and **Figure 21** show the main challenges that face students when taking notes. We can see that out of the total selection, most students selected "the teacher speaks too fast" as the biggest issue (31.40%), followed by "listening and forgetting to write" (25.58%). The other two difficulties are less frequent, including language comprehension (17.44%) and getting distracted (15.12%). On the other hand, fewer students struggle with identifying what's important to note (5.81%) or lacking the methods (4.65%). The results suggest that speech rate and cognitive overload are the biggest challenges for first-year EFL university students. As Rost (2013) states, "a major obstacle in academic listening is the learner's inability to process information in real time."

**Item 17 (Mixed question): do your notes help you remember what the teacher said in class? If yes, please explain how.**

**Table 18: effectiveness of notes in recalling classroom lessons**

Choice	Count	Percentages%
Yes	32	78.05%
No	9	21.95%
<b>Total</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>100%</b>



**Figure 22: distribution of responses on note-taking effectiveness**

Table 18 and figure 22 shows that more than half of the students answered yes (78.05%, n=32) to the note-taking is helpful to remember what the teacher said. While only 9 students (21.95%) disagree and said no that note-taking is not helpful. The large number who agreed shows that students are aware of it's important for the memory.

Out of 32 students who answered yes that note taking helps them remember what the teacher said, the 23 respondents to this question said that their notes help them remember the information and examples given by the teachers. Many found that reviewing their notes and the keywords on them helps them recall and memorize the teachers' explanation. This suggests that taking notes and reviewing them can reinforce both memory and comprehension through active listening.

#### **Item 18 (open-ended): what would help you improve your note-taking?**

From the overall number of participants, 30 shared suggestions to improve their notes. The majority agreed on organizing them (e.g., mind mapping) and using highlights or colors as helpful tools. Others focused on how to improve their listening skills to match the fast speech rate and unfamiliar accents and expanding vocabulary knowledge. Some talked about the teachers' help in summarizing the lesson and outlining key words, and using the Arabic language

when needed. The insights show that both active listening and effective organization are important for taking better notes.

- **Section five: relationship between active listening and note-taking**

**Item 19: please choose the option that best represents your opinion.**

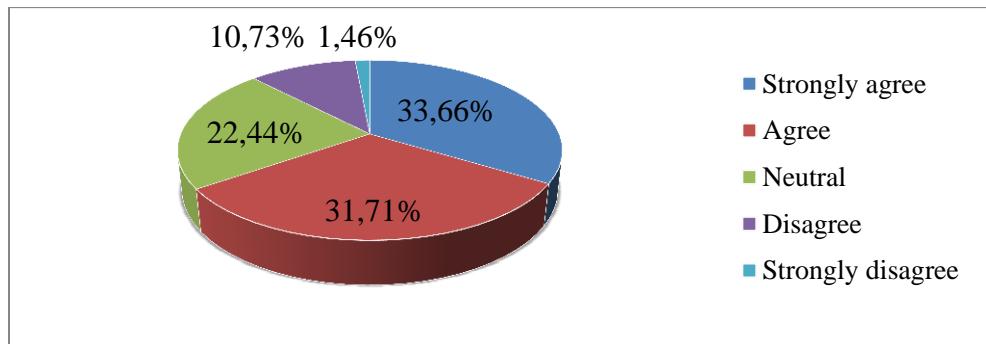
**Table 19: students' opinions on the relationship between active listening and note-taking**

The statement	Strongly agree	agree	Neutral	disagree	Strongly disagree
1. I focus more on note-taking when I understand the topic.	20	12	7	2	0
2. I miss fewer important points when I actively listen instead of just copying words.	9	16	12	4	0
3. I find it easier to write clear and useful notes when I focus first on listening to the teacher.	14	12	7	8	0
4. When the teacher changes their voice (intonation, stress, pauses), it helps me know what to write.	18	9	8	5	1
5. I struggle to listen and take notes at the same time.	8	16	12	3	2

The findings of **Table 19** reveal that active listening is really helpful and supports effective note-taking. The majority of students state that they take better notes during class when they understand the topic and listen actively. Also, verbal cues (intonation, stress, and pauses) are really important in identifying which information is important. However, many of them still find some difficulties in writing and listening at the same time, which suggests making training classes to help students improve their writing and listening skills together.

