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An Investigation of Lectures Note-Taking Strategies and Difficulties
The Case of Third Year Students of English at the University of Mohammed
Seddik Ben Yahia Jijel

A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirement for Master Degree in
Didactics of English

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Dedication

I dedicate this work to MY dearest parents who have provided endless and unconditional love, support and encouragement along my study life.

To my lovely sisters Hadjer, Safa, Marwa, and Azza, my dearest brothers Djad and Mehdi, and my cousin Nour.

To my best friends: Nesrin, Iman, Karima and Khaoula.

Raouia

I dedicate this simple work to my dear parents; to my precious father who always strengthens my will and to my encouraging and faithful mother.

To my lovely sister Loubna and dearest brothers Sidali and Toufik.

To my supportive fiance Messaoud.

To my best friends Manel, Asma and Raouia.

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Abstract

The major aim of this research work is to investigate note-taking strategies used by third year License English language students at Mohammed Seddik Ben Yahia University. It also aims to examine the note-taking listening and writing difficulties. It is hypothesized that third year English language students are not aware of the importance of note-taking strategies and they face different difficulties in relation to the listening and writing skills. To test the validity of these hypotheses, a questionnaire was administered to 70 third year License English students at Mohammed Seddik Ben Yahia University. The findings indicate that the students are aware of the importance of note-taking in enhancing their level and show that they encounter a number of listening and writing note-taking difficulties such as lack of concentration, speed rate of speech, organization of notes, lack of mastery of vocabulary and grammar, the lecturer's accent, and spelling mistakes. Based on these results obtained, this study suggests for teachers to be collaborative with their students by repeating the important information and giving them enough time to record points and correct the mistakes. It also suggests for students to practice both listening and writing skills outside classroom to improve their note taking strategies and overcome their difficulties.

Key Words: Note-Taking Strategies, Listening, Writing.

List of Abbreviations and Symbols

EFL: English as a Foreign Language

LMD: License Master Doctorate

P.: Page

%: Percentage

N: Number

Q: Question

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General Introduction

General Introduction

1. Background of the Study

Note-taking is a vital part of study skills that students need to master for effective learning. It can be defined as the ability to write down the most important information from a lecture. This information includes the keywords and the main ideas that benefit students to remember and perceive the content when they read the notes later. Recording points is considered as a method that aids students to enhance the learning process. It is mainly used in order to avoid them from losing concentration in the classroom.

According to Piolet, Olive, and Kellogg (2005), “note-taking is a complex activity that requires comprehension and selection of information and written production processes” (p.291). This means that note-taking is a complex and challenging skill for many EFL learners, which requires listening carefully, comprehending, and picking the most from the less important information and write it down. Good notes should include enough written materials from the information presented in the lecture so that students will be able to use these points to understand the new ideas and concepts. In fact, students may face different difficulties during this activity since they might not have the ability to effectively combine listening to the presentation, understanding the content, and writing the notes.

There are numerous studies about note-taking, its strategies, and its difficulties. The very first methodical study of note-taking was done by Gilbert (1989). He claimed that the process of recording notes from a lecture in a foreign language is an effortful task, and which sometimes leads students to take the notes in their first language when listening to the second language lecture (Koren, 1997).

Accordingly, James (1977) investigated in his study different problems that may occur during the lecture. The results showed that these problems are divided into three broad areas including: (1) decoding, (i.e. recognizing what the lecturer is saying), (2) comprehending, (i.e.

being aware of the main ideas and points), (3) taking notes, (i.e. picking and writing down the most important information that the student needs later). Similarly, Suritsky (1993) reported, in his research, that forty-five percent of subjects said they experienced difficulty due to written expression problems (e.g., slow writing speed, spelling difficulties) and twenty-six percent said that the difficulty was due to the lecturer's speed of speech, lack of paying attention, making sense out of notes after the lecture, and deciding what important lecture information to record.

Moreover, Dudley-Evans and St John (1997) investigated the main difficulties students may face when taking notes. The study showed that note-taking can be difficult for students to select what important or pertinent information to write it down, or how to structure their notes in a way that will be easy to study from in the future. They said “the taking of notes requires a student to be assessing whether or not a point made by the lecturer needs to be noted down and how it can be taken down in such a way as to be understandable when the notes are consulted at later stage” (p.104).

2. Statement of the Problem

Note-taking plays a fundamental role in the process of learning a foreign language. It is a strategy which all students need to master since it is considered as an essential tool, especially at the university level where lectures are the teaching method. Most of third year English language students encounter difficulties in taking note even if they follow its strategies and methods. These difficulties might be related to listening and writing. Therefore, this study is carried out to unveil the difficulties that students experience during lecture note-taking.

3. Research Questions

The present investigation is carried out to answer the following research questions:

- Are third year License students aware about the importance of note-taking strategies?

- What are the difficulties of listening and writing the source of students' note-taking difficulties?
- What are the reasons of students' note-taking difficulties?

4. Research Assumptions

- Third year License students may be aware of the importance of note-taking.
- Third year License students do use a variety of strategies when taking notes.
- Third year License students may encounter difficulties in note-taking strategies in relation to listening and writing.

5. Aims of the Study

The present study aims to investigate the main difficulties of note-taking strategies in relation to listening and writing that third year License students encounter during lectures. Through this study, we aim also to draw the learners' attention on these strategies and their importance.

6. Research Tools

The present research is a descriptive study. To reach the aim stated previously, data is collected via an online questionnaire submitted to 69 students in order to investigate the different difficulties they may face when taking notes in lectures. The participants in this research are sixty-nine students of third year at the department of English at the University of Mohammed Seddik Ben Yahia.

7. Structure of the Study

The present work consists of two chapters. The first chapter is theoretical and is concerned with note-taking strategies and their listening and writing difficulties, whereas the second is practical which is divided into two sections. The first one provides a description of the research methodology. The second part seeks to analyze and discuss the data gathered and the results obtained from the questionnaire conducted to third year students.

Chapter One: Lecture Note-Taking Strategies and Difficulties

Introduction

The current chapter tackles note-taking skills and its phases. Further, it highlights the most common methods to be adopted in order to take effective notes. It has also to do with the stages, skills, difference between note-taking and note-making, and the relation of note-taking with academic lectures. Finally, it discusses the main listening and writing difficulties students may encounter when recoding notes.

1.1. Note-Taking

Note-taking is a beneficial process that must be taken into consideration in every foreign language teaching situation. In addition, students must give a great importance to note-taking strategies as it is one of the best ways to help them in their learning situation.

1.1.1. Note-Taking Definition

Note-taking is one of the most important activities for students. It is a vital skill in the learning process, a strategy which all students need to master, and a key to acquire knowledge in a meaningful way. Note-taking is one way to avoid forgetting the received input with few words. It is mentioned in the Oxford dictionary as “note something down” which defined as writing something down so it can be remembered.

Many scholars defined note-taking differently. O'Malley and Chamot (1995) defined note-taking as “writing down the key words and concepts in abbreviated verbal, graphic, or numerical form to assist performance of a language task” (p. 138). In other words, taking notes is a recording of the main ideas included in the lecture's content in various ways that may help students in their performance.

In addition, Dewitt (2007) defined note-taking as “an external memory aid that refers to writing brief record of information to be remembered” (p. 64). It is believed that note-

taking is not just an act of writing down information, but also a technique that helps to remember and reuse the written ideas and words.

