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**MASTER**

**<<Applied Linguistics and ICTs>>**

**The Effect of Positive Thinking on Students' Motivation**  
**Case of Study: First year English students at Mostaganem**  
**University**

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degree in English

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## **Abstract**

The present study aims at identifying the relationship between student's motivation and positive thinking. To achieve this purpose, we attempted to cover a study that was divided into three chapters which highlight students' positive and negative attitudes. We, in fact, sought to shed the light on students' motivation and its effectiveness in their learning process and we tried to propose some helpful elements and activities that urge to solve students' learning issues. Therefore, our objective is primarily to examine the suitability and effectiveness of positive thinking on students' motivation and academic performance. We assume that positive thinking helps to increase learners' motivation in their learning process by providing different activities in oral sessions. In order to test this hypothesis, we used an interview and a questionnaire to collect data. These two were administered to first year license students at the English department of Abdelhamid Ibn Badis University, Mostaganem . The findings have revealed an influence of positive thinking over students' motivation in a manner that increases their energy and effort.

**Keywords:** negative mental attitude, anxiety, optimistic thinking, high academic performance, motivation.

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## General introduction

The process of thinking is considered as one of the main factors that pave the way for adopting positive and negative orientations. It is simply the main factor that urges individuals to constitute a habit of thoughts that strongly affect their emotions and actions. Thus, positive thinking has become a major means that contributes to overcome the issue of pessimistic thinking and demotivation; it is simply the way the mind concentrates affirmatively on what is constructive which in return attempts to impel positive emotions that seek to awaken inner strength, energy, motivation and therefore eliminate every destructive and negative thought. Learners' negative attitude and lack of motivation in the educational field led to the implementation of positive thinking as a process to enhance their motivation and overcome their learning issues. Thus, this study is a good initiative to shed light on the impact of positive thinking on learners' motivation.

In attempt to highlight the objectives of the study, the research aims at enhancing learners' motivation through adopting a positive attitude that seeks to avoid anxiety issues and promote higher academic performance; its main objective is to help learners increase their self-confidence and self-awareness over the obstacles that they encounter in their learning process. This research's target to draw attention toward the benefits of implementing positive thinking patterns and to provide activities as a supportive factor that promotes students' persistence and eagerness to improve their academic skills.

Furthermore, to undertake this research and investigate the issue raised, we sought to answer these questions:

- In oral sessions, why do learners tend to be pessimist and think about the problems that they are facing rather than thinking of how to solve them?
- Can learners be motivated if they adopt positive attitude?

To answer these questions we assumed the following hypothesis:

It is probable that learners in oral sessions are demotivated and no longer participating in any activity in the classroom, because all what they can think of is failure. However, they can be motivated if they think positively. We also assumed that teachers can enhance their learners' motivation in the sense of making them adopt positive attitudes.

Our research consists of three chapters .First, it provides a general description of negative and positive thinking, negative thinking causes and its damaging effects. Moreover, it attempts to highlight the importance of positive thinking as a significant factor of motivation in the learning process. The second chapter deals with data collection and analysis that seeks to shape an understanding of the impact of learners' attitude on their academic performance. The last chapter provides a discussion of the findings and recommendations; it explores positive thinking as a helpful process to foster learners' motivation.

## **Introduction**

Positive thinking is a subject of matter for many researchers. The main purpose of such a field is to enhance learners' motivation because the majority of first year English university students tend to be pessimist and anticipate the worst outcomes of themselves during their learning process which may demotivate them and make them in a troubled environment. This issue led to the emergence of a new area of investigation called positive thinking, this research area constitutes a crucial element of students' motivation. It leads to avoid negative thinking, avoid being anxious and make learners anticipate positive outcomes and be more confident.

In the light of encouraging learners to adopt positive mental attitude, oral sessions offer an opportunity to be engaged in a communicative environment where they would be able to express their fears and challenges. This chapter includes two parts; the first one constitutes an understanding of negative thinking and its main causes and its damaging effects. The second part deals with positive thinking and motivation including different classroom activities in oral sessions such as open discussion activities, writing activities and others.

### **1.1 The scope of negative thinking**

Negative thinking is considered as the mind ability to produce thoughts that are not favorable to what the person wants. It is simply the mind's attitude to anticipate the worst outcomes on events and circumstances. According to (Williams-Zahir, 2015) negative thoughts cause negative attitude that may hinder our ability to think and act positively. Whenever a challenge arises, a person with negative thinking expects and predicts only negative outcomes .For example, a student with negative thinking, during exams he/she will expect and think only about failure before doing the exam.

Negative thoughts are described as destructive, disturbing, annoying and unwelcoming. Bad images or unlikable ideas can cause the person to be upset and distressed. According to J.S. Carter& Garber (2011) negative thinking patterns make individuals experience depression in response to high stress. These distorted thinking patterns trigger negative feelings and can lead to a state of depression.

The truth is that negative thoughts maybe difficult to be removed from the mind and can be challenging to deal with because it has the power to find a number of negativities even in a positive area. “*The mind attracts whatever is familiar to itself .the frightened mind attracts frightening experiences .a confused mind attract more confusion. The abundant mind attracts more abundance*” (Anthony, 2004, p. 14) if a student is thinking about failure in exams, his/her mind helps him/her to think only about what is negative; she/he will be anxious, nervous, depressed and sometimes the student does not even attend their exams.

In fact, anything can trigger our negative thinking from a bad customer service to what was said about us or even how we speak to ourselves .All of it can affect how we feel and what we do and this might have negative effects on our state of mind. Since thoughts have such a power how harmful can it actually be?

Negative thinking can be extremely damaging because it can make life a series of troubles and negative attitudes and can get negative results like mental and organic diseases .Caroline leaf a cognitive neuro scientist demonstrated that 75 to 98% of mental and physical illnesses come from our thoughts. And it can be one of the factors that cause psychological disorders; negative thinking patterns make individuals experience negative emotions that urge to greater awareness of threats which are the causes of psychological disorder. “*Psychological disorders results from the thinking patterns that is activated in response to a negative thoughts or emotions*” (Pablo Briñol, 2012, P.325)

In fact, a research was undertaken by Stanford University on the power of negative thinking and its main effects on human body. Researchers have found that negative thinking causes a chemical release in the human stomach; they took these releases and put them into mice food and the results was that the mouse who ate that food died, and this is a scientific proof that shows to what extant can negative thinking can be damaging and can cause physical illnesses.

A negative thought itself is just a simple word that we say to ourselves, but what can make it dangerous is repeating it and storing it in our minds until it will become a habit that we get used to causing nothing but troubles. “*When you have negative thoughts these are put into your hard drive, they can put blockages on any positive thoughts by deleting any search for positives and in fact lead your unconscious mind to find examples to support negative thoughts* (Roshier, 2010, p. 08)

Negativity without action can, on a long term basis, affect us whether we are hearing it or whether we are the ones performing it. This what scientific experiment done with plants in a controlled environment had proved. According to a website article titled how words and thoughts effect the growth and vitality of plants<sup>1</sup>, an experiment was done by a Japanese theorist on the vitality of plants .6 plants were grown in the same environment, at the same time upon reaching maturity. 3 of the plants were placed in a separated room with the same conditions as the other 3 plants. Room A as they called it was subjected to a barrage of negative talk on a daily basis; at the same time as being watered. Room B, however, was given nothing but positive, loving words, whilst being watered. Over 30 days period the plants were subjected to those controlled conditions and nothing accept the negative or positive words differentiated their care. Over the 30 days period the plants in room (A) started to shrivel, wilt and ultimately die, whilst the plants in room B thrived, grew and blossomed into adult plants. The experiment demonstrated that over a period of time negative words and feelings had physically inhibited the growth of living plants.

This may prove that the negative energy that we produce during these periods of negative thinking and feeling could not only have a determined effect on our wellbeing but the wellbeing of others. An experiment on rice was made by a Japanese theorist Massaru Emoto who placed rice into 3 glasses and covered them with water and every day for a month he said word of thanks to the first, the second glass was given talks and critics while the third one was ignored. After one month the rice that had been thanked has begun to formant and gives nice smells. The rice in the second glass turned black and the rice that was ignored began to rot. This experiment demonstrates that positive and negative talking on a daily basis has a strong effect. He found physical evidence which showed that the molecular structure of water changed with positive or negative energy thoughts and feelings.

What these scientists tried to demonstrate is that the thoughts, subsequent feelings and words we produce on a daily basis can physically affect not only our bodies, but also the molecular structure of everything around us. The words that we say to ourselves and others have a powerful effect whether it is on plants, rice or human. Positive words with good intentions encourage growth and abundance. On the other hand negative words and emotions can physically destroy and rot what is around us and can even kill us<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> <http://therightstripes.com/the-damaging-effects-of-negative-thinking/>.

## **1.2 Negative thinking causes**

A wide range of causes aims at triggering negative thinking patterns which contribute to affect people's state of mind, their personal outlook and even their physical health. These causes includes internal and external effects which urge individuals to anticipate the worst outcomes and can become a habit of mind when individuals strengthen these patterns through repetition( (Bujan, 2011).

### **1.2.1 Internal effects**

This one of the causes of negative thinking and it is likely to be of extreme danger due to its negative results. This type of effects has to do with the inner self of individuals, i.e. no intervention of any external effects, and one of its damaging results is lower self-esteem and negative concentration; individuals tend to damage their self-esteem through their inner self when having negative thinking. According to the author Vicky Omifolaji (2017) she demonstrated that when we have negative thinking patterns we tend to fill the mind with negativity that results in low self-esteem and losing self-confidence. These negative patterns also affect memory and concentration (Fennel,1998).

### **1.2.2 Lower self esteem**

Lower self-esteem can be the one of the main reasons that makes people be unhappy in their own life because it is basically the way that people think about themselves. Individuals who anticipate negative outcomes may encounter negative feeling on themselves and that may have negative influence on theme since negative thinking is difficult to remove from the mind (Ellis.A, 1989) found that negative thinking patterns often lead to exaggerated thinking involving self-blame and self-criticism.

Self-esteem is associated with happiness, motivation to live a productive and a healthy life. Those who lack self-esteem are more likely to experience depression, problem anger, and other psychological problems "*nothing can be more stressful than the experience of lacking the basic anchor and security of a wholesome sense of self-worth*" (Schiraldi, 2007, p.01).So self-esteem is essential to our health and the sense of wellbeing.

Lower self-esteem can be extremely harmful to the individual since it can make the individual anticipate the negative outcomes “*people with low self-esteem are more troubled by failure and tend to exaggerate events as being negative*” (Rosenberg, 2001, p. 400). According to Rosenberg(2001), people with lower self-esteem are likely to experience anxiety and interpersonal confidence by tending to be pessimist .