**Table 20: overall distribution of students' responses to the relationship between active listening and note-taking**

Responses	Frequency	Percentages%
Strongly agree	69	33.66%
Agree	65	31.71%
Neutral	46	22.44%
Disagree	22	10.73%
Strongly disagree	3	01.46%
<b>Total selection number</b>	<b>205</b>	<b>100%</b>



**Figure 23: students' agreement levels on the role of active listening in enhancing note-taking**

**Table 20** and **Figure 23** show a summary of the data from the previous table. Most students strongly agree (33.66%) and agree (31.71%) with the statements showing that active listening plays an important role in effective note-taking. The neutral responses (22.44%) show that they may not be sure about their thoughts, while the less selected options were disagree (10.73%) and strongly disagree (1.46%), indicating an overall positive attitude. All of this supports the idea of the importance of active listening in effective note-taking.

**Item 20 (open-ended question): do you have any comments or suggestions about listening in class or taking notes?**

Out of 41 students, only 22 responded to the last question, even though about 10 had no additional comments. The rest of the suggestions were about the teachers speaking at a slower speed, providing clear explanations, and giving them time to write notes. Others had different

thoughts, like learning note-taking strategies, sitting in front, and interacting with classmates. A few mentioned helpful tools (listening to podcasts and music) to develop their listening skills. All the suggestions that students mentioned reflect their awareness of good active listening skills in order to get better notes.

- **Discussion and Interpretation of Students' Questionnaire**

The analysis of the students' questionnaire reveals a clear understanding among first-year EFL students regarding the importance of both active listening and note-taking. A strong majority (83%) reported that they regularly take notes during class, emphasizing the role this habit plays in retaining and recalling key lecture content. This confirms that note-taking is not only a passive activity but is actively linked to memory and comprehension.

Furthermore, 76% of the participants recognized that being active listeners—meaning paying close attention, focusing on main ideas, and identifying key points—helps them take more effective and organized notes. Their responses support the idea that note-taking is not an isolated skill, but one that is enhanced by cognitive engagement through active listening strategies. Students also noted that organizing notes visually through highlighting or color coding helped them review content more effectively.

Despite these positive findings, 36% of students admitted they face significant challenges, such as fast-paced speech from instructors, lack of time to write while listening, and unfamiliar vocabulary. These difficulties suggest that although students value note-taking and listening, they are not fully trained to manage both tasks simultaneously. Therefore, the responses indicate a need for instructional support to develop their real-time processing and note organization strategies.

### 3. The Teachers' interview

- **Description of the interview**

To gather the teachers' point of view on active listening and note-taking, interviews were conducted with six teachers. Five were hand-delivered, and one was sent via email, and that was from the teacher not having time to answer face-to-face interviews, so they asked for a written form of it, which seemed to be the way all of them preferred.

The Interview contained five questions, each of them including two sub questions, and the total number was fifteen questions about different aspects, from the role of active listening in taking effective notes and their experience with the challenges students face in this manner and how they deal with them.

- **Aim of the interview**

The main aim of this interview is to gather more information, especially from the teachers of English at the English department at Biskra University, to see if they are aware of the struggles students face in terms of active listening and note-taking practices and how they deal with them.

- **Result analysis of The Teachers' interview**

- **Item 1: Do you teach note-taking as part of your lessons?**

Most teachers answered that they do teach note-taking regularly or from time to time, while one of them encourages this practice without formal instructions. But two teachers said they don't actually do that. Even so, all of them confirm that this skill is important for students to learn.

- **Sub question: If yes, what strategies do you use to help students take effective notes?**

Four of the six teachers that answered yes stated that they use different strategies such as writing notes on the board, mind mapping, clustering, highlighting main and minor ideas, and encouraging their students to record key points from the lesson.

- **Sub question: If no, do you think students should be taught note-taking skills?**

Although these two teachers said they don't teach note-taking, they agreed that students should learn note-taking regardless of that, because it fosters active listening, information processing, better memory retention, and learner autonomy. All of these are essential elements in language acquisition, especially English.

- **Item 2: How do you help students improve active listening during lessons?**

Teachers improve active listening in different ways like creating a calm and silent teaching environment for better concentration, encouraging some students to sit in front or in a circle to foster interaction, and emphasizing understanding the important key concepts rather than just copying blindly.

- **Sub question: What techniques do you use to encourage focused listening?**

They use various techniques including repetition of the key points of the lesson, giving clear instructions with guided questions, encouraging students to record the lessons, peer and group discussion when possible, note-taking practice like asking them to summarize and write in their own words the important parts of the lesson, and finally using motivational audios or presentations to help them gain confidence.

- **Sub question: How do you assess whether students are listening effectively?**

Most teachers ask questions about what's being said, give quick tests or quizzes in order to test whether they are focused or not, observe students' ability to communicate and comprehend ideas, and finally monitor attention or participation during the session.