However, it is clear that recording points is not an easy task to do especially for nonnative speakers. This was totally agreed upon Kennedy and Bolitho (1984) who stated that “note-taking is a difficult skill to master even for native speakers of English and one which requires much more practice” (p.90).

Accordingly, Dudley-Evans and St John (1997) declared that “the taking of notes requires a student to be assessing whether or not a point made by the lecturer needs to be noted down and how it can be taken down in such a way as to be understandable when the notes are consulted at later stage” (p. 104). In other words, it is important for students to record notes that briefly summarize the main points of the lecture which are selected appropriately and that will help them recognize what will and will not be useful for their review.

Note-taking is a strategy used by learners to improve and enhance their academic performance. It is an effective study skill and a convenient way of writing down the essence of the received information in lectures presented by the teacher to raise students' concentration in the classroom and find appropriate data to be reviewed when studying for exams.

1.1.2. The Importance of Note-Taking

Note-taking is considered as an effective tool that allows students to collect information from lectures and presentations. Recording notes while teachers are lecturing is very beneficial to students in facilitating the process of learning and recalling lecture materials.

Peper and Mayer (1986) claimed that note-taking aids learners to be more selective, helps them organize their thoughts, and relates present material to what was previously

learned or already known. In addition, it increases concentration because in this process students have to pick up both main ideas and details related to them. As a result, learners would unconsciously pay great attention to what is said by the lecturer. Likewise, and according to Barnett, Di Vesta, and Rogozinski (1981), when taking notes, learners attempt to memorize and comprehend key terms and concepts or, they just store them externally in other devices to decrease the difficulties of comprehension, and allow them to recall the information easily after a period of time.

Accordingly, research by Zohrabi and Esfandyari (2014) supported the implementation of note-taking as a study tool that improves students' ability to catch new terms, remember, acquire, and comprehend them to be used later on. Moreover, Dunkel and Pialorsi (2005) added that when learners are allowed to take notes, they feel more comfortable and they have better performance in answering the post-listening questions. Research on notetaking confirmed that, generally, taking notes has a positive effect on learning, especially on remembering what was learned. This was shown when students had recall tests (immediate and delayed ones). Interestingly, the results indicated that those who took notes learned better than those who did not (Kiewra, DuBois, Kristian, McShane, Meyerhoffer, and Roskelley 1991).

To summarize, note-taking is a fundamental strategy in learning a foreign language since it raises learners' attention and makes them more involved in the classroom. In addition to its positive impact on enhancing students' achievement in exams through reviewing, it is so advantageous in improving learners' overall learning.

1.1.3. The Purpose of Note-Taking

In the academic lecture, students receive a huge amount of information that can be complicated for them. So, note-taking can be one of the most effective strategies that students should use during lectures in order to achieve their needs.

Kiewra (1985) explained the various reasons behind taking notes arguing that it helps lecture learning by activating intentional mechanisms and engaging the learner's cognitive processes of coding, integrating, synthesizing, and converting aurally received input into a personally meaningful form. He added saying that the notes taken serve as an external store of information that provides later revision to reassure remembrance of the information heard (Zohrabi & Esfandyari, 2014).

According to Kesselman-Turkel and Peterson (2003), the act of note-taking attracts students' attention and makes them active throughout the lecture time, relying on their cognitive processes to transform the information into a personal production by using different study skills such as paraphrasing and summarizing. Moreover, this activity aids learners to remember the materials that they have heard or read. When the student summarizes the lecture in his/her own words, this can help him/her to understand the subject better, organize the ideas, and facilitate memorization. As a consequence, note taking is a process of recording the needed ideas that are used for future revision purposes specifically in preparing for exams or writing assignments.

1.1.4. Note-Taking Methods

All over the years, researchers have suggested different types of note-taking methods to aid students organize their notes in a suitable manner for future use. Note-taking styles can be classified into two categories: linear and nonlinear styles. According to Piolat (2001), linear styles have a similar format to conventional written texts and one of the most common styles used by students. In contrast, non-linear styles depend on graphical representations, and notes are organized in a systematic and unconventional way. Piolat, Olive, and Kellogg (2005) pointed out that the non-linear style of note-taking is more effective than the linear style because it facilitates the process of making a connection between ideas. There are five

common note-taking methods which are: the Cornell Method, the Outlining Method, the Mapping Method, the Charting Method, and the Sentence Method.

1.1.4.1. The Cornell Method

The Cornell Method was developed by Walter Pauk at Cornell University in the 1950s. Most EFL learners rely on this method especially when they are involved in different learning situations because it is organized, effective and it saves time and efforts. Pauk (2001) asserted that the Cornell Method is not a method of recording random notes. However, it is a system of organizing the notes into an effective study guide that promotes active learning and critical thinking.

The Cornell Method is divided into three main columns. The right column which is called the note-taking column contains the date, the title of the lecture, supporting ideas and, details. It will be better for students to leave space for more clarification or for missing words. The left column or the cue column is reserved to record the keywords, main ideas, or questions. The last space is left for the summary of the notes. Figure 01 is an example of the Cornell Method format.

Figure 01

The Cornell Method Format (adapted from Academic Success & Disability Services, 2015).

Subject _____ Date _____

Cues	Notes
<input type="checkbox"/> Main ideas <input type="checkbox"/> Keywords <input type="checkbox"/> Questions that connect ideas	<input type="checkbox"/> Record the lecture points with concise sentences <input type="checkbox"/> Leave space between points <input type="checkbox"/> Use shorthand symbols, abbreviations and lists
Summary	<input type="checkbox"/> Sum up the main points of the notes section

1.1.4.2. The Outlining Method

The Outline Method is probably one of the most common techniques among college students. According to Wong (2010), the Outlining Method organizes the information in a highly structured and logical manner that shows the relationship between concepts and ideas. Moreover, it reduces the time to edit the notes and makes it easy to review. In this method, the notes are arranged from the most important points to the least important ones. The use of Arabic numerals, Roman numerals, or capital letters is important to distinguish and identify the level of information. Figure 02 is an example of the Outlining Method format.

Figure 02

The Outlining Method Format (adapted from Academic Success & Disability Services, 2015).

Page Number	Today's Date
Class Topic: How To Outline Notes I.	
The first level is reserved for each new topic/idea and is very general.	
a. This concept must always apply to the level above it (I)	
i. This concept must always apply to the level above it (a) ii. This is a second supporting piece of information for the level above it (a) but is	
equal to the previous information (i)	
iii. This information is a sister to (i) and (ii)	
b. This concept applies to the level above it (I) and is a “sister” to (a)	
II. You do not have to use Roman Numerals, Letters, and Numbers – try only indents, dashes, and bullets!	
III. Outlining requires listening and writing in points in an organizational pattern based on space indentation	
a. Advantages to outlining	
i. It is well-organized ii. It	
records relationships and content	
iii. It reduces editing and easy to review by turning the main points into questions	
b. Disadvantages to outlining	
i. It requires more thought during class for accurate organization	
ii. It does not always show relationships by sequence.	
iii. It does not work well if the lecture is moving at a quick pace.	