Guindon(2002) listed five characteristics to describe students with low self-esteem . The most common ones were/are: quiet, shy, negative attitude, angry, unhappy, poor communication, etc. This may prove that individuals with lower self-esteem may be troubled by their own negative thoughts.

Low self-esteem is a state of mind that can make individuals greater the notion of negative thinking and it can be changed if the individuals work to change the negative feelings and judgement that they have toward themselves giving individuals the opportunity to think optimistically toward themselves and avoid being stressed and anxious.

### **1.2.3 Negative concentration**

William Rodman (2005) describes negative thinking patterns as polluted thoughts that work to pollute our mind system. Since thoughts have the power to damage our mind system, they can make individuals give their full attention only to what is negative and cancels every positive side paving the way to strengthening the negative idea until they believe it.

For example during the period of exams, students are likely to be nervous and stressed because of their negative ideas; they get frightened to fail in their exams. Their main focus is on failure or on the obstacles that they may face and that can have negative effects on their results. This is what Hamfries (2004) has illustrated in his book *The power of thinking*. According to him, students who are frightened to fail or repeat their examinations are the ones who increase their negative thinking because their main concentration is only on what is negative.(p,13).

A research in psychology stated that during the Second World War, Hitler wanted to punish his soldiers because they disobeyed him. He put the 3 soldiers in 3 different rooms in present and told each one of them that they are going to smell a toxic gas which would kill them in 6 hours. After 4 hours only, he went to check them and he found that 2 of them had died and the last one is taking his last breaths and the truth is that there was no toxic gas. It

was just a trick to kill them by their own minds. Doctors did analyze this, and argued that the soldiers believed that they smell a toxic gas which would kill them. Their minds concentrated on the idea of death leading to increase their heart pulses and their bodies to sweat. They started to panic and take long breaths which made them strengthen the idea of death. What did this research had shown is concentrating on a negative idea can be extremely damaging “don’t feed your mind with negative thoughts, if you do, you will come to believe them” (Catherin, 2013, p.49).

### **1.3 External effects**

In fact, there are different external effects that can cause negative thinking which may lead the individual to being easily disturbed and tend to focus on the unpleasant aspects. Some of these effects are the media and the surrounding environment that make individuals trigger negative thinking and are of extreme danger because of their negative effect on the individual’s physical health and state of mind.

#### **1.3.1 The media**

Media is one of the fundamental reasons that may cause negative thinking and have a negative impact on the individuals because it is considered as a factor that urges to create different mental illnesses “*it is far more likely that the public’s knowledge of mental illness comes from the sources closer to home, sources to which we all are exposed on a daily basis namely, the mass media*” (Wahl, 2003, p5). The media commercials of beauty and thinness as an example. Male and female alike feel that they can’t measure up to what is out there; they get influenced of media commercials of beauty measures, they simply tend to lower their self-esteem through having negative self-image because of the media imperfections of beauty and youth.

In addition, the media contributed to create a psychological disease called Anorexia nervosa which is a very dangerous illness. People with this condition believe that they are fat where, in fact, they are not. They get afraid to gain weight and are obsessed by getting thinner. This kind of a disease can profoundly affect the student’s ability to learn, decrease the ability to concentrate, and decrease the ability to listen and process information due to the student’s lack of energy and fatigues. (Mark D. Kilgus W. S., 2014) Illustrated in their

anorexia diagnosis on some psychological patients, individuals tend to have a distorted body image, low concentration, low energy and a fear of gaining weight .

According to the author (Arnett, 2006) media can cause depression by taking the TV channels as an example; the language of the news is all about problems, violence, wars, diseases, music and movies all about self-aggressive, crimes, eroticism, etc. These studies may demonstrate that the more teens spend listening to music and watching movies they are likely to be depressed, and it offers the opportunity for indirect message transmission of suicide “*an alarming increase in teens suicide in the past several decades has led to increased scrutiny of music and its possible effects on depression*” (Cooper, 2007,p.93).

### **1.3.2 The surrounding environment**

A large amount of surrounding elements can have a negative effect on individuals; the setting, society, and especially people’s negative judgements which may lead the individual to trigger and reinforce their negative thinking. Teachers’ negative judgement and critics regarding their students, as an example, can make students have negative attitudes toward the lecture, the teacher, and can even have a negative effect on themselves. Students would feel belittled, ashamed and have self-doubts. Recent studies have showed that when people are being in a state of judgement or negative criticism they tend to have a negative internal dialogue (self-talk) which may have a negative effect toward their emotions (Pierce, 2001). (Philip Emmert, 1984) Stated that people with low self-esteem tend to be hypersensitive to criticism; they don’t like to be corrected because they view mistakes as a challenge (P,64).

The family environment is one of the factors that could highly influence individuals thinking. Families dysfunctions as an example, in which conflicts and misbehavior arises and often child neglect or abuse can be one of the causes that seek to make the individual process negative thinking patterns .According to the author Nancy Hine(2008) dysfunctional families make individuals process negative thoughts that ends up by viewing the world through a negative filter.in fact, this type of family problems contributed to create mental disorders and psychiatric illnesses like psychotic disorders and drug abuse (Keith, 1996).

## 1.4 Anxiety

Negative thoughts are a symptom of anxiety and unfortunately these involuntary thoughts tend to create more anxiety making it difficult to be cured without help. It affects the individual's way of thinking, According to (Beck, 1997) negative thoughts contribute to increasing the level of anxiety whereby individuals tend to lose the way to plan and think reasonably.

Negative thoughts, on a continuous basis can lead to a destructive and distorted mental habit; since it has the ability to affect our emotions, it can cause anxious feelings and these anxious feelings reinforce negative thinking which may lead to cause depression “*negative thinking patterns over time had resulted our problems with anxiety and depression*” (Williams, 2014, p. 15)

Anxiety has a tremendous impact on our physical health. Students may experience health problems because of academic pressure and anxiety about exams; they may suffer from headaches, eating disorder, stomach, etc. “*Thousands of people are ill of dammed up anxiety*” (Peale, 2016, p. 171). In fact, it is the modern disease that many people are suffering from due to its negative consequences.

According to an American surgeon George W. Crile, when we are anxious, the fear is not only in our minds but in our hearts, brains and viscera<sup>2</sup> then, the effect of worry and fear can even be noted in the cells tissues and organs of the body. Anxiety causes blood pressure, heart diseases, and anger problems due to the chemical release of adrenaline which can damage the internal organs of the body over time. Ron Williams (2014) states that negative thoughts can cause a chemical release that affect the body over a continuous basis of ongoing stress and fear; the individual develop a reduced level of serotone in the brain resulting in reduced level neuron to neuron message transfer which affects normal thought processing, and the imbalance in the level of serotonin can influence the mood in a way that leads to depression.

In addition, anxiety can have serious effects on learner's academic performance. It can impact learner's concentration, attention, memory, interaction, etc. Learners with anxiety problems are likely to be distracted and have problems with reading comprehension and

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<sup>2</sup> viscera :the internal organs of the body, specifically those within the chest (as the heart or lungs)

memory. They are so worried about failing and can't retrieve information or store new information. (Robert Reid, 2012) has found that high level of anxiety can lead to diminish working memory capacity, it act to drain cognitive resources, and this will reduce students ability to accomplish tasks in an effective manner.

Anxiety is a distractive process of occupying the mind with thoughts of fear and worry, and it can be cured if we work to change the negative thinking like positive self-talk .individuals need to repeat positive statement to lower their anxiety *“people need to continually repeat to themselves positive and truthful statements until such position thinking is in charg”* ( (Padovani, 2006, p. 128).

### **1.5 Positive thinking and motivation**

Positive thinking is a mental attitude that focuses on the bright side of any activity and expects positive results. It is simply the mind's ability to concentrate on what is good and constructive, eliminating as such negative and destructive thoughts and emotions. It is often referred to as optimistic thinking that is based on an internal thought process.

Travain and salinzadeh(2009) stated that positive thinking is a measured thinking and choice process in which we look for goodness and we are much more likely to find it ;a positive mind anticipate happiness, joy and successful outcomes of every situation and activity .it is simply a way of thinking that seek to obtain the best results from the worst conditions.

According to Kamah (2006) Positive thinking never recognize negative issues but deals with them *“positive thinking is the practice or result of concentrating one's mind affirmatively on what is constructive and good ,thereby eliminating from it negative or destructive thoughts and emotions “*( (Kamath, 2006, p. 16) and this highlights that positive thinking increases the mind awareness over positive actions.

Batrbara Fredericson (2013) a leading scholar within social psychology and positive psychology made an experiment to highlight the effect of positive emotions. The experiment was made on 4 groups of people where she showed each group images to provoke different emotional responses. The first group was shown images designed to trigger feelings of joy. The second group saw images to make them feel content .the third one was shown images of anger and the last group saw images to make them feel afraid. Each group was then asked to

write what actions they would take in a situation created similar feelings. Group 3 and 4 wrote down few actions, the other groups (1&2) wrote down actions like feeling positive emotions help you to identify more possibilities and options in life. She found that these extra possibilities and options seem to be translated into actions. She also demonstrated that when people experience positive emotions their minds broaden and they open up to new possibilities and ideas.

Munro (2004) made a research on 420 students in Stanford university in order to make a relationship between negative thinking and positive thinking and categorize the characteristics of pessimist and optimistic personality. He found that optimistic students tend to think positively and expect positive results while pessimist students tend to anticipate negative results. Since thinking positively make the individual have inner peace and less stressed and better problem solving ,less fear of failure Ligtsey (1994) demonstrated that positive thinking has a strong relationship of making the individuals feel happy. Because positive thinking patterns can make individuals experience positive emotions *“the source of emotions are thoughts, bear in mind that positive emotions and positive actions can only result from positive thoughts, while negative thoughts produce negative emotions and actions”*(H.Karstein,p10,1986).

In fact, doctors use positive thinking as a treatment to cure their patients from depression .Doctors use treatments called placebo effects which have no physical effect. It is just a flavored sugar pills; a fake treatments instead of genuine tablets. It is a phenomenon in medicine in which those who think that they are being given new and effective treatments are likely to be cured.

In 2001, a study was posted on the American journals of psychiatry. Andrew Flenchter discovered that patients diagnosed with clinical depression actually did recover from depression after being treated with placebo medicines. In fact, they recovered faster than the patients who are taking genuine medicines .The patients' thoughts and feelings somehow cause physical changes in the brain or body. The patients expect to feel better; they will feel less anxious because stress hormones drop.

Motivation and positive thinking are very interrelated. Motivation is the desire and energy to do something which is an important aspect of positive thinking because it is the root of inspiration in one's life. Individuals who tend to be optimistic and anticipate positive thinking patterns might experience positive feelings to be motivated.