- **Item 3: How do note-taking and active listening support student learning?**

All the teachers agreed that note-taking and active listening enhance students' learning, saying that they help students focus more, organize the information and ideas better, and help them get better marks in exams.

- **Sub question: Have you noticed a difference in performance between students who take notes and those who don't?**

In this question, all of the six teachers reported that students who do take notes are more motivated, focused, and engaged in the delivered information, leading to better performance than those who do not.

- **Sub question: In what ways does good listening help students take better notes?**

Based on them, good and active listening helps students identify main points and key words of the topic, understand it in depth, summarize and put this understanding into notes in their own way and voice, and stay focused on each detail. All of that leads to more accurate and useful notes for study.

- **Item 4: What challenges do students face when taking notes in your classroom?**

Teachers are aware of some challenges faced by students when taking notes, like time management, fast speech that is hard to follow—one of the most reported challenges by first-year EFL students in the questionnaire responses—unfamiliar words or vocabulary, and identifying which information is important to note and which is not.

- **Sub question: Do students struggle to balance listening and writing?**

All teachers answered with yes and confirmed that their students find it hard to listen actively and write at the same time, mostly because they fear missing essential

information or because of time limitations and teachers going fast from one point to another, making it hard to keep up.

- **Sub question: What techniques do you recommend to overcome these difficulties?**

The recommendations by the teachers were explicit instructions in note-taking strategies like the use of abbreviations and symbols which save them time while writing, giving more time to listen actively and focus, repeated listening practice, building clear lesson goals, organizing the lesson timeline, and also giving them some time to review their notes.

- **Item 5: Do you guide students on how to review their notes after lessons?**

The majority of teachers don't really guide students on how to review their notes after class, although two of them talked about encouraging sharing and comparing notes with other classmates to enhance their understanding.

- **Sub question: How do you encourage students to use their notes for studying?**

Professors answered that they encourage them by asking students to revise and check their notes from time to time, rewrite notes in their own way and words, summarize key words, and use notes actively during class.

- **Sub question: What methods can make reviewing notes more effective?**

The effective methods suggested by teachers include using recording tools to get an audio version of the section which helps to review notes better, color coding, posting the lesson or handouts, rewriting notes as questions to help in revising for exams, and lastly peer teaching to reinforce comprehension.

- **Discussion and Interpretation of teachers interview**

The overall analysis of the teachers' interviews shows that all teachers who participated in this work agreed on the strong relationship between active listening and effective note-taking during class sessions. Five out of six teachers stated that students who listen actively and pay attention not just hear tend to take better and more organized notes compared to others who do not.

Teachers emphasized that verbal cues such as pausing and repetition can be really helpful for guiding students, especially since many of them don't know which information is important to note and which is not.

However, some teachers noted that many of their students struggle when it comes to taking meaningful notes or being engaged in both active listening and note-taking together, because they find it hard to follow along. This makes some of them write passively without focusing on key words or selecting their ideas clearly.

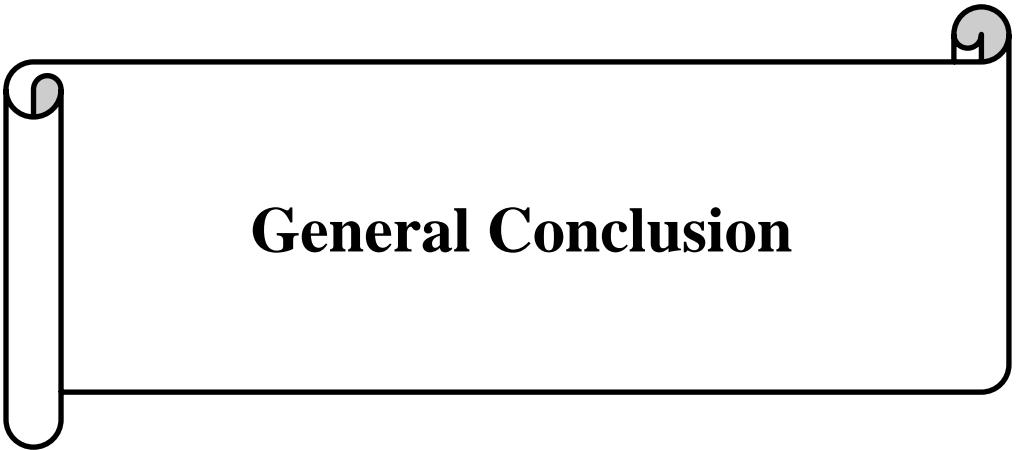
In summary, the interview responses confirm the idea that active listening is essential for first-year EFL students in order to take better and more effective notes during their classes. Reminding or guiding students in this process can be helpful for them.