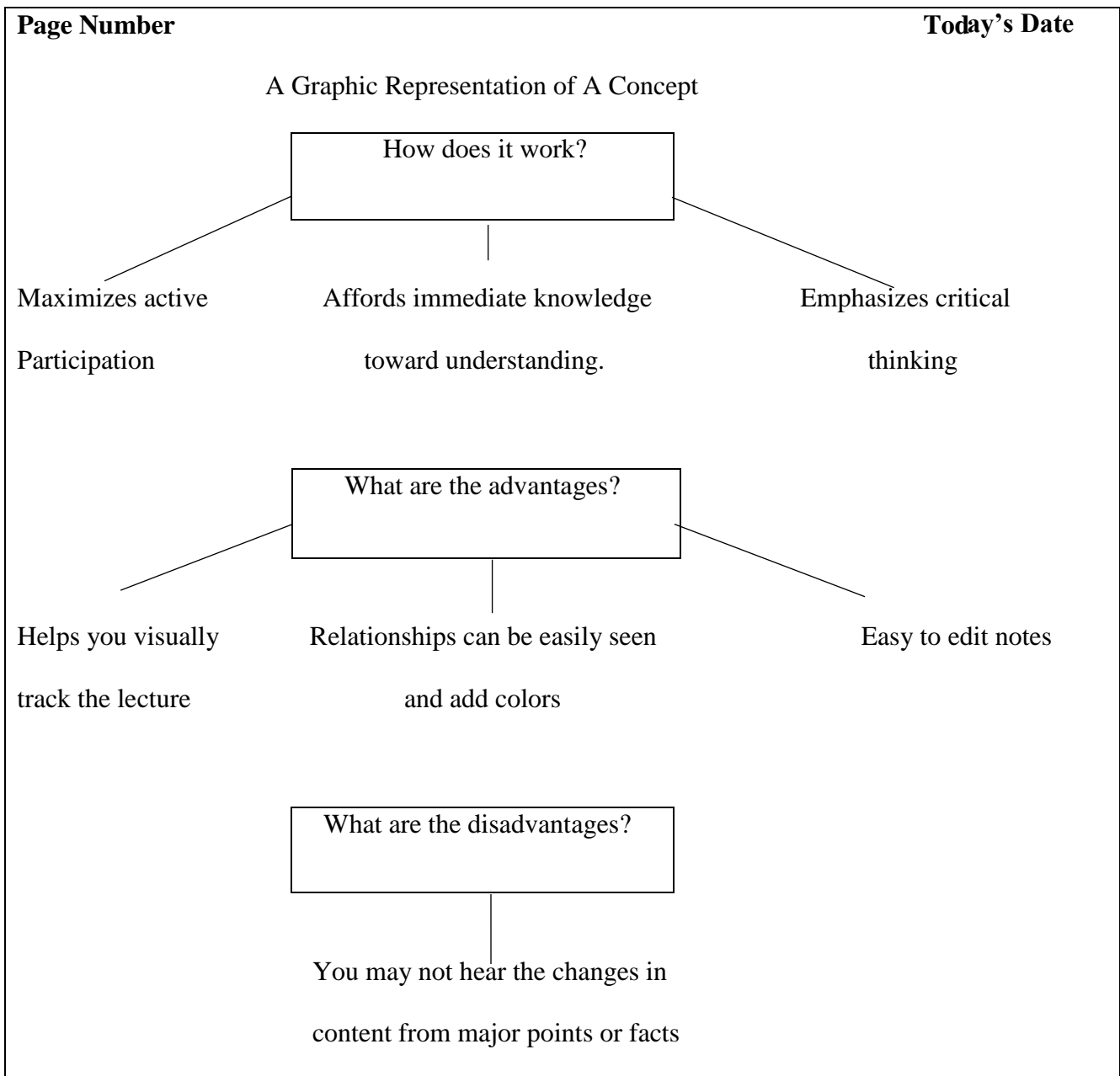
1.1.4.3. The Mapping Method

The Mapping Method is a graphical representation of the content of a lecture. It allows students to visually track the content and make a summary of a huge amount of information in a very short time. Moreover, it facilitates comprehension and memorization and helps students to develop their critical thinking.

It requires writing the main ideas or the keywords in the center or the top of the map and divides it into sub-point on the left and the right by using arrows to connect them in a way that shows the relationship between the parts and how they are related to the whole. Figure 03 is an example of the Mapping Method format.

Figure 03

The Mapping Method Format (adapted from Academic Success & Disability Services, 2015).



1.1.4.4. The Charting Method

This method is mostly used when the lecture contains historical events or statistics that need to be learned by heart. It has several advantages. For example, it reduces the amount of writing necessary and provides an overview of lectures that cover a lot of facts and

relationships between topics. The charting format is simply required setting up a table that contains separate columns and filling them with the appropriate information. Figure 04 is an example of the Charting Method format.

Figure 04

The Charting Method Format (adapted from Academic Success & Disability Services, 2015).

Page Number

Today's Date

How?	Advantages	Disadvantages	How to use it?
Set up your paper in columns and label appropriate headings	Helps pull out the most relevant information	Can be a hard system to learn to use	If you will be tested on facts
The heading could be categories covered in the lecture	Also reduces the amount of writing necessary	You need to know the content that will be covered during the lecture before it begins	If content is heavy and presented quickly-such as history course with dates, events, etc
Insert information (words, phrases, main ideas, etc.) into the appropriate category	Provides review for memorizing facts and studying comparisons and relationships		If you want to get an overview of the whole course on one big paper

1.1.4.5. The Sentence Method

The Sentence Method can be considered as the easiest method since it depends on writing the most relevant ideas, facts, or any kind of information in the form of sentences. Each idea is written in a separate line and the use of numeration is necessary. It is used when the lecture is organized, heavy with information, and quickly delivered. According to Rauschhaupt (2010), the thing that makes this method different from the others is that instead of using full sentences, students use only short terms or phrases. Figure 05 is an example of the Sentence Method format.

Figure 05

The Sentence Method Format (adapted from Academic Success & Disability Services, 2015).

Page Number	Today's Date
1.	Write every new thought, fact, or topic on a separate line as you progress, numbering each sentence.
2.	Advantages: it is more organized than writing paragraphs and still records most of the information.
3.	Disadvantages: it is hard to determine major/minor points and it is hard to edit and review with clean-up.
4.	It is a good method when there is lots of information and you do not know how the ideas fit together.

1.1.5. Note Taking Skills

Suritskey and Hughes (1991) suggested four broad processes and skills associated with note-taking which are listening, cognitive processing, recording lecture content, and reviewing the noted information (as cited in Williams & Eggert, 2002, p.174). They reported

that listening and processing, basically, occur together and are followed directly by the third skill (i.e., recoding). However, reviewing notes can take place by the end of the lecture or postponed prior to exams.

1.1.5.1. Listening

Williams and Eggert (2002) stated that despite the difficulty to differentiate between listening and cognitive processing since they occur simultaneously, there is a slight difference between them. They distinguished listening by making it equivalent to paying attention. Accordingly, they stressed that in case students' attention is not focused on what the instructor is saying, there is a little chance that cognitive processing and information encoding would follow. However, little consideration has been given to moment-to-moment student attention in the college classroom.

1.1.5.2. Cognitive Processing

As argued by Suritsky and Hughes (1991), cognitive processing consists of at least two stages: (1) the comprehension of the course's points and (2) the connection of that comprehension with previous knowledge. For Armbruster (2000), the second stage is subdivided into two processes: (a) building an internal connection by linking new ideas with previous ones in the lecture and (b) building an external connection by linking new points with prior knowledge of the topic.