Recent researches demonstrated that positive thinking skills had a significant effect on increasing achievement motivation scores and happiness scores. Mollakalili & Ahmadi (2014) had also demonstrated that positive and optimistic thoughts cause encouragement, comfort, energy while pessimistic and negative thoughts cause nervousness, anger and fatigue. In this regard, it seems that optimistic thinking has a beneficial effect on motivation.

Unlike people who do not have much motivation because of their fear of failure, people who have high motivation tend to compete with others for success and advancement; motivation plays a unique role of importance because of its role in our daily life; all of our activities, our thoughts, beliefs are affected by internal motivation. Studies show that the more is advancement motivation, the more is individual's success (Soleymanifar, 2013).

Some studies have been conducted to show the relationship between positive thinking and intrinsic motivation. The result of these studies shows that intrinsic motivation is caused by positive, internal thoughts; individuals tend to be in a state of excitement that leads them to think positively about their achievements. "*positive thinking is intrinsic motivation, not extrinsic motivation. intrinsic motivation is caused by positive internal feelings*" (Kamath, 2006, p. 03).

Intrinsic motivation has been defined by (Ryan, 1985) as an activation or goal-oriented behavior within an individual due to internal factors; individuals who are intrinsically motivated feel happy when performing a task and are the ones who don't require external benefit to be motivated. (Martnes, 1990) Defined it as the inner striving to be competent and self-determining.

Being optimistic urges to increase intrinsic motivation which leads the individuals to make achievement in various domains (Luthans, 2003) has reported that optimistic individuals are effortlessly motivated to work harder, possess high moral and are likely to adopt behaviors directed toward their goals; this means that individuals who anticipate positive outcomes will be motivated and have energy and better perception to perform a task.

Motivation can be enhanced through positive thinking because being optimist urge the individuals to trigger positive emotions to achieve a particular goal or a task (Scheier, 1985) found that optimist tend to believe that their actions will lead to positive outcomes, positive thinking affect individuals motivation, cognition; individuals tend to have less fear of failure and heightened creativity .this may prove that urging students to think positively may increase their level of motivation for a better academic achievement.

## **1.6 The role of the teacher as a motivator**

Motivation has been viewed as the energy that drives people to do something .It is the reason why people decide to do something and how hard they are going to peruse the activity .As for teachers motivating the students is the most important aspect of teaching because students who are not motivated will not learn effectively, they won't retain information, they won't participate and some of them may become disruptive "*demotivation is a loss in self-confidence and learned helplessness which can trigger psychological and behavioral patterns that disrupt both immediate learning and long self- regulation*" (Matthew T. Apple, 2013, p. 247) . (Martin, 2006)stated that motivation plays an important role in students interest and enjoyment in the school; students who are motivated tend to perform higher academical performance and are better behaved than unmotivated ones . (Thijs J, 2008)had also stated that motivated students experience more positive emotions and pay more attention in the classroom .

Motivation is also one of the major challenges that teachers face in their classrooms because much of it is intrinsic to the students .teachers need to increase their students' excitement in their learning process because motivation is a fundamental element for academic and behavioral success .Teaching positive thinking can be a key to increase student intrinsic motivation (Smith, 1975)points out that teaching positive thinking is effective in progress motivation another study made by (Barkhordari Hamid, (2010)) showed that teaching optimistic and positive thinking ,students are encouraged to recognize their good and positive experiences .In teaching positive thinking individuals tend to improve their abilities to face negative situations and focus on positive skills (Stallard, 2008)This proves that teaching these skills to students can urge them to improve their intrinsic motivation and make them focus on positive elements .

Teaching positive thinking patterns like positive self-talk, self-efficacy, makes the teachers productive and creative to motivate the students ;students will feel better when they think and say positive statements about themselves which urge them to be confident in their abilities and they can do better in their environment “*positive self-talk contains words of encouragement and support, positive self-talk is the voice inside telling you to persevere ,boosts self-esteem and it is motivating*” (Kuther, 2015, p. 86)

It was also noted by many (Bénabou, 2002)that teaching positive self-talk to students is a factor that urges them to be optimistic and confident to find solutions in the challenges that they are facing .in addition, positive self-talk creates self-regulated learners that are motivationally active participants in their academic achievements according to Zimmerman(1989).

Self-efficacy is commonly defined as the belief in one’s ability to achieve a goal or an outcome. Students who have high sense of efficacy are more likely to challenge themselves with difficult task and be intrinsically motivated; students tend to make efforts to achieve their goals while students with low self-efficacy believe that they cannot be successful. Bandura (1977) assumed that efficacy beliefs influence level of effort, he stated that efficacious students participate rapidly, work harder and persist longer when they encounter difficulties than those who doubt their capabilities.

(Schunk, 1981) Has designed instructional strategies to enhance students’ self-efficacy; the strategies included modeling, goal setting, giving feedback on students’ achievements; the results showed that these strategies increased learners’ self-efficacy and their motivation. Making learners think about their goals or tell stories about some successful people and giving students some instructions to improve their skills like how to improve their writing skills as an example may increase their motivation.

### **1.6.1 Classroom activities in oral expression session**

Oral expression sessions provide an opportunity for learners to share thoughts and express feelings. They create an atmosphere where the students are engaged in a discussion to change their ideas and adopt new ones .Oral expression sessions also offer an opportunity for teachers to motivate their learners through teaching positive thinking patterns like how to make learners use positive self-talk to avoid anxiety, how to build their self-efficacy,

engaging the student in different motivational activities like open discussion and writing activities to make them avoid negative thinking patterns and enhance their motivation .

### **1.6.2 Open discussion activities**

Open discussion activities increase students' interest and enhance their motivation. It is an opportunity for them to talk and express their ideas, give and justify their opinions .teachers who can facilitate engaging in discussion and involve their students in activities may be able to motivate them “*open discussion are essential to the promotion of positive purpose because these activities are likely to stimulate conversations about particular goal in life to pursue*” (Mariano, 2011, p. 26)

Discussions on positive and negative self-talk encourage the students to have a positive energy and effort (weignberg, 2007) has found 2 major functions of self-talk, the cognitive function which is dependent on skills learning and performance ,and motivational function which relies on self-confidence .Other studies of (Seligman, 2004) made on teaching positive self-talk and students anxiety have demonstrated that encouraging student to use positive self-talk can reduce their stress and anxiety ;for example making students work in pairs and having one read a negative statement such as “I am going to fail”, “I can't do this” and having the other student turn the statement into a positive one such as “ I can do this if I work hard”. Students will be motivated by practicing this technique and will be able to turn their negative thoughts into positive ones.

Engaging students in a discursive environment where they discuss different ideas work to find solutions to their learning issues discuss ideas to avoid negative thinking, share different ideas to build self-efficacy and positive self-image can be one of the factors that enhance their motivation and increase their academic performances.

### **1.6.3 Writing activities**

This is a type of activities that urge students to write a response to an open question or making learners focus on some of their learning issues,. These activities give students the opportunity to give predictions and solutions to some issues and allow them to organize their own thoughts. Such activities encourage students to share their experiences, their interests and their ideas which may enhance their motivation.

Writing activities like asking the students to list some elements that improve their writing skills as an example, the students may share some of their experiences. This may help them to write positive thoughts and increase their interest to improve their writing skills. The author (Snyder, 2014) stated that writing thoughts can help individuals to reflect on what they are thinking and release negative emotions in return. Learners will be able to work on their writing difficulties they are facing instead of thinking of the problems that they are facing.

Christine Moorcroft (2002) demonstrated in her book, *Self-esteem* different activities that may contribute to develop students' thinking skills and abilities develop their self-esteem and awareness, enhance communicating and departing. As an example an activity where students write on a sheet of paper some of the consequences of lacking self-confidence, write some of the negative thought that these individuals may encounter and an activity in which they work in groups and discuss how to turn these negative ideas into apposite ones. This type of activity may make learners overcome negative feelings and develop self-confidence.

### **1.7 The impact of positive thinking on learners' self-esteem and self-awareness**

One of the fundamental effects of positive thinking is that it changes our mental and emotional attitude. A positive mind does not allow negativities to dominate it, but in contrast it allows a better way of thinking that focuses on the bright side of any activity. It is a way of thinking that broadens the individuals' scope of cognition, attention and action. In fact, it is one of the ways that psychologists use as a treatment for many illness like anxiety, depression, anger problems, frustration. Such a way of thinking also urges individuals to adopt positive attitudes and improve their self-esteem.

Self-esteem is one of the influential factors that affect students' achievement. It has been declared by many researchers that high self-esteem can lead to high academic performance (Marsh H, 1999). Individuals with high self-esteem tend to be optimistic, more confident and more motivated and are the ones who have a positive image toward themselves "*high self-esteem is itself a source of energy. it is a positive stimulus and not merely a negative one, high self-esteem is an intrinsic motivation because it is rooted in our inherent striving to be effective, to be active,*" (Sniderman, 1975, p. 151). In fact this is a technique that sport coaches use to increase their athletes self-confidence. Research in sport psychology has

investigated the effect of positive self-talk on athletes performance (Van Raalt & &A.J., 1994) They found that encouraging tennis players to use positive self-talk and positive affirmation enhances their self-confidence for better performance. Sandra Alters and Wendy Schiff stated in their book of *Essential concepts of healthy living* that individuals who use positive self-talk reduce their stress level and boost their self-confidence by identifying their negative outcomes. According to (Hatzigeorgiadis, 2007) motivational self-talk will enhance performance, increase self-confidence and reduce cognitive anxiety.

Optimistic thinking has a positive effect on learners' self-awareness; it is a way of thinking that might make individuals aware of their self-aspects; their strengths, their beliefs, emotions and the aspect that need to be improved like their weaknesses "*Be positive and think about yourself .self-awareness brings you to know yourself well, you will find balance and honest view of your personality*" ( Troy C. Stewart, 2015, p. 05).

Constructing high self-awareness through mental process including positive thinking and internal dialogue help the individuals recognize and reduce stress that they created through their negative thinking "*stress reduction is due to increased self-understanding and self-awareness of cognitive and affective reaction to interpersonal events*" (V. Sutherland, 2000, p. 208).This demonstrates that high self-awareness help learners to reduce their stress and anxiety.

## **1.8 The impact of positive thinking on learners' attitude and behavior**

The process of positive thinking has a strong effect on the individual's mental attitude and behavior .Different researches have highlighted its impact on thought process including memory; self-efficacy and problem solving.it is one of the processes that urge learners to anticipate positive outcomes and enhance their performance.