## ***Conclusion***

In conclusion, this chapter aimed to analyze, present and discuss the data obtained by questionnaire administered to L1 EFL university students and the interviews contacted with English language teachers at university of Mohamed Khider, Biskra. The primary aim is to explore the students' awareness of the importance of active listening on note taking and their attitudes toward them during classroom sessions and the different challenges they face.

The findings reveals that the majority of students are engaged In active listening and taking notes regularly because they look at them as an essential skills for acquiring a foreign language or their academic performance on general. However they reported several difficulties including fast speech which is recognized also on the responses of the teachers on the interview questions, alone with unfamiliar vocabulary and finding a balance to listen and write simultaneously. Teachers also supposed further the idea that active listening significantly lead to better and more organized notes, though many students need more guidance and support to achieve that.

Overall, chapter three confirms that while all the results approve this framework and that students are aware of the role of this two practices they need more training and learning knew techniques in order to enhance their both listening and writing specifically in the context of classroom sessions.



## General Conclusion

## Conclusion

This dissertation aimed to investigate the perceptions of first-year EFL students and teachers at Mohamed Khider University of Biskra, Algeria, concerning active listening and its important role in taking successful notes during classroom sessions.

The data gathered through questionnaires for students and interviews for teachers indicates that the majority of students acknowledge the significance of active listening and that it can influence their capacity to comprehend and take higher quality notes. Frequently used techniques and methods among students included asking questions for clarification, paying attention, and writing down key points, organizing them using coloring, highlighters, and titles and subtitles. However, students also experienced multiple obstacles, and the most highlighted ones were rapid delivery and, lastly, periodic nervousness.

Additionally, the investigation emphasized that active listening improves not only comprehension but also the overall academic experience and engagement with the topic. Concurrently, note-taking underpinned by techniques such as summarizing and the Cornell method was found to greatly boost students' confidence and preference.

In conclusion, this framework establishes that cultivating listening sensitivity and using accurate note-taking methods is vital for EFL students in academic settings, especially first-year students making the big transition from high school to university with different learning environments.

## Pedagogical Implications and Recommendations

- Introducing active listening techniques by teachers to students and facilitate their use in class.
- Indicating students on the methods of note-taking and how to practice them.

- Teachers need to take into consideration that first year EFL students can't follow along with a fast rhythm.
- Pre-listening activities and post-, listening tasks are beneficial and can support better understanding.

### **Limitations of the Study**

- The study is based on self-reported data and that may not entirely capture the real classroom behaviors.
- The Data gathering tools did not contain classroom observations and looked at the actual notes and interactions.
- Due to time limitations and resources, the study did not incorporate a larger sample especially for the teachers to get more in-depth analysis.

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## Appendix one: Students' Questionnaire

1

**Mohamed Khider University Of Biskra**

**Faculty of letters and languages**

**Department of foreign languages**

### **Student Questionnaire on Note-Taking and Active Listening in Classroom**

#### **Lessons**

**Dear Participant,**

You are invited to take part in a study that explores first-year EFL students' perceptions of active listening and its role in effective note-taking. Please answer the following questions honestly and to the best of your ability. Your responses will remain anonymous and be used solely for academic research purposes.

#### **Section 1: General Information**

1. What is your age ?

18-20

21-23

24 or older

2. What is your gender?

Male  Female

#### **Section 2: Active Listening in Classroom Sessions**

3. How often do you actively focus on understanding others (e.g., teacher or classmates) during English classroom sessions, such as discussions or group tasks?

Always       Often       Sometimes       Rarely       Never

4. To what extent do you agree with this statement: "I prepare for classroom sessions by using strategies like reviewing vocabulary or thinking about discussion topics."

Strongly Disagree       Disagree       Neutral       Agree       Strongly Agree

5. Which active listening techniques do you use during English classroom sessions? (Select all that apply)

Making eye contact with the speaker (teacher or peer)

2

- Taking notes to capture key ideas from discussions
- Asking questions to understand classmates' or teacher's points
- Restating what others say in my own words Noticing gestures or tone from peers or teacher
- Other (please specify):  
.....  
.....  
.....

6. What is one active listening strategy that helps you participate in English classroom sessions (e.g., group discussions)? Why does it work for you?

.....  
.....  
.....

### Section 3: Challenges in Active Listening

7. How often do you feel nervous when trying to understand spoken English in classroom sessions?

Always       Often       Sometimes       Rarely       Never

8. How hard are these aspects of listening during English classroom sessions?  
(Mark the appropriate box for each aspect)

Aspect	Not hard	A little hard	Somewhat hard	Quite hard	So hard
Fast speech from peers or teacher					
New or unfamiliar vocabulary					
Understanding different accents					
Remembering key points from activities					
Staying focused during group tasks					

9. What is the biggest challenge you face when listening actively during lessons?

.....  
.....  
.....