According to Williams and Eggert (2002), the first stage, the comprehension of the course's points, is based on understanding the lecture points and re-writing them in one's own words. After this understanding, students need to associate these new points with their previous knowledge, for instance thinking that "This is an example of...", "This is related to..." so that new information becomes more useful and easier.

1.1.5.3. Note-Taking

To record notes is to write down the interpretation student came up with within the cognitive processing skill into a written form. Williams and Eggert (2002) asserted that this skill requires students to make a balance between listening, processing, and recording; and the notes will not be efficient if they do not achieve this balance. They defined efficiency as “the ratio between the number of conceptual points recorded and the number of words in the note” (p. 175). They stressed also that students should be able to distinguish between the main ideas and subordinate information. Hartely and Marshall (1974) confirmed that one of the most complex features of note-taking is achieving a mix between main points and details, which may help learners to reconstruct main ideas in later exams (as cited in Williams & Eggert, 2002, p.176).

1.1.5.4. Reviewing

More recent studies on note-taking indicate that students perform better when they review complete notes (Kiewra, 1984). He argued that the greatest influence of note taking occurs when students take their own notes and review them before exams; otherwise, the recording is not efficient (Kiewra, 1989). Williams and Eggert also mentioned that students often review in a relatively passive way, by simply reading through their notes and trying to remember the lecture comments. DiVesta and Gray (1972) found that students who take notes but do not review get a lower score than the students who review notes before the exam. They also found that learners who do not attend lectures but are given notes to review perform almost as well as the students who attend (as cited in Williams & Eggert, 2002, p.178).

1.1.6. Note-Taking Stages

Taking notes in class lectures is the most useful strategy that raises students’ attention and retention during the academic discourse. It is a process that begins before the lecture and ends after the students review their notes, helping them for better preparation for note-taking.

1.1.6.1. Before the Lecture

To take effective notes, it is important to read and search about a specific subject before attending class. This may help students to get a general overview of the main ideas and important key concepts or to have background knowledge. Students should sit as near to the front of the classroom as possible to eliminate distractions. As they prepare to record points, they need to write the date and the title to help them locate information more easily later on. If time permits, students may review notes from previous lectures to activate prior knowledge. In addition to that, it is necessary for the learner to have adequate writing tools and available papers so that they do not interrupt the learning process by looking for more (Boyle, 2007).

1.1.6.2. During the Lecture

As the lecture starts, students must be active listeners in order to attend to the main information of the lecture and relate meaning to them (Kiewra, 1985). By assigning meaning, learners must concentrate on and comprehend the essential points the instructor is explaining. In addition, focusing and paying attention to both teacher and lesson are key aspects of the listening process, involving concentration to visual and auditory cues for a better understanding of the relevant lecture information. Moreover, the notes must be recorded in a well-organized way in order to be meaningful and understandable for later review. Hughes and Suritsky (1991) asserted that as the students begin to take notes, paraphrasing is the best method to be followed in which they use their own words in summarizing what the instructor is saying to recall them easily when it is necessary. Additionally, it is better to use abbreviations and symbols to record the information in order to write a little faster (as cited in Boyle, 2007, p.228). Hughes and Suritsky (1994) asserted that recording notes verbatim is the least effective way of learning. Furthermore, according to Kiewra (1985), learners have to differentiate between subordinate and key information. They must be selective and take notes

as brief as possible in an organized manner by including the main themes of the subject in hand (as cited in Boyle, 2007, p.228).

1.1.6.3. After the Lecture

The last step in the process of note taking is reviewing the notes after the lecture. According to Lazarus (1991), reviewing is an essential part of the process whether it occurs immediately after the lecture or when revising for an exam. Suritsky and Hughes (1996) defined reviewing as looking over the notes being recorded in order to fill in the gaps, clarify the ambiguous notions, and correct spelling mistakes. They stressed the importance of revising notes as it helps poor note-takers to compensate for their inadequacies. Review the notes immediately after class is the key to better learning because the subject matter is still fresh.

To conclude, the process of note-taking goes through several stages. Firstly, students must take a seat in front of the teacher to facilitate the listening skill. Then, they start recording the main ideas using their own words and in an organized and understandable way. Finally, immediately after the lecture, learners should review the notes to complete and clear the misunderstood points.

1.1.7. Note-Taking versus Note-Making

Note-taking and note-making are both fundamental activities in the academic study. However, there is a distinction made between them. According to Jordan (1997), there is a simple difference between both activities, but they are sometimes used interchangeably. He stated that note-taking is the straightforward writing down of what is said or written on the board, and which may not require much thought. However, note-making is the creation of students' own notes, which may involve summarizing, paraphrasing, and making important elements stand out by visual means (p.187).

Note-making is an advanced process of producing effective notes, which involves reviewing, synthesizing, and connecting ideas from the lectures, or reading and presenting the information in a creative way (Neville, 2007). The distinct difference between note-taking and note-making is the control that students have over the process. That is, note-taking involves recording notes from lectures where there is less control of the process and more pressure because of time-restricted. But, when students make their notes which are usually from reading texts or rewriting notes, they feel less pressured, comfortable, and have more control over the process.

1.1.8. Note-Taking Symbols and Abbreviations

Note taking needs to be concise. Its general principle is to reduce the amount of language by shortening sentences and words. Students do not have to write down everything word for word. Using symbols and abbreviations can allow students to take notes that are more accurate more quickly. Due to their function, they are sometimes called time savers.

According to Wallace (2004, p. 39), symbols and abbreviations can be of three kinds:

- 1) *Field symbols and abbreviations*: the students specializing in a certain field or subject area will learn certain symbols and abbreviations as part of the study of that field. Thus, a student of Chemistry will know that C stands for carbon and Ca for calcium. Such symbols/abbreviations are very useful, since they are widely used within each field, and neither ambiguous nor liable to be misunderstood.
- 2) *Commonly used Symbols and Abbreviations*: these are symbols and abbreviations in common use or widely understood. Two examples are 'i.e.' meaning that is; and '=' meaning is equal to, is the same as, or means.
- 3) *Personal Symbols and Abbreviations used by individual students*: if you find yourself to frequently note down a certain word or phrase it is sensible to find a quick way to represent it. For example, students of English literature listening to a lecture on the

poet Wordsworth might well use the initial letter W instead of writing out the poet's name in full each time they have to refer to it.

1.1.9. Note Taking in Academic Lectures

Academic lectures for the purpose of instruction maintain an important presence at most of the universities. According to Sutherland (1976), "The lecture is defined loosely as a continuing oral presentation of information and ideas by the professor; it is presumably a synthesis of his own reading, research, and experiences, interpreted in light of his own insights" (p. 30). That is, lectures are a set of knowledge presented by the professor in terms of his previous studies and experiments. It involves, primarily, an oral presentation and explanation of the topic where the teacher clarifies the content matter to the students accompanied by some tools such as a slideshow, a word document, and most of the time a whiteboard to emphasize important points in his/her lecture.