Learners with a positive attitude might boost their memory. Darren Bridger demonstrated in his book *Boost Your Memory* (2008) that positive thinking helps individuals improve their ability to recall information. It affects our memory abilities through the chemical release of dopamine in the brain. He claims that when being positive, we tend to experience positive emotions that change the neuro-chemistry of the brain. It increases the level of dopamine in the frontal lobes; the region of the brain which co-ordinates our information from the memory.

Adopting a positive behavior through positive thinking can be one of the factors that enhance the students' motivation and improve their self-efficacy. (Beck A. T., 1970), an American psychiatrist, made a theory of cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT). He demonstrated that our thoughts affect our feelings and behaviors, He hypothesized that we can change the way we think to feel and act in better .In fact, CBT is one of the treatments for anger problems, depression, low self-esteem, stress management and anxiety .Learners would be able to improve their self-efficacy through CBT since self-efficacy is the belief of one's ability to achieve a particular task .Using CBT as a cognitive process. According to Bandurah( 1994), it urges individuals to have strong sense of efficacy and increase their intrinsic interest to achieve difficult tasks .

Such a cognitive process can be a factor to motivate learners and urge them to reduce stress and negative thinking habits. For example in an open discussion activity, the teacher may ask the students about how they find making mistakes when writing an essay. The teacher also may give positive reinforcements. S/he would say, for instance, "We learn from our mistakes". Learners will be able to change their negative thoughts and feelings; they won't view mistakes as a challenge, and they will be able to act in a positive way "*CBT skills will empower and motivate people to learn how to modify automatic negative thinking habits, painful emotional reactions and self-defeating behavior*" (Gregory, 2010, p. 03)

## **Conclusion**

In this chapter we have started with introducing the scope of negative thinking and highlighted its causes which reported various issues such as anxiety, low self-esteem, etc. Then we introduced positive thinking correlated to motivation, we listed relative contextual tasks that put into evoking a real life like atmospheres as adopting positive attitude within the mind, and ended up with listing its effects on learners which will be observed in the second chapter that will be devoted to the analysis of students manner of thinking and motivation.

## **Introduction**

The goal of this study is to describe and understand the impact of positive thinking has on 1st year university students; specifically our aim is to investigate the impact of positive thinking on student's motivation, to change the negative thinking patterns into positive ones and reflect on the value of positive thinking on the students' academic performance.

In attempt to test our hypothesis, this chapter is designed to provide an overview of the quantitative and qualitative methodology used and how it was an appropriate approach to answer my research questions .In addition details of the research methods and procedures are provided including, the description of the population, the questionnaire and the interview conducted as a research method to gather information. Finally, the interview and the questionnaire analyses are highlighted to reveal the influence of positive thinking on learners in their learning process.

### **2.1 Description of the population**

The study of the research was conducted at Abdel Hamid Ibn Badis University. It has a population of approximately 495 first year LMD students. The research was designed for 1st year English students in order to shape an understanding toward learners' motivation as a first year foreign language students, shape learner's positive and negative attitude in their learning process; the research also highlights the learners' characteristics and the effect of their attitude on their academic performance.

### **2.2 Research tools**

The research of the study is conducted to meet two major tools: a questionnaire and an interview as quantitative and qualitative researches which are targeted to gather data on the study and provide a detailed understanding of learner's positive and negative orientations and highlights its effects on their academic performance, learner's motivation and their learning process.

### **2.2.1 Qualitative research**

Sherman and Webb (2001) demonstrated that qualitative research in education took time to receive recognition and its first considerable discussion was in 1986, the handbook of research on teaching, (P,10). Qualitative research has made its mark and has become an accepted and valid approach in the field of education. It is a method of inquiry designed to gain understanding and provides insights into the problem, it is simply a method employed to focus on the participant's perspective on a subject under study.

#### **2.2.1.1 Interviews**

We assumed that the interview is one of the most appropriate forms to gather data for the research under study because it allowed the students to express their ideas, their understandings about having a negative attitude and highlight the importance of motivation in their learning process. "Interviews are probably the most frequently used method for collecting data in qualitative research" (Carol,L&Susan Mc,2008,P.167) According to Bogdan and Biklen (2007) interviews aims at understanding what the individual that the investigator is questioning thinks. This study concentrated on motivation through series of questions, which helped to illuminate what would happen if learners anticipate positive outcomes on their academic performance.

Bogdan and Biklen (2007) described the five features of qualitative research as a) naturalistic .For example, the research would take place in the classroom which is a familiar setting to the students. b) Uses a descriptive data .eg, the students' interview would give an insight of the effects of their thinking process, c) it is concerned with the process. eg, the interview questions would concentrate on positive thinking patterns and its impact on their motivation d) it has a meaning eg, the information might create an awareness and understanding of positive thinking. e) Uses descriptive data eg, , the students' interviews might give an amount of information about the effect of their thinking patterns on their attitude .the qualitative research method may confirm that students can enhance their motivation and improve their academic performance through adopting a positive attitude and rethink negative patterns into a constructive positive patterns.

The interview also allowed for 3 different questions, and each question has its own target to achieve. All of the students were asked the same questions and have given different responses. Each interview lasted in total for 15 to 20 minutes. All of the interviews were recorded through an audio mobile application, which were transcribed into a written word document [see appendix + page 50or 51or 52]. When transcribing the audio voices, some students used words in spoken language that were omitted (eg, mm, hum) and repetitive words (eg, if I make mistakes, if my ideas were wrong). We only recorded one “if I make mistakes” ,they were not used because they added no value to the interview, added to that some students paused when speaking for 5 seconds or more that was also documented (eg, pause 5s). This was to draw attention to the fact that students sometimes needed time to formulate and express their ideas.

### 2.2.1.2 Analysis of the interview

1. In the period of exams do you feel anxious?

If yes, does it affect your performance?

Number of students	Gender	Responses
1	Male	Yes
2	Male	Yes
3	Female	Yes
4	Female	Yes

**Table01:** anxiety and academic performance

According to the analysis of the table above, we notice that all of the students agreed that during the period of exams they do experience feeling of anxiety; all of them also confirmed that anxiety does have an impact toward their performance, they stated that they get afraid not to finish on time and what do they think of is making mistakes when writing. A female stated that these feelings make her forget all the information. This indicates that anxiety triggers negative thinking patterns that have a negative effect on the learners’ performance.

## 2. Do you get afraid to share your ideas in the classroom?

Number of students	Gender	Responses
1	Male	Yes
2	Male	No
3	Female	Yes
4	Female	No

**Table02:** learners' attitude and academic performance

The question raises the problem of low self-efficacy; a male and a female stated that they do not get afraid to share their ideas and opinions in the classroom, whereas the other 2 students claimed that they do feel embarrassed because they get afraid to make mistakes and they get afraid if their ideas are not correct. According to these results, we notice that students with pessimist thinking tend to lose their self-confidence.

## 3. How do you find the teacher criticism?

Number of students	Gender	Responses
1	Male	I do welcome teacher criticism
2	Male	constructive
3	Female	I like being criticized
4	Female	Little bit embarrassing but good to learn from

**Table03:** the impact of teacher criticism and learners attitude

The question was target to shed light on the impact of teacher criticism on learners' attitude, all of the students agreed that teacher criticism is constructive. Students stated that they like being criticized in order to discuss their ideas with the teacher, a student added that the teacher criticism is a constructive feedback. The analysis of these results illustrate that the teacher criticism have a positive impact toward learners attitude.

4. Do you think that being optimist and positive can help you improve your performance in the classroom?

Number of students	Gender	Responses
1	Male	Yes
2	Male	Yes
3	Female	Yes
4	Female	Yes

**Table04:** optimistic thinking and students' academic performance

The question highlights the students' attitude toward positive thinking patterns. The results of the table above show that all of the students confirm that being optimist helps to improve their academic performance; a student added that it is a way of thinking that leads to increasing their self-confidence. A female student added that it is a way of enjoying learning and it helps to avoid being anxious. These results reveal that students' positive attitudes have a positive impact on their academic performance.

### 2.3 Research questionnaire

The research questionnaire was used as a research tool to collect information from first year university students; it was designed to meet two types of questions, open and closed ended questions. It was simply designed to investigate the impact of positive thinking on first year English learners' motivation.

- Open ended questions: a type of questions used to make the students answer in their own words; the aim behind such questions is to determine the respondent's opinion toward the subject under study.
- Closed ended questions: a type of questions used to make the respondent's choose from pre dominant answers.

The questionnaire was handed out to twenty students of first year English students. Answering the questionnaire took place in a vivid atmosphere. Our main focus was to draw the students' attention to the fact of answering objectively and honestly. The questionnaire consists of eleven different questions and each question has a target to achieve; the aim

behind this questionnaire is to concentrate on positive thinking through a series of questions which would help to highlight the importance of positive thinking patterns to enhance learners' motivation .It also highlights the negative effects of negative thinking on learners' academic performance.

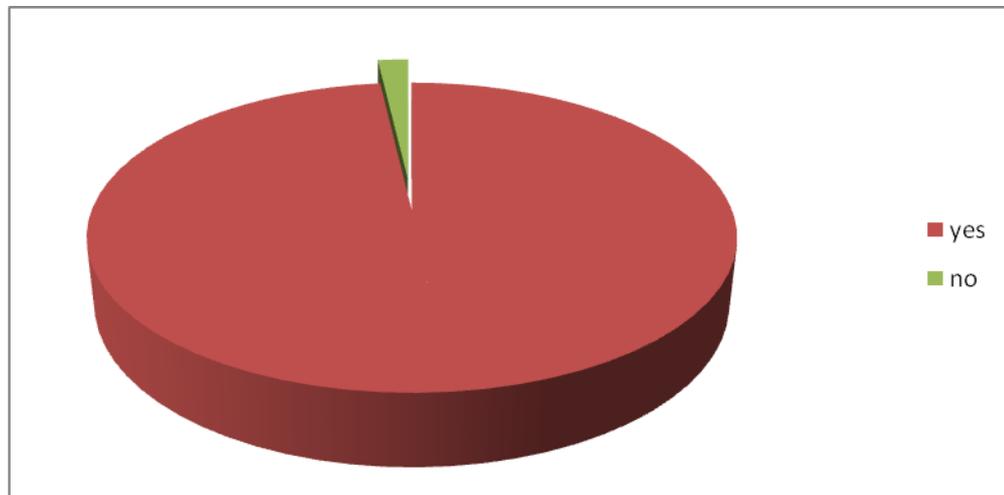
### 2.3.1 The analysis of the questionnaire