#### **Section 4: Note-Taking in Classroom Sessions**

10. How do you usually take notes during classroom sessions?

- By hand (using a notebook or paper)
- Digitally (using a phone, tablet, or laptop)
- Both
- I don't take notes

11. What kind of information do you usually write down? (Choose all that apply)

- Key vocabulary
- Grammar explanations
- Main ideas or summaries
- Teacher's examples
- Homework or instructions
- My own thoughts or translations

12. Do you organize your notes using:

- Titles and subtitles
- Bullet points or numbering
- Symbols or abbreviations
- I don't organize them

13. In which language do you mostly write your notes?

- English
- Arabic
- Both

14. Do you review your notes after class?

- Always
- Sometimes
- Rarely
- Never

15. When you review your notes, what do you use them for? (Choose all that apply)

- Revising for exams
- Writing assignments

- Completing homework
- Understanding lessons better

16. What are the main challenges you face when taking notes during sessions? (You can choose more than one)

- The teacher speaks too fast
- I can't understand everything in English
- I don't know what is important to write down
- I get distracted during the session
- I focus more on listening and forget to write
- I don't have a good note-taking method

17. Do your notes help you remember what the teacher said in class?

Yes  No  
If yes, please explain how

**18. What would help you improve your note-taking?**

## **Section 5: Relationship Between Active Listening and Note-Taking**

19. Please choose the option that best represents your opinion.

Statement	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I focus more on note-taking when I understand the topic.					
I miss fewer important points when I actively listen instead of just copying words.					
I find it easier to write clear and useful notes when I focus first on listening to the teacher.					
When the teacher changes their voice (intonation, stress, pauses), it helps me know what to write.					
I struggle to listen and take notes at the same time.					

5

20. Do you have any other comments or suggestions about listening in class or taking notes?

.....

.....

.....

*Thank you so much for your time.*

## Appendix two: Teachers' interview

### Interview Questions for Teachers on Active Listening and Note-Taking in the Classroom

**1. Do you teach note-taking as part of your lessons?**

.....  
.....

If yes, what strategies do you use to help students take effective notes?

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

If no, do you think students should be taught note-taking skills?

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

**2. How do you help students improve active listening during lessons?**

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.....  
.....  
.....

What techniques do you use to encourage focused listening?

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

How do you assess whether students are listening effectively?

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

**3. How do note-taking and active listening support student learning?**

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

Have you noticed a difference in performance between students who take notes and those who don't?

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

In what ways does good listening help students take better notes?

.....  
.....  
.....

**4. What challenges do students face when taking notes in your classroom?**

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.....  
.....  
.....

Do students struggle to balance listening and writing?

.....  
.....  
.....

What techniques do you recommend to overcome these difficulties?

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

**5. Do you guide students on how to review their notes after lessons?**

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

How do you encourage students to use their notes for studying?

.....  
.....  
.....

What methods can make reviewing notes more effective?

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

**Thank you so much**

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## Abstract in Arabic

تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى استكشاف تصورات ووجهات النظر لدى طلبة السنة الأولى في قسم اللغة الإنجليزية، كلية الآداب واللغات الأجنبية بجامعة محمد خضر بسكرة، حول أهمية الدور البارز الذي يلعبه الاستماع النشط في تحسين مهارة تدوين الملاحظات من ناحية المحتوى والتنظيم خلال الحصص الدراسية داخل الأقسام.

من خلال استطلاع الرأي، تبيّن أن غالبية الطلبة يدركون أهمية الاستماع الجيد وأثره الإيجابي والعميق على تدوين الملاحظات بشكل فعال ومنظّم. وعلى الرغم من ذلك، هناك بعض المشاكل التي تعيق هذه العملية وسيرها السلس، وتنجلي في وتيرة الإلقاء السريعة من قبل الأساتذة، واستقبال العديد من المفردات الجديدة، أو الشعور بالتوتر. كما وضّحت الدراسة جملة من الاستراتيجيات التي قد تساعد في تجاوز ذلك، منها الأسئلة التوضيحية، والتركيز الكامل على استقبال المعلومات، وتدوين المهم منها. كل هذا يؤدي إلى تجربة استماع جيدة، وينتّي مهارات المتمدرسين، لأنّ تربية هذه المهارات تُعتبر ضرورية في المرحلة الجامعية.