Good and Merkel (1959) asserted that a lecture is a method of teaching by which the instructor gives an oral presentation of facts or principles to learners where the class usually being responsible for note-taking. Hence, during the lecture, students should be expected to take notes as it is an important part of academic success in university. It is the strategy that helps them focus and better understand the main concepts of the content matter, as well as improve their active listening, comprehension of material, and retention. However, many students do not prefer the lecture format as they find it difficult to listen and take clear notes simultaneously. They often miss important information because they simply cannot keep up with the lecturer. For that purpose, many teachers provide students with support stuff such as copies of the lecture, basic questions, handouts, or a website where related information to the content matter are available. It is useful to utilize these support materials as it is mostly the lecturer who sets the exam questions.

The way students take notes affects their comprehension of the lecture. Therefore, they need to enhance and develop their ability in recording effective notes. They must pay attention and listen carefully to the lecture, determine the important concepts and phrases, choose the keywords to be included in notes, hold and manipulate the information in working memory, explain and clarify the ideas, decide what to record; and then write it down (Piolat et al., 2005).

Suritsky and Hughes (1996) recommended a number of ways to develop students' note-taking ability. As an important first step, it requires teaching students the listening skill and how to receive verbal information. They stated that it is important to prepare students and enhance their listening ability in order to acquire more information about the lecture. Boch and Piolat (2005) proposed that it is better for teachers to write key concepts and new vocabulary related to lecture on the board to help students pick the important information to be recorded and revisit the missing ones presented verbally.

In summary, recording notes during lectures is an effective strategy that helps the learners identify the core of important ideas in the lecture, and it is a permanent record that aids them remember and learn later. In addition, the underlying organization and purpose of the lecture will become clear through note-taking, which activates students' prior knowledge and relate new concepts to the previous ones.

1.1.10. Note-Taking Difficulties

Throughout the process of note-taking, students face many challenges that prevent them from catching the lecture main points. The major difficulties they encounter are mainly related to listening and writing.

1.1.10.1. Learners Difficulties Related to Listening

Kiewra (2002) in his research pointed out that students spent about 80% of the class time listening to lectures. Therefore, to make the act of note-taking useful and successful, it

requires effective listening which involves encoding information, selecting, summarizing, and evaluating what is being said by the lecturer.

O'malley and Chamot (1990) described listening comprehension as the active process in which the listener form meaning by using signs from contextual information and existing knowledge. In other words, listening comprehension is the receiver of transferred images, impressions, and thoughts from the speaker.

According to McIvor (2006), "listening to academic lectures can be challenging for many L2 students and they often fail to understand the main points of the lectures" (p. 38). In this regard, students encounter several problems in listening during note-taking in lectures that decrease their quality of notes and make them passive note-takers. The source of the difficulties can be summarized in the following causes.

1.1.10.1.1. The Lack of Background Knowledge

According to Gebhard (2000), background knowledge is related to our real-world experiences and the expectations that we have. Underwood (1989) pointed out that the lack of background knowledge is a hindrance to listening. Grahem (2006) agreed with Underwood's (1989) point of view, stressing out that the unfamiliarity with the topic presented can cause difficulty in listening. Students may clearly hear the lecture or the listening task but still cannot be able to understand the meaning. In addition, Schmidt-Rinehart (1994) implemented a study with the purpose of discovering the effects of topic familiarity on L2 listening. Learners have listened to two different passages, one was about a familiar topic that they had already previous knowledge on it; and the second one was unfamiliar to them. The results concluded that background knowledge in the form of topic familiarity emerges as a powerful factor in facilitating and supporting the listening skill. When students do not have enough information about the topic they are listening to, they will face difficulties in comprehending the content.

1.1.10.1.2. The Lack of Concentration

It may be hard for students maintaining concentration in a foreign language classroom. When students lose concentration during listening to lectures, they will fail to comprehend even the easiest topics. Thus, it can result from various psychological situations such as stress, fatigue, anxiety, or because of the lack of interest in the subject material, which can be considered as the main reason for losing concentration when listening. Thus, when students find the topics interesting this will help them to focus and concentrate and the comprehension will be easier.

1.1.10.1.3. Accents

Students who are not familiar with the different kinds of accents may face a considerable reduction in listening. Buck (2001) explained that when students hear an unfamiliar accent such as Indian English after studying only the American one, they will encounter critical issues in listening. This will certainly prohibit and interrupt the proper understanding of the listening content. Goh (2000), in her research, found out that 66% of students indicated that the speaker's accent is the most significant factor that affects badly on their listening. The differences in stress, pronunciation, and articulation in general, which exist between the different accents of the English language, may hinder the learners' listening abilities. If the students are not familiar with accents, they will not be able to comprehend easily the content of the listening tasks.

1.1.10.1.4. Speed Rate of Speech

The speed rate of speech plays a significant role in the students's listening. The lack of possibility to control the speed of speakers' speech may create gaps in their comprehension. Underwood (1989) asserted that speed can make listening passage difficult. If the speakers speak too rapidly, students may have issues understanding L2 words and fail to catch the

important information and keep it in the mind. This is can be confirmed by Buck (2001), who mentioned that the faster the speech is, the more difficult is to comprehend.

In this regard, Underwood (1989) concluded the major reasons that make the speed of speech a barrier to effective listening. First, learners cannot control the speed rate and take control of how quickly the speakers talk. Second, they cannot have words repeated whatever they want. Third, listeners cannot replay a recording section. Teachers decide what and when to repeat the listening text and it is challenging for them to know whether or not their learners understood what they have heard. Fourth, students may not have high vocabulary knowledge. Speakers may use words that students do not know. Listeners may face an unfamiliar word, which can stop them and think about the meaning of that word. Then, they will miss the next part of the speech. Moreover, Graham (2006) declared that there are some other factors that may expand learners' listening difficulties such as poor grammar and vocabulary and misinterpretations about listening tasks. To sum up, all what has been said about the listening problems can be considered as the source of students note-taking difficulties, since that learning from academic lecture calls for listening and taking notes.

1.1.10.2. Learners Difficulties Related to Writing

Harmer (2001) declared that writing is an indirect communicative skill that allows one to deliver ideas, experiences or express feelings through written form. In the learning process, it plays an important role and learners need to enhance their levels in order to have a huge base of vocabulary and grammar. According to Starkey (2004), an effective piece of writing is the one that is organized, clear, and coherent, with accurate language and effective word choice. However, it is a challenging one to be learnt or even taught because it is not a simple cognitive activity; rather it is a complex mental production that requires thinking and concentration (Grami, 2010, p. 9).

Writing is considered as one of the main language skills that must be taken into consideration during note-taking. Nevertheless, problems of sentence structure, lack of mastery of vocabulary and grammar, and spelling mistakes are some of the difficulties that may make students dislike recording points during lectures.

1.1.10.2.1. Problems of Sentence Structure

During the writing process, students may face problems with sentence structure that prevent them from writing complete and grammatically correct sentences and may obstruct their understanding when coming to reviewing. These problems include: (a) the sentence fragment; (b) the run-on sentence; (c) lack of subject-verb agreement; and (d) lack of parallel structure.

A fragment is a sentence which is not complete, and there are three main causes of fragments: (a) a missing subject; (b) a missing verb; (c) or contains only a dependent clause.

Run-on is a sentence which contains two or more complete sentences with no proper punctuation to separate sentences. There are two common forms of the run-on: (1) the "comma splice" in which a comma is placed between two complete sentences where a period should actually be inserted; (2) absence of punctuation where a semi-colon or period is required.

Subject-Verb Agreement means that the subject and verb must both be singular or plural. In other words, there must be an agreement between the subject and the verb in their tense. If the subject is in singular form, the verb should also be in singular form (and vice versa).