1. When you are stressed and anxious do you experience negative emotions and Thoughts?

Yes  No

Option	Respondents	Percentage
Yes	15	75%
No	05	25%
Total	20	100%

**Table 05:** Negative thinking and learner's anxiety



**Figure 01:** Negative thinking and learner's anxiety

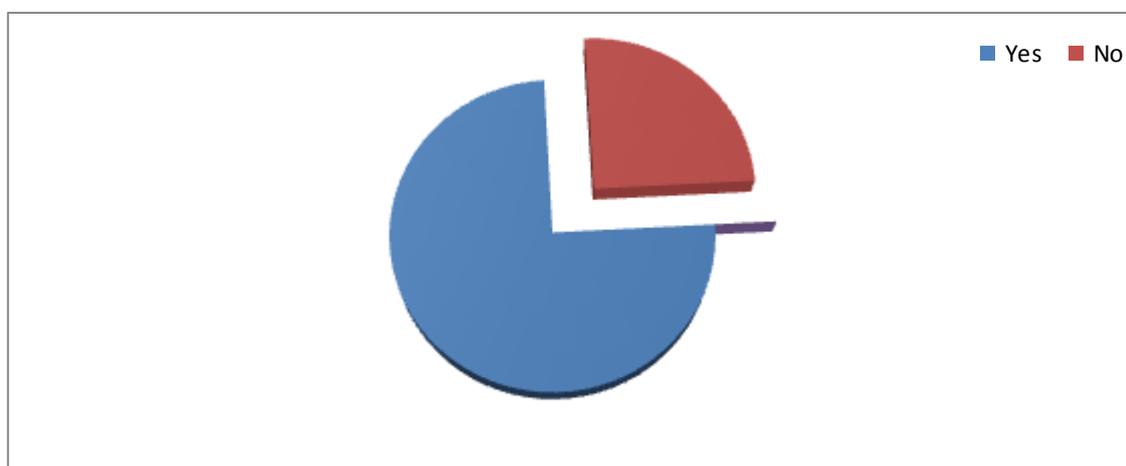
Most of the learners, that is approximately (75%), gave positive responses, whereas (25%) stated that they do not encounter negative thinking patterns and emotions when they are stressed and anxious. According to the results above negative thinking patters are the causes that make learners trigger negative emotions which raises the problem of learners' anxiety and stress.

2. Do negative thoughts and emotions affect your learning process?

Yes  No

Option	Respondents	Percentage
Yes	12	60%
No	08	40%
Total	20	100%

**Table 06:** The impact of negative thoughts on learners learning process.



**Figure 02:** the impact of negative thoughts on learners learning process

If yes how

- It decreases motivation and eagerness to study.
- A way of thinking that is destructive and helps to decrease concentration.
- A way of thinking that makes learners encounters some difficulties to interact with the teacher and express their ideas because they feel shy.
- Make learners adopt a negative attitude and affect their memory especially in exams.
- A way of thinking that makes learners anxious.

The majority of the students (60%) stated that negative thinking patterns have an impact on their learning process, whereas (40%) stated that it does not. We notice that learners encounter difficulties in their learning process because of their negative attitudes .The

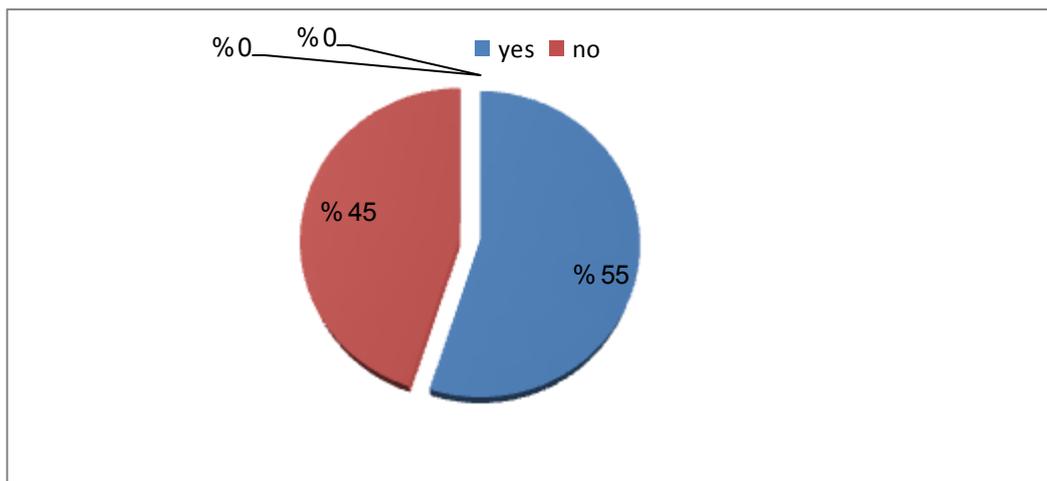
students also describe that negative thinking patterns as a destructive way of thinking that causes demotivation to study, decrease concentration and affect their memory; they also stated that negative thinking makes them experience negative emotions that urge them to be anxious to participate in the classroom .This clearly indicates that learners' negative attitude has a negative effect on their learning process.

3. Do people's judgments and teachers' criticism make you have a negative attitude?

Yes  No

Option	Respondents	Percentage
Yes	11	55%
No	09	45%
Total	20	100%

**Table 07:** The impact of external effects on learners' attitudes.



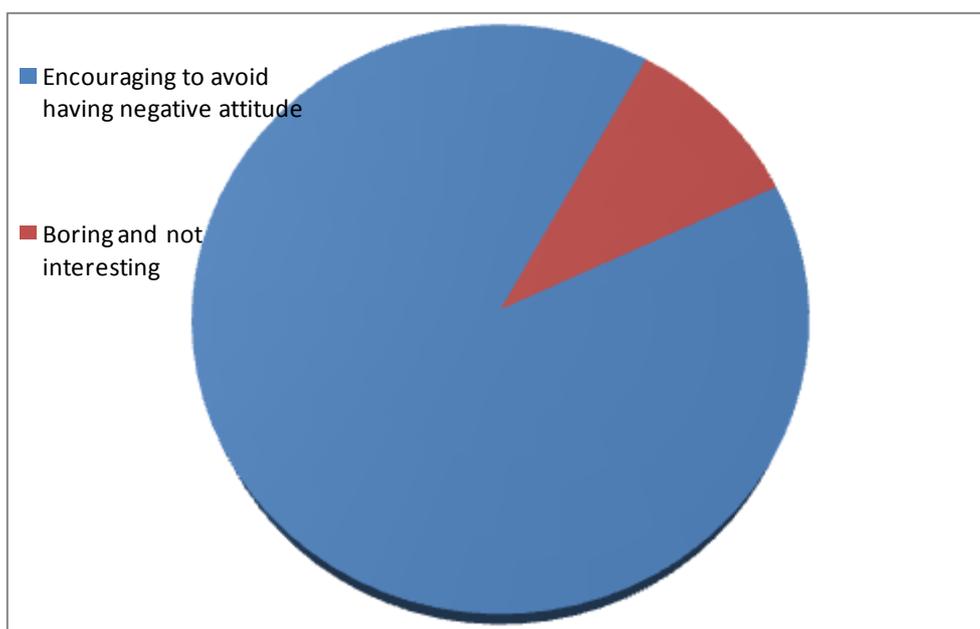
**Figure 03:** The impact of external effects on learners' attitudes.

We have noticed that (55%) of learners have positive responses whereas (45%) stated that people's judgments and teachers' criticism do not affect their attitude. The results of this question shows that the external effects like people and teachers' criticism have negative and positive impact on learners' attitudes .And this may indicate that these effects depend on learners' own attitude.

## 4. How do you find learning to use positive self-talk in oral session?

Option	Respondents	Percentage
Encouraging to avoid having negative attitude	18	90%
Boring and not interesting	02	10%
Total	20	100%

**Table 08:** Learners' interest toward learning positive thinking patterns



**Figure 04:** Learners' interest toward learning positive thinking patterns.

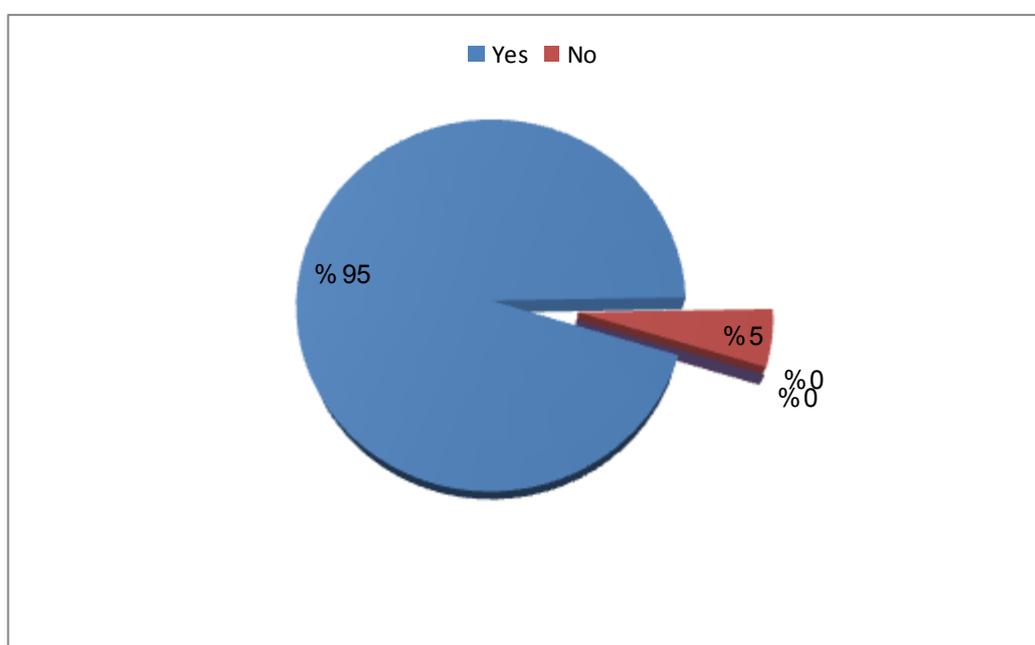
Based on the analysis of this table, we notice that the majority of learners (90%) find learning about positive thinking interesting, whereas (10%) do not have much interest toward it. According to the results, teaching positive thinking patterns urge learners to avoid having negative attitudes.