Non-Parallel Structure of a sentence refers to parts of a sentence listed as a sequence, but do not match each other in form. When more than one phrase or description is used in a sentence, they should be consistent with one another in the same grammatical or structural

principle. This means that each item in a list or comparison should follow the same grammatical pattern.

1.1.10.2.2. Lack of Mastery of Vocabulary and Grammar

Vocabulary is viewed as an integral part of language teaching and learning, especially in learning a foreign language. Accordingly, we think that vocabulary knowledge plays a significant role in writing.

The best way for the learner to accurately convey his/her ideas in taking notes is to choose the right words. Doing so ensures that the student understands what he/she recorded before. According to Starkey (2004), there are two major aspects the learner should consider while selecting the words to be used: denotation and connotation. The former is the literal and precise meaning of a word. Learners should check the correctness of their words because there are some words that sound or look similar but have different meanings or words that are misused and often their usage is thought to be correct. Whereas, the latter, connotation, is defined as “a word’s implied meaning which involves emotions, cultural assumptions, and suggestions” (2004, p. 21). It refers to what can the reader infer from the written text. The learner should confirm that each used word denotes exactly what he intends for it.

In note-taking skill, vocabulary is an important aspect for clear and understood points.

Students’ vocabulary must be as rich as possible to be able to pick the keywords the teacher is using and succeed to recall important terms to use. It helps learners in selecting their own, appropriate words that stand with the content of the lecture.

Grammar is one of the English language elements that must be learnt and understood by students. According to Nunan (2003), grammar is generally a set of rules that describes the structure and the correct ordering of words at the sentence level.

Many students get confused with the ways words are combined in order to form sentences and which may lead them to encounter difficulties during recording points in

lectures. These ways are called “the grammar rules” that are the main elements in every language and are also inseparable from writing, like the reference of tenses that needed to be distinguished, prepositions, word class, voice, and many others. Beverly Ann Chin (2000) emphasized the importance of learning grammatical rules and language structure for better writing. He asserted that “Students who are native speakers of English already know English grammar... they recognize the sounds of English words, the meanings of those words, and the different ways of putting words together to make meaningful sentences” (p. 1). Hence, without proper grammar, clear notes are nearly impossible. Correct grammar keeps the learner’s points far from being misunderstood while reviewing his/her ideas.

1.1.10.2.3. Spelling Mistakes

To have good notes to be recorded, note-takers tend to have correct spelling. Steve Graham and Lamoine Miller (1979) defined spelling as “the ability to recognize, recall, reproduce, or obtain orally or in written form the correct sequence of letters in words”.

In the English language, spelling is a difficult skill to learn because basically there are 26 letters but more than 26 sounds due to the connection between those letters. As Seely (1998) stressed, “...there are over forty sounds in English ... and we only have the same twenty-six letters in the alphabet. Thus, we have to combine letters in different ways to represent the missing sound” (p. 209). In this sense, Harmer (2001) stated that “...the correspondence between the sound of a word and the way it is spelt is not always obvious” (p. 256). He indicated that many English words are pronounced the same way, but written differently and carried distinctive meanings such as “see” and “sea”. Furthermore, he indicated that the reason spelling is difficult for students is “...the fact that not all varieties of English spell the same words in the same way” (p.256). For instance, American English and the British one differ in the way they spell some words such as “behavior” and “behaviour”.

Moreover, spelling is said to be closely interrelated with reading as Frith (1980) argued, “Learning to read should imply learning to spell, and learning to spell should imply learning to read” (p. 496). So, reading is the basis of good spelling and it is a remedy for students to overcome the difficulties when recording notes, because the incorrect spelling may affect the understanding of the written points and the reader’s judgment when it comes to reviewing.

1.1.10.2.4. Organization of Notes

Another difficulty that students may encounter while taking notes is the organization of points. Starkey (2004, p. 2) stated that “by following [an organized method of writing], you will guide your reader from your first to last sentence. He or she will be able to see how the various points you make in your [piece of writing] work together and how they support your thesis”. Organization has to do with coherent arrangement of information and the power of expressing ideas clearly and effectively. It guides learners to dismiss the order of thoughts in different situations where they have to think first then write. Accordingly, during the recording of notes, learners seek to arrange their ideas in a well ordered and structured way because this has a significant effect on the student himself for later reviewing. It helps him/her to understand the notes being taken before and relate between each other to have coherent pieces of information.

Conclusion

In education, note-taking is a significant strategy that can commonly be used among students mainly as a memory aid. It is a beneficial skill that helps learners focus and better understand main concepts. Good note-taking will improve their active listening, comprehension of material, and retention. The purpose of such strategy in lectures is to record student’s understanding of the ideas and concepts discussed in class for future uses. However, it seems a complex technique to foreign language learners that requires following steps and

methods for good notes. Recording notes is one of the best ways to make studying for exams easier through having clear, understandable, and concise notes to refer to. Taking notes in class can be a challenging task for almost all students. They are required to listen to information presented by their teachers, process that information, and record it using their own words in the form of easy-to-read notes. In other words, the most difficult skills for learners related to note taking are listening and writing that are considered as the basic aspects students either have or will learn through trial and error.

Chapter Two: Research Methodology, Data Analysis, and Discussion

Introduction

This chapter describes the research design, sampling techniques, procedures the data analysis and discussion. It is divided into two sections. The first section provides the description of the research methodology; it includes the research paradigm, research design, data collection and the limitation of the study. The second section deals with the analysis of the obtained data and the discussion of the results in the light of the related literature.

2.1. Section One: Research Methodology

In this section we introduce the methodological approach and the research paradigm of this study. Besides, we are going to define and describe the research tool. In addition, the sample and limitations of the study are also presented.

2.1.1. Research Paradigm

The current research is a descriptive study. It aims at investigating students' note-taking strategies and uncovering the main listening and writing difficulties they face during lectures. To accomplish this aim, a quantitative and a qualitative method are chosen to use throughout the research in order to answer the research questions. According to Tolmie, Mujis, and McAteer (2011), a quantitative research means "explaining by collecting numerical data that are analyzed using mathematical based methods" (p.1). Thus, this method is appropriate for our research to use since it provides a precise and numerical data which guarantee the validity and reliability of data.

2.1.2. Conceptual Design

This part contains the target participants in addition to the description and administration of the research instrument.

2.1.2.1. The Population

The subjects who participated in this research were third year License students at the department of English at the University of Mohammed Seddik Ben Yahia, Jijel. We chose third year students for a specific reason which is that most of their modules they study are lecture-based that require them taking notes. The total number of participants is sixty-nine out of the population of seventy students.

2.1.2.2. The Questionnaire

The instrument used in this research is the questionnaire. This latter is well known and widely used among the educational researchers and professionals .Thus; it is a useful tool of data collection through which a great number of respondents can be reached. According to Beiske (2002), “a questionnaire is essentially a structured technique for collecting primary data .It is generally a series of written questions for which the respondents have to provide answers” (p.3).

In the present research, we used the online questionnaire instead of the printed one for two main reasons. The first one is the current world situation of Corona virus and the inability of getting in touch with students in person. The second one is that the use of online questionnaire has several advantages that facilitate the data gathering. Levefer, Dal, and Matthiasdottir (2007) summed up the major advantages of the online questionnaire as follows. First, it saves time and guarantees a rather short time frame for the collection of responses. Second, it gives to researchers access to a large and diverse population with the potential of a huge amounts of data. Third, it gives the participants the freedom of deciding when and where to fill the survey; moreover, the participants’ responses in the online survey can be more detailed and comprehensive.