5. Will you be motivated to improve your writing skill if the teacher suggested some solutions in the classroom?

Yes  No

Option	Respondents	Percentage
Yes	19	95%
No	01	5%
Total	20	100%

**Table 09:** The impact of the teacher toward the learners' attitude.

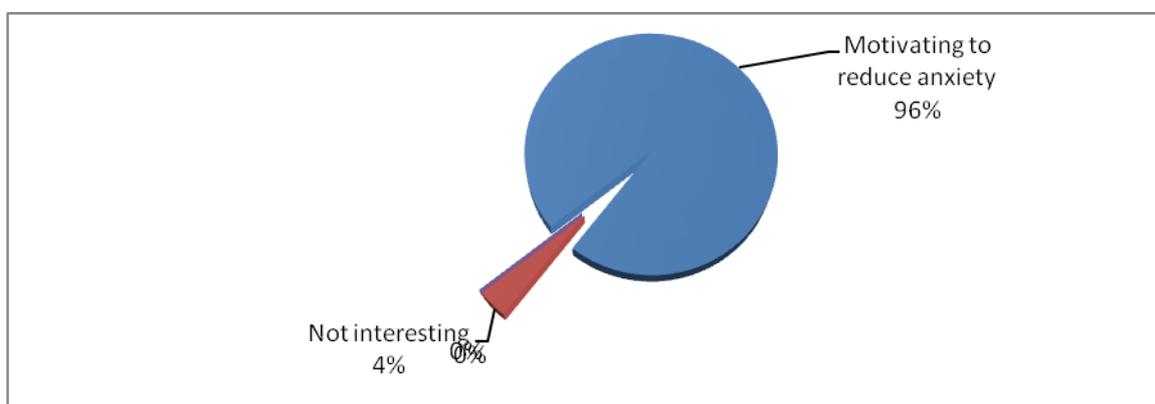


**Figure 05:** The impact of the teacher toward the learners' attitude

The answers of this question reveal that learners can be motivated to improve a particular skill if the teacher made some suggestions, which means that the teacher plays an important role toward his/her learners' attitude; the teacher can be an external factor that increases learners' intrinsic motivation; the majority of the students (95%) have positive responses whereas (5%) have negative ones.

## 6. How do you find discussing problems of anxiety and working to find solutions?

Option	Respondents	Percentage
Motivating to reduce anxiety	16	80%
Not interesting	04	20%
Total	20	100%

**Table 10:** working to reduce anxiety and learners interest toward the activity**Figure 06:** Working to reduce anxiety and learners interest toward the activity

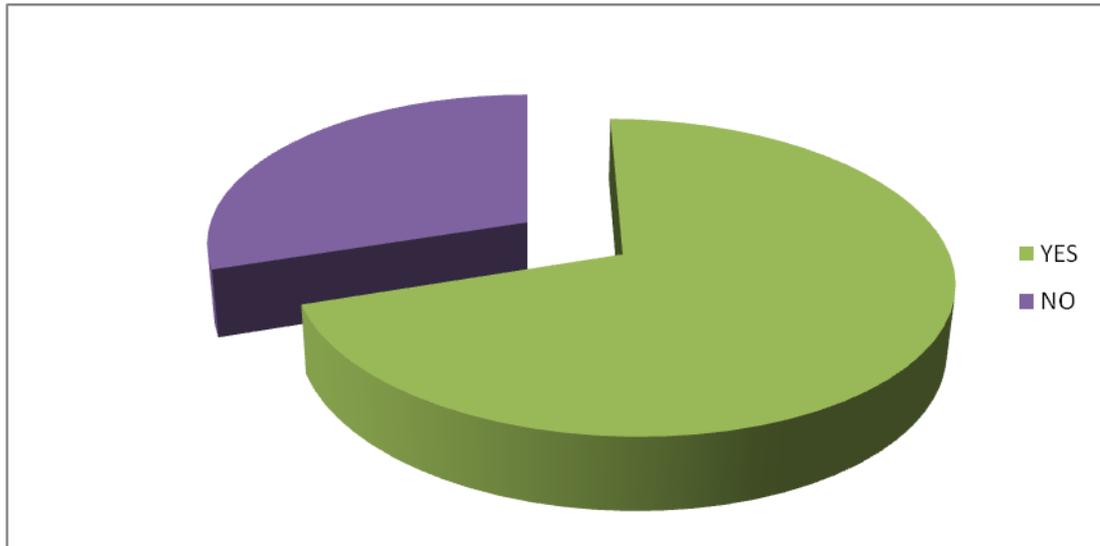
Most of the students (80%) picked up positive responses “yes” which reveals that learners are interested to learn about positive thinking, while (20%)of students find it uninteresting. The results of this question indicate that engaging learners in a discursive activity where they work to find solutions to their anxiety can be motivating.

## 7. Have you ever experienced positive thoughts that had a positive impact on your academic performance?

Yes  No

Option	Respondents	Percentage
Yes	14	70%
No	06	30%
Total	20	100%

**Table 11:** The impact of positive thinking on learners' performance



**Figure 07:** The impact of positive thinking on learners' performance

If yes how?

- Make learners motivated and eager to perform in a certain activity in the classroom
- A way of thinking that makes learners less anxious and experience positive emotions
- Make learners less anxious and more interested to perform in the classroom
- Make learners adopt positive attitude especially when the teacher encourages his students
- Helpful to make learners improve their learning process
- An important way of thinking since it make learner more confident
- Motivated ways of thinking since their family support urge learner work harder and persist to a better achievement.

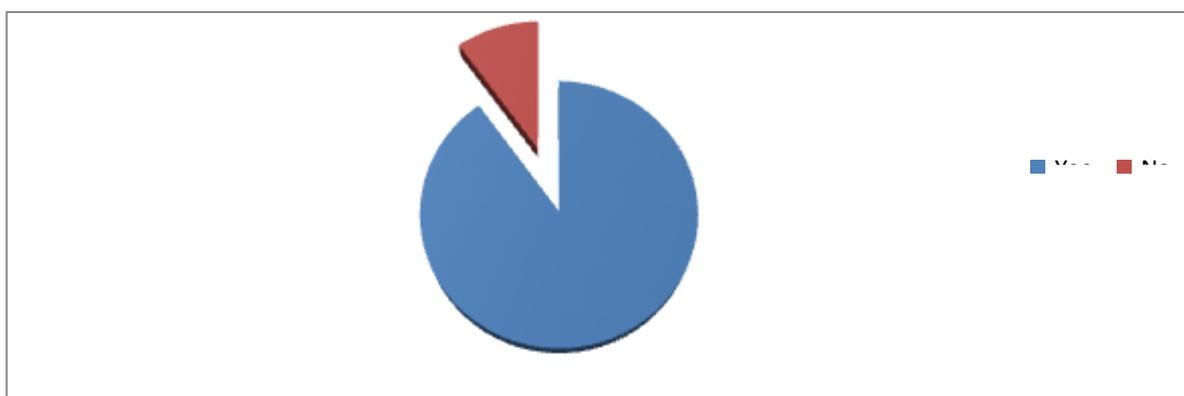
The table above illustrates the impact of positive thinking on learners' academic performance. Most of students (70%) gave a positive response while (30%) gave a negative one .This implies that positive thinking make the learners to better perform in the classroom. The students described these patterns as a motivating and helpful way of thinking because it helps to increase their self-confidence. It is an important way of thinking since it helps to adopt a positive attitude and urges them to persist for a better achievement.

8. Do you think that being optimist can help you avoid being anxious?

Yes  No

Option	Respondents	Percentage
Yes	18	90%
No	02	10%
Total	20	100%

**Table 12:** Optimistic thinking and anxiety



**Figure 08:** Optimistic thinking and anxiety

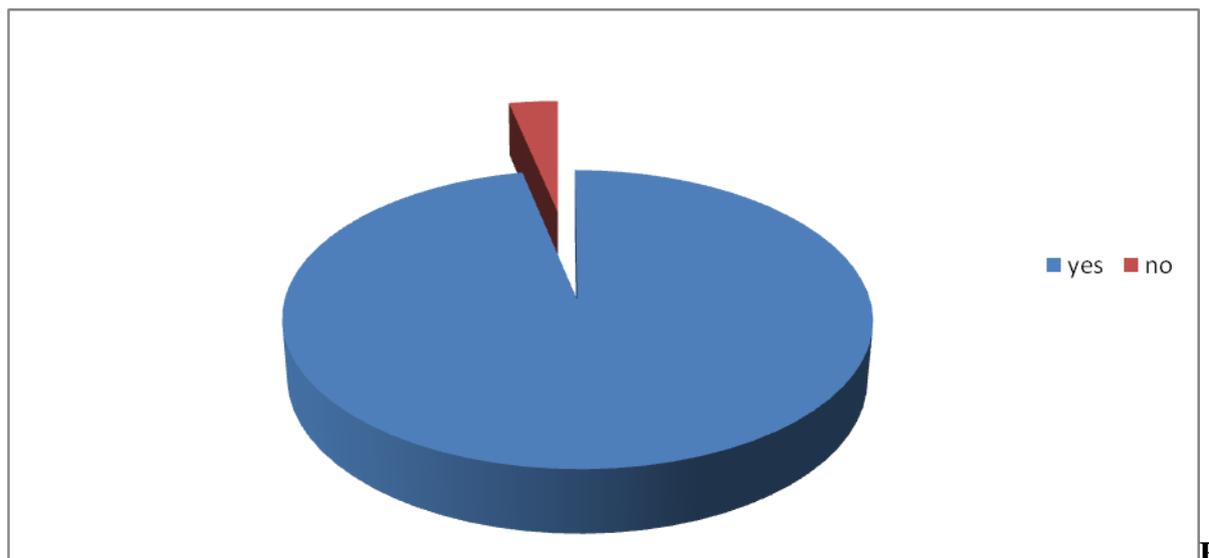
In this question, we wanted to know students' view of positive thinking; if they are optimist they tend to avoid being anxious or not .the majority of the students (90%) agreed that being optimist and positive help them avoid being anxious and only (10%) answered negatively. From the results, we notice that learners with positive attitudes avoid being having anxiety.

9. Do you think that being positive and optimist can help you to be aware of your Strength and increase your self-confidence?

Yes  No

Option	Respondents	Percentage
Yes	19	95%
No	01	05%
Total	20	100%

**Table 13:** positive thinking and learners' self-efficacy



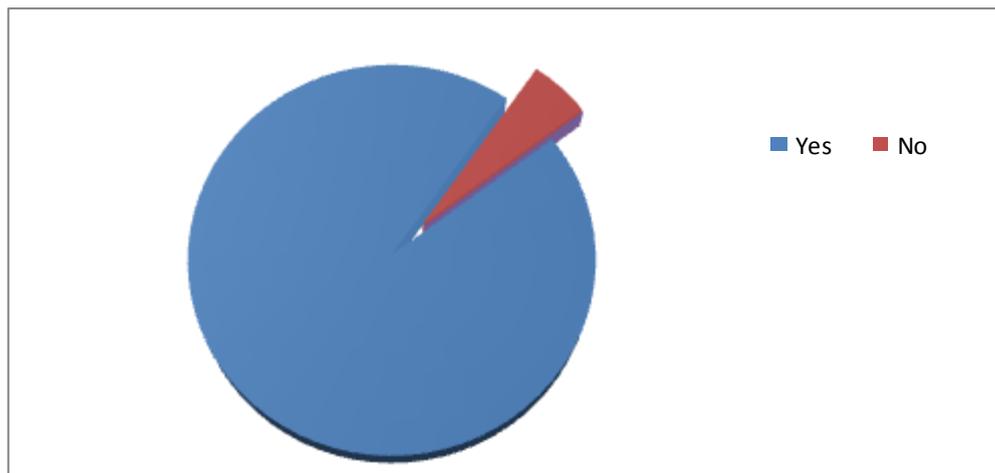
**figure 09:** positive thinking and learners' self-efficacy

About (95%) of the students have agreed that being positive can increase their self-efficacy and make them aware of their abilities ,while only(5%) have claimed that it cannot be helpful. According to the results above, students can increase their self-efficacy if they adopt positive thinking patterns.

10. How do you find making speaking or writing mistakes in the classroom?

Option	Respondents	Percentage
Embarrassing	02	10%
Good to learn from	16	80%
Challenging	02	10%
Total	20	100%

**Table 14:** Learners' attitude toward making mistakes in the classroom



**Figure 10:** Learners' attitude toward making mistakes in the classroom

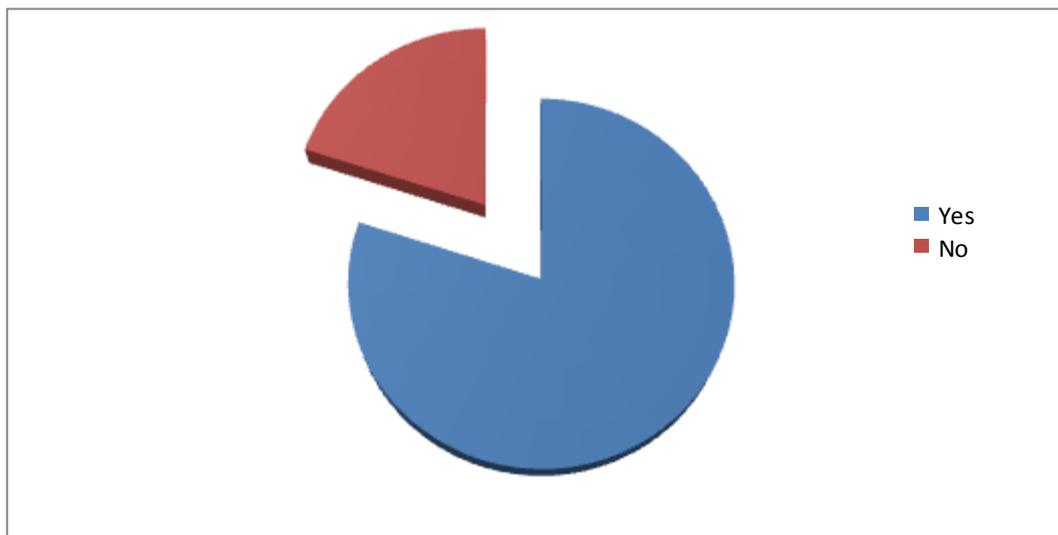
(10%) among the students who replied that making mistakes is embarrassing and challenging highlight that these students tend to be pessimist and trigger negative thinking patterns ; this indicates that this type of students may not like being corrected or they get afraid when making mistakes , whereas (80%) of students find that making writing or speaking mistakes is good to learn from .As a result, this indicates that students with pessimist thinking tend to trigger negative thinking whereas students with optimistic thinking tend to concentrate on what is constructive and good .

11. Do you find writing activity in the classroom where you will writ you negative thoughts and try to replace them with positive ones can help you avoid having negative attitude ?

Yes  No

Option	Respondents	Percentage
Yes	16	80%
No	04	20%
Total	20	100%

**Table 15:** Writing activities in the classroom and learners attitude



**Figure 11:** Writing activities in the classroom and learners attitude

The results show that there is considerable agreements among the respondents about (80%) find that writing activities in the classroom are helpful to adopt positive thinking attitude while (20%) claimed that it cannot be helpful to avoid having negative attitude. According to these results the students showed willingness toward the activity and it is likely to make learners reflect on their thoughts.

## Conclusion

The results of the data analysis have come up to cover our hypothesis with a convenient feedback about the impact of positive thinking on learners' motivation. The outcomes have been revealed from the analytical part show learners' tendency to acquire rather than to learn positive thinking patterns since it is described as an enjoyable way of learning and get them engaged. It also demonstrates that there is a negative effect on learners' performance in the classroom due to their negative attitude and anxiety. Now we may realize that positive thinking patterns improve learners' academic performance and increase their potentials to achieve a particular task. Thus, the discussion will seek to explore the influence of optimistic thinking as a cognitive process.

## **Introduction**

Based on the results of the study, positive thinking is a cognitive process that allows students to improve their academic performance. Therefore, we consider it as a process that should be utilized in attempt to make learners more confident, more persistent and motivated in their learning process. This chapter provides a general discussion of the research findings; it also provides recommendations and limitations of the study. We also would like to provide some suggestions as guidelines to help EFL learners in oral expressions obtain satisfactory outcomes and implement positive thinking patterns in their learning process.

### **3.1 Discussion of the findings**

Motivation is of a significant importance in the domain of education because it has a major role in learning in the sense that it simply refers to the students' willingness and persistence to perform a task or engage in a particular activity. Its significance tends to provide students with purpose and direction to follow. Thus, from the results obtained from the data analysis of the students' questionnaire; it is evident that positive thinking is a cognitive process that has an impact on students' attitude and academic performance.

According to our investigation, there was a strong affirmation concerning learners' anxiety and negative thinking; the majority of students confirmed that they could be easily anxious because of the negative thoughts that they encounter, and this makes them experience feelings of fear and hopelessness. Students simply tend to anticipate the worst outcomes and attract every negative thought and this in return can make them broaden their minds over obstacles and challenges that they may face instead of working to look for solutions. In addition, these negative patterns have a negative influence on their learning process. When interviewing the students, their responses help to shape an understanding of their issues of anxiety in exams; the majority of the respondents confirmed that these negative patterns tend to create more anxiety which contributes to encounter difficulties to recall information as well as difficulties to concentrate. The issues of being negative also tend to make learners develop negative attitude which influence their motivation and eagerness to study which means that students experience lack of motivation when being in a negative environment, and this would affect and degrade their learning process.

The problem of learners' low self-efficacy and low self-esteem rises from students' negative filter. The results of the previous study provided an understanding of learners' academic performance. The majority of the students confirm that they attribute feelings of fear and anxiety about making mistakes, and this in return helps to create passive learners in the classroom who do not engage in any class activity. They simply tend to experience fear to share their opinions and even feel embarrassed to interact with the teacher and this clearly indicates that learners with low self-efficacy tend to be less active and demotivated because of the internal patterns that they encounter which may result in a disappointing academic performance.

Depending on the results of the study, it seems that the teacher's criticism can influence learners' motivation and attitude in positive and negative ways, and this depends on learners' own attitude. Students agreed and disagreed that the teacher's criticism can represent a constructive feedback and can be demotivating at the same time. And this in return helps to identify students' characteristics; students with optimistic thinking tend to view the teacher's criticism as a factor that urges them to improve a particular skill whereas students with pessimistic thinking lower their self-confidence over teachers' criticism because this kind of students do not like to be corrected or criticized. It is likely to be embarrassing and challenging when making mistakes.

Learning about positive thinking patterns seems to be preferred by students. Most of the students showed an interest toward learning positive thinking patterns; they simply consider learning how to use positive self-talk a helpful strategy that allows them to use internal dialogues as a supportive factor for adopting positive attitudes. They also consider it as a helpful strategy to reduce stress and anxiety. Thus, positive self-talk is one of the factors that contribute to make learners anticipate positive outcomes and break the habit of having self-doubts in a manner that allow them increase their self-efficacy and awareness over their abilities ;students simply tend to have a strong sense of efficacy and a high level of interest to achieve tasks.

Unlike negative thoughts that work to reinforce negative emotions, positive thinking urges students to broad their mind for other possibilities. The findings of the questionnaire and the interviews seem to be supportive for the effect of positive thinking as a factor to enhance learners' academic performance because most of the students declared that being

optimist contributes to anticipate positive outcomes which in return helps to improve their academic skills. Thus, oral sessions provide an opportunity for learners to adopt positive attitudes through expressing their fears and challenges that they encounter in their learning process.

Most of the learners showed an interest toward different activities in oral sessions because they find them encouraging to avoid having negative attitude. Activities such as open discussions which provide an opportunity for learners to share their thoughts and understandings. According to the results, engaging learners in a discursive environment where they work to find solutions for their learning issues as the example of anxiety seems to be encouraging to improve their academic skills; students will explicitly learn how to adopt positive attitude through presenting their suggestions to overcome anxiety issues. Furthermore, the majority of the students find writing activities in which they replace their negative thoughts with positive ones encouraging to reflect on their negative attitude, and this in return can even develop the habit of being positive and optimist .

Suggesting some solutions to some learning issues can influence learners' attitude to improve a particular skill; the results of the study provide a support for teachers to influence their students' academic performance; the teachers suggestions seem to be encouraging for learners in a manner that allows them increase their persistence to improve a particular skill which indicates that teachers' encouragements tend to enhance learners' intrinsic motivation. Learners are likely to experience positive emotions that urge them to be more enthusiastic and self-driven to enhance their performances.

Furthermore, most of the selected students find positive thinking a helpful mental attitude that contributes to increase their willingness to perform a particular task, increase their self-confidence and persistence to achieve their goals. Then, it is likely to be a cognitive process that makes learners avoids having anxiety and stress. The results of the study provide support toward the adaptation of positive attitude through optimistic thinking.

### 3.2 Recommendations for teachers

In the light of the findings of this research, we provide different suggestions for teachers as a helpful element to increase their learner's motivation in oral sessions. In the following, we shall present some of these recommendations:

- Teachers should encourage their student to be optimist in order to help them adopt the habit of being positive. They also need to encourage the students in oral sessions to stop being afraid when expressing their opinions; they had better encourage them speak and share more ideas with their classmates, which in return may help the introvert learners and learners who face problems of self-confidence to be active and motivated.
- Teachers are required to expand the courses of group works and discussions with different activities in order to encourage learners to discuss problems of their learning issues and work in a cooperative environment to look for solutions.
- We also recommend teachers to provide learners with assignments to work on a particular skill; for example assignment to improve their writing or speaking skills
- Teachers need to provide lectures on positive thinking patterns in oral sessions; also courses like positive self-talk, self-determination are recommended in order to enhance learners' motivation and make them adopt a positive attitude.
- Teachers should provide writing activities in which learners write about a particular problem that they are facing in their learning process and list solutions to follow.
- Teachers may also provide an assignment in which learners make presentations in the classroom about a particular learning issue, anxiety for instance, in order to increase learners' awareness about the issues that they may face behind such a problem.