2.1.2.3.1. Description of the Questionnaire

The questionnaire is composed of twenty questions which vary from close-ended to open-ended questions. It is divided into two main sections; they are entitled as follows: Note-taking strategies (Q 1 to Q12), and note-taking difficulties (Q12 to Q20).

The first section is about the students' overview on note-taking strategies. Question 1 is designed to know whether or not the students are provided with handouts. Question 2 is devoted to know whether students take notes in lectures. Questions 3-5 are designed to explore the students' knowledge about the importance of note-taking and its objectives. Question 6 is about note-taking methods used by students. Questions 7 to 9 are designed to know whether students follow the appropriate stages of note-taking. The questions 10 and 11 are related to the skills and techniques used by learners to organize their notes. The question 12 attempts to determine how the process of note-taking helps students to remember the lecture content.

The second section is about the listening and writing note-taking difficulties that the students encounter during lectures (Q13 to Q19). Finally, in the question 20, students were given an opportunity to provide some suggestions in order to overcome the listening and writing difficulties and to improve their note-taking skills.

2.1.2.3.2. Administration of the Questionnaire

The learners' questionnaire was not distributed hand to hand, rather; it was posted online on 7th of September 2020 on Facebook group of third year Licence students of the University of Mohamed Saddik Ben Yahia. It took less than five days to collect 69 responses; the participants were really cooperative and showed much support. Aneshensel (2013) defined data analyses as "the systematic arrangement of information into intelligible patterns" (p.4). For our research, in order to analyze the data obtained from the questionnaire we relied on tabulations graphs to represent the number of the total responses.

2.1.3. Limitation of the Study

This study has some limitations that should be highlighted. First, the lack of references was the main obstacle that we faced; unfortunately our university's library does not have any books concerning note-taking strategies and their difficulties or study skills in general; in addition to the lack of articles that deal with note-taking difficulties which took for us a long time of searching to find studies about this topic. Second, the current Covid-19 situation made the meetings with the supervisor impossible; our discussions were always by emails which were not helpful enough because there were topic that needed face-to-face discussions.

2.2. Section Two: Data Analysis and Discussion

In this section, the data obtained from the students' questionnaire will be presented and analyzed. This section provides the data obtained from the students' questionnaire and the findings will be presented in tables.

2.2.1. Analysis of the Results from the Questionnaire

Answers for Q1: Do your teachers provide you with handouts about lectures?

Table 1:

Teachers' Handouts

<u>Options</u>	<u>N°</u>	<u>%</u>
Yes	57	82.6%
No	12	17.4%
Total	69	100%

This question is purposefully given to know whether teachers provide their students with handouts. As it is shown in Table 1, 82.6% of the students claimed that their teachers provide them with handouts, whereas 17.4% of them claimed that they do not.

Answers for Q2: How often do you take notes during lectures?

Table 2:

Students' Frequency of Note-Taking during Lectures

<u>Options</u>	<u>N°</u>	<u>%</u>
Always	26	37.7%
Sometimes	37	53.6%
Rarely	06	8.7%
Never	00	0%
Total	69	100%

This question is intended to know the frequency of note-taking during the lecture. The results show that 26 of the participants always take notes, 37 sometimes take notes, and 6 rarely take notes in class. These results may indicate that most students give a great importance to note-taking skills.

Answers for Q3: According to you, note-taking is...

Table 3:

Students' Attitudes towards Note-Taking

<u>Options</u>	<u>N°</u>	<u>%</u>
a. A necessity to remember and organize ideas	49	71%
b. A tool to concentrate and remain attentive on a lecture	14	20.3%
c. A means to improve your knowledge	06	8.7%
Total	69	100%

This question attempts to find the students' perception towards the act of taking notes by students during lectures. According to the results shown in Table 3, a high number of the students (49) consider note-taking as a necessity to remember and organize ideas. This means that students find note-taking as a fundamental task to recall and arrange the main information of the lecture content.

Answers to Q4: Do you think that note taking-strategies facilitates learning process?

Table 4:

Importance of Note-Taking in the Learning Process

<u>Options</u>	<u>N°</u>	<u>%</u>
Yes	69	100%
No	00	00%
Total	69	100%

The objective behind asking this question is to know the role of note-taking strategies in the learning process. Through the Table, all the students answered that note-taking facilitates the learning process. This explains that note-taking is advantageous in focusing, understanding and remembering the main concepts of the lecture.

Answers for Q5: What is your objective behind taking notes?

Table 5:

The Objective of Note-Taking

<u>Options</u>	<u>N°</u>	<u>%</u>
a. To understand better the lecture content	06	8.69%
b. To record information for later use	16	23.18%
c. To get good marks in exams	04	5.79%
a+b	21	30.43%
a+c	04	5.79%
b+c	03	4.34%
a+b+c	15	21.73%
Total	69	100%

This question attempts to find the main objectives behind the process of recording notes by students during lectures. Table 5 shows that the highest number of the students (16) said that they take notes to record information for later use. This may be because the process of note-taking is a useful learning strategy that helps students to retain information for later use.

Answers for Q6: Do you follow a specific method to take your notes?

Table 6:

Students' Adherence of Note-Taking Methods

<u>Options</u>	<u>N°</u>	<u>%</u>
Yes	58	84.1%
No	11	15.9%
Total	69	100%

Learners in this question are asked if they follow a specific method while recording notes. 58 out of 69 of the students said that they do so. The first interpretation is that they may have had courses about note-taking strategies.

Students' answers to question 6: (If yes, what is the method do you usually use?)

Table 7:

Students' Use of Note-Taking Methods

<u>Options</u>	<u>N°</u>	<u>%</u>
Separate sentences	43	65.2%
Outlining	17	25.8%
Charts	00	0%
Mapping	06	9.1%
Total	66	100%

Statistics related to this question show that most of the students (43) use separate sentences when taking notes in lectures while none of them use charts. However, and unfortunately, when we asked them to name other methods they use in note-taking; they mixed between note-taking strategies and methods. They named note-taking methods as abbreviations, summarizing, highlighting and ordering ideas which are actually note-taking strategies. It can be said that they do not remember well the strategies and methods of this skill that they might have studied.

Answers for Q7: Do you include the date and course title at the beginning of your notes?

Table 8:

Students' Inclusion of Date and Course Title in Notes

<u>Options</u>	<u>N°</u>	<u>%</u>
Yes	44	63.8%
No	25	36.2%
Total	69	100%

This question attempts to explore whether or not the learners are interested in writing the date and the course title before starting taking notes. Table 8 shows that 44 of students include the date and course title at the beginning of their notes. This is possibly because they help them to easily return and review the lectures.

Answers for Q8: Do you organize your notes after lecture?

Table 9:

The Organization of Notes after Lectures

<u>Options</u>	<u>N°</u>	<u>%</u>
Yes	38	55.1%
No	31	44.9%
Total	69	100%

This question is asked to know if students arrange the points they record after lectures. Table 8 demonstrates that some of the learners (38) organize their notes after lectures. This is may be because it helps them relate information to have a coherent content and find them easily when it comes to revising.