- Teachers may discuss problems of demotivation and its effect on their students' academic performance in order to make learners avoid having a negative attitude in their learning process.
- We also recommend teachers to use videos as a reference for assignment ; these videos would illustrate negative thinking patterns and its damaging effect in order to shape learners' understandings of these patterns and urge them to have a positive reaction.
- Teachers had better organize conferences in which they discuss different issues that make learners lack motivation in their learning process, for example issues of introversion, anxiety to highlight its negative effects and in attempt to increase learner's awareness and provide strategies to obtain.

### **3.2.1 Recommendations for students**

In attempt to respond to learners complains throughout the questionnaire and the interview, we would like to provide learners with different recommendations that they would take into consideration for the purpose of supporting them against challenges that they are facing in their learning process; these recommendations also aim at urging learners to adopt a positive attitude and look for solutions in the problems that they encounter rather than having the habit of being pessimist.

We recommend that learners should lose the habit of being pessimist and negative toward their performances in a particular task in the classroom which would lower their self-esteem for better academic achievements.

Learners should stop being biased and be more open toward the teachers' criticism and other students' point of view; it would be beneficial if they develop the attitude of discussing ideas instead of making judgements. They had better encourage discussions with their peers and teachers to develop ideas and adopt new ones.

It would be beneficial if the students organize activities in which they present some learning issues and encourage students to make some suggestions, this would enhance learner's

persistence to work on a particular issue that they are facing and in return it will create a cooperative environment where they enjoy learning and increase their eagerness to learn.

Students ought to stop complaining about the problems that they are facing in their learning process, but instead they should work to look for solutions that help to overcome their issues . For example, if students are facing difficulties in writing or speaking, they had better look for strategies that they can obtain to develop their skills.

Since learners are more attracted toward social Media, it would be beneficial if they create forums and blogs to post motivational quotes, post different strategies for having optimistic thinking in attempt to encourage learners to adopt positive attitude and increase their awareness over consequences of being pessimist and optimist.

We recommend learners to organize reading clubs in order to develop the habit of reading and discussing different ideas that urge them to adopt positive attitudes, and ideas that urge them to improve their skills in order to avoid having the habit of being pessimist.

Learners ought to perform activities that urge learners reflect on a particular issue. For example role plays; to highlight the problem of lacking self-confidence over judgments and how to overcome this habit.

### **3.2.2 Suggestions for learners and teachers**

After analyzing students' responses, it would be quite beneficial to give some suggestions and tips for both learners and teachers

- Learners need to avoid making judgement over other students' responses in order to promote discussion in the classroom.
- Teachers need to create an appropriate environment and a friendly interaction with the students in which students communicate with no fear and hesitation
- Teachers should provide an instructional technique such as cooperative group work in order to increase learners' interest to solve a particular problem in their learning process.
- Learners need to interrupt politely and respond well when negotiating in the classroom in order to create a positive environment to communicate.

Finally, these suggestions aim at encouraging learners to improve their performance in the classroom; it aims also at making learners work with better techniques for better results. Thus, the teacher's is of paramount importance in providing learners with a suitable environment that encourage them to be active and increase their interest in their learning process.

### **3.3 Limitation of study**

Due to many reasons, the study under research has considered some limitations. To begin with, the specific population is one limitation. The population of the study was limited because it focused only on 20 students who were only in first year which provided a narrow amount of information. Thus, the number of the sample would not represent the whole population because it is difficult to generalize these findings. If the study covered a large number of students, it would have provided another amount of data and findings. So, it would be interesting if the study were repeated to examine a large number of students of different levels at the department of English. The second limitation was time; we were bounded by time and we had to do training in the period that we are supposed to focus on our research project and dissertation. Also we did not have enough time to cover a large sample of students and use different tools for our research .Extended time would have been very helpful to cover large sample of students and teachers who teach oral sessions which may provide our findings with different dimensions.

The investigation of the study highlighted only the positive impacts of positive thinking; it did not reveal the negative areas of positive thinking patterns on learner's attitude Moreover, the lack of documents and sources in our library led us to look for e-books and articles from the websites. The study under research focused only on two research tools: a students' questionnaire and an interview ; it would have been quite beneficial if we made an experiment and applied positive thinking patterns on learners in the classroom or engage learners in activities to reflect on their negative thoughts in order to enhance their motivation; this may provide us with a tangible amount of findings and permit us to draw different conclusions .Interviewing the teachers would also permit us to extend our research and broaden our understandings on learners' attitude, learners' motivation and demotivation in their learning process . Therefore, this would note what knowledge students retain and continue to implement.

### **3.4 Suggestions for Future studies**

The interview and questionnaires were suitable methods to shape an understanding toward learner characteristics and their attitude. Also, the results and the interpretation of the data for the study revealed several areas where future research could be conducted. The students' positive and negative attitudes were essential to capture its impact on their motivation and academic performance

First, there is a need that more studies should be conducted on positive thinking and learners' motivation on a large sample population and using different research tools which would allow shaping an understanding of learners' attitudes and reveal a large impact regarding their academic performances. In addition, more investigations need to be conducted on learners' attitudes toward teachers' criticism; which would help to understand learners' characteristics and its impact on their academic achievements.

It would be more beneficial if studies would be conducted on positive thinking and learners academic skills in order to provide an investigation on positive thinking as a factor that urges students develop their academic skills or as a factor that urges learners to develop new skills. Moreover, more studies had better be conducted to investigate learners' attitude and self-confidence, in order to reveal the impact of learner's self-confidence on their learning process and provide solutions for these issues.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter aimed to provide some pedagogical recommendations and implications that might help students and teachers to work effectively in the learning process. Relying on the results of the study and the findings obtained from the previous studies, we have highlighted the importance of the implementation of positive thinking patterns in the classroom .It is necessary to provide teachers and students with some suggestions to enhance their motivation and improve their performances . Those recommendations have been offered because the amount of the data revealed that learners are facing some obstacles and challenges in their learning process due to their negative attitude.

## **General conclusion**

The present dissertation was an attempt to highlight the impact of positive thinking patterns on learners' motivation. The study of the investigation allowed us to shape an understanding of learners' attitude and its influence on their academic performance. To test the hypothesis put forward, we have carried out questionnaires and interviews administered to first year LMD students of English in the University of Mostaganem during the academic year of 2016/2017.

Basing our survey on exploring three chapters, we began with a theoretical review composed of two parts that highlight the most relevant aspects of positive thinking; we devoted the first part to formulate an understanding of negative thinking and its major causes. Then, we shed light on its consequences that tend to have a negative effect on learners' attitude, self-esteem and motivation. The second part tended to shed the light on positive thinking and motivation as a process to promote higher academic achievement; it also included basic activities that contribute to enhance learners' motivation and adopt positive attitude.

The second chapter of this dissertation was devoted to the empirical investigation which provides a detailed description of the research work; it provided a description of both a questionnaire and interview, description of the population, data gathering tools and analysis. As for the last chapter, it has provided a discussion of the collected data, and it presented a number of major recommendations for both learners and teachers. In addition, the last chapter also presented the limitation of the study and some suggestions to implement positive thinking patterns as a learning technique.

To conclude, positive thinking is a cognitive process that promotes higher academic achievements; that is to say students with optimistic thinking tend to adopt positive attitudes and positive orientations to improve their academic skills which in return encourage them to be persistent and self-determinant to achieve a particular goal; moreover, it is a cognitive process that contributes to increasing learners' self-confidence and self-awareness.

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## **Appendix**

### **The interview script**

Student: female

Place: library

Time: 13:00

Interviewer: hello, may I ask you few questions?

Interviewee: yes go ahead

Interviewer: do you feel anxious in the period of exams?

Interviewee: yes I do all the time

Interviewer: what do you think of? (pause 05).

Interviewee: I always think in failure and I only want to finish my exam and leave .

Interviewer: does it affect your performance?

Interviewee: yes it does because it makes me very nervous and makes me forget all what I have learned.

Interviewer: do you get afraid to share your thoughts in the classroom?

Interviewee: no I never do.

Interviewer: how do you find the teacher criticism?

Interviewee: actually I like being criticized by the teacher because his critics help me in my exams and my studies.

Interviewer: do you think that being optimist and positive can help you improve your performance in the classroom?

Interviewee: of course it helps me a lot and it helps my friends as well because being optimist, it is a way of enjoying learning and it makes me self-confident.

Interviewer: thank you.

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Student: male

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Place: the classroom

Time: 11:00

Interviewer: good morning, may I ask you few questions please?

Interviewee: yes you may

Interviewer: in the period of exams do you feel anxious?

Interviewee: yes, totally.

Interviewer: what do you think of?

Interviewee: I think about the way I write , doing the exams , my style of writing .

Interviewer: does it affect your performance?

Interviewee: yes it does, I think about the time, I get confused and anxious when I write in the exam paper .

Interviewer: do you get afraid to share your opinions in the classroom ?

Interviewee: yes, sometimes

Interviewer: what do you think if the teacher criticizes you? (pause 05)

Interviewee: I think the teacher criticism is a constructive feedback.

Interviewer: do you think that being positive and optimist can help you improve your performance in the classroom?

Interviewee: yes to some extent.

Interviewer: thank you

---

Student: male

---

Place: the classroom

Time: 11:15

Interviewer: good morning, is it possible to ask you few questions?

Interviewee: in exams do you feel anxious?

Interviewer: yes, I do

Interviewee; what do you think of when you stressed?

Interviewer: I think about time, I think that I cannot finish by time.

Interviewer: do you get afraid to share your opinions in the classroom?

Interviewee: I used to that when I was in high school but now I don't.

Interviewer how do you find the teacher criticism?

Interviewee: the first attitude, I do welcome the teacher criticism, I like to discuss my ideas

Interviewer; do you think that being positive and optimist can help you improve your performance in the classroom?

Interviewee: yes, because when you feel good, when you feel that you are at a good atmosphere, you can have good results.

Interviewer: thank you.

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Student: female

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Place: the classroom

Time: 12:00

Interviewer: may I ask few questions please

Interviewee: yes, go ahead

Interviewer: do you feel anxious in exams?

Interviewee: yes I do

Interviewer: what do you think of?

Interviewee: I start thinking about losing information

Interviewer: how do you find the teacher criticism?

Interviewee: I find it embarrassing, but it is good to learn from

Interviewer: do you think that being positive and optimist can help you improve your performance in the classroom?

Interviewee: of course it helps a lot, when you are positive you expect good things to happen, it helps you to avoid being anxious