Answers for Q9: Do you paraphrase key points of the discussions or reading materials rather than writing words verbatim (as they are written or said)?

Table 10:

Students' Use of Paraphrasing

<u>Options</u>	<u>N°</u>	<u>%</u>
Yes	52	75.4%
No	17	24.6%
Total	69	100%

The question aims to know whether the students use paraphrasing and reformulate the ideas using their own words. As it is illustrated in the Table 10, the majority of the participants (52) paraphrase key points of the presentation rather than recording words verbatim. This may indicate that they use this strategy to simplify information for them when they revise for exams.

Answers for Q10: When you are taking notes, do you usually use:

Table 11:

Students' Techniques of Note-Taking

<u>Options</u>	<u>N°</u>	<u>%</u>
Abbreviations	59	85.5%
Diagrams	02	2.9%
Symbols	06	8.7%
Others: Keywords	01	1.44%
Short expressions	01	1.44%
Total	69	100%

This question aims to specify note-taking techniques used by the students. The statistics related to this question shows that abbreviations are the most preferred strategies among students (59 students). This can be explained by the fact that students are trying to save time by using abbreviated forms instead of writing the whole words and which may aid them get huge number of information in a short time.

Answers for Q11: Do you review your notes after each lecture?

Table 12:

The Usefulness of Reviewing Notes

<u>Options</u>	<u>N°</u>	<u>%</u>
Yes	23	33.3%
No	46	66.7%
Total	69	100%

The question was asked to determine if the students review their notes after each class. The results assumed that most of the learners (46) do not review the notes after the lecture. A possible explanation is that students consider reviewing as a process which occurs before the

exams. However, others (23) do so maybe because it helps them remember the content easily without referring to the original source.

Answers for Q12: Do you think that students who do not take notes forget the lecture content quickly?

Table 13:

The Importance of Note-Taking in Remembering the Lecture Content

<u>Options</u>	<u>N°</u>	<u>%</u>
Yes	51	73.9%
No	18	26.1%
Total	69	100%

By asking this question, we aim to determine the importance of the process of note-taking in remembering the information being learnt. The results show that the majority of students agree that those who do not take notes forget the lecture content very quickly. This may imply that the process of recording information assists the learner to remember and keep concentrated on the knowledge being received.

In the second part of this question, the students are asked to explain how taking notes help them not to forget the lecture content very quickly. The explanations provided by the students are similar and they are summed up as follows:

- It helps to remember pieces of information which are not included in the handouts.
- It depends on the student's attention and strategy of comprehension. Some do not need to put their ideas in paper to recall the content of the lecture, i.e. those who lack or could not develop this skill need such method to recall information. But overall, note-taking is useful to everybody because it helps the learner to organize and synthesize data.

- Note-taking strategies help the learner to well grasp the lecture content and to be knowledgeable about what is going on in the class.
- It is an important skill to facilitate revision.
- If you do not take notes you cannot keep yourself concentrated for the whole session and without recording points the student is storing the information in his short term memory which will be easily forgotten.

Answers for Q13: Do you face problems when you are taking notes during lectures?

Table 14:

The Rate of Having Difficulties when Taking Notes

<u>Options</u>	<u>N°</u>	<u>%</u>
Yes	42	60.9%
No	27	30.1%
Total	69	100%

Question 13 is posed to see whether the students face problems during the task of taking notes. As it is shown in Table 14, the big part of the students (42) has problems. However, 27 of them stated that they have no difficulty. This may be explained by many factors such as the lack of practice, environmental distractions, and the low writing and listening comprehension abilities.

If yes, give an example(s) of these difficulties:

Table 15:

Students' Difficulties in Note-Taking

<u>Options</u>	<u>N^o</u>	<u>%</u>
a. Having difficulties with the spelling of words	02	2.89%
b. Problems with vocabulary and grammar of the language	02	2.89%
c. Disorganization of ideas	01	1.44%
d. Speed of the lecturer's explanation	20	28.98%
e. Time limiting	06	8.60%
f. Facing problems of listening and writing skills	07	10.14%
g. Unfamiliarity with the teacher's accent and pronunciation	04	5.79%
No specification	27	39.13%
Total	69	100%

This part of the question seeks to determine the difficulties students may face when recording notes in lectures. According to the results being shown in Table 13, learners are having different problems during the process of note-taking. However, the most common difficulty that students encounter is the speed of the lecturer's speech. This may explain that different information presented by the teacher are missed due to the speed of the explanation.

Answers for Q14: Are you able to take notes in class, keep up with the instructor, and understand the concepts at the same time?

Table 16:

Students' Concentration during Note-Taking

<u>Options</u>	<u>N°</u>	<u>%</u>
Yes	46	66.7%
No	23	33.3%
Total	69	100%

This question is asked to know if the learners are able to do multiple tasks at once without distracting them from paying attention. From the results shown in Table 16, most of the students are able to take notes in class, keep up with the instructor, and understand the concepts at the same time. This can be explained that the students have a high capacity in concentrating and balancing between the three actions at a time.

Answers to Q15: Do you have enough time to take as many notes as you want?

Table 17:

Students' Time to Record Enough Information

<u>Options</u>	<u>N°</u>	<u>%</u>
Yes	22	31.9%
No	47	68.1%
Total	69	100%

In this question we want to know whether the learners are having the time they need to record most of the information they receive. The table shows that 47 of learners do not have enough time to take the notes they need, while 22 of them stated that time is enough. This may indicate that the explanation of the lecture is going faster or the comprehension of information takes more time.

Answers for Q16: How could you describe your level in listening?

Table 18:

Students' Level in Listening

<u>Options</u>	<u>N°</u>	<u>%</u>
Very good	07	10.1%
Good	42	60.9%
Average	20	29%
Weak	00	00%
Total	69	100%

This question checks if the students are able to listen successfully and select just the needed information from the listening materials. The majority of them (42) answered that their listening level is good and only 7 claimed that it is very good which may explained by the fact that they used to listen to videos and songs, while the rest (20) admitted that their level is average. This is possibly because they have never been taught the techniques for successful listening.

Answers for Q17: Do you encounter any difficulties in listening during note-taking?

Table 19:

The Rate of Students' Listening Difficulties when Taking Notes

<u>Options</u>	<u>N°</u>	<u>%</u>
Yes	48	69.6%
No	21	30.4%
Total	69	100%

The question checks if students face problems in listening during the process of taking notes. It reveals that most of them (48) cannot listen successfully when taking notes, while, 21

of them do not have any problem with listening. This may indicate that students do not learn how to record notes and listen well at the same time since both are inseparable strategies.

If “yes”, are these difficulties related to:

Table 20:

Students' Problems Related to Listening

<u>Options</u>	<u>N°</u>	<u>%</u>
a. Lack of background knowledge related to the topic presented	05	7.24%
b. Lack of concentration	03	4.34%
c. Unfamiliarity with the lecturer's accent	05	7.24%
d. The speed of speech is too fast	18	26.08%
a+b	01	1.44%
a+c	01	1.44%
a+d	06	8.69%
b+d	06	8.69%
c+d	07	10.14%
a+d+c	02	2.89%
a+b+d	06	8.69%
a+b+c+d	03	4.34%
No specification	06	8.69%
Total	69	100%

This part of the question aims to determine exactly the main listening difficulties faced by the students when picking out notes from lectures. On the basis of the results shown in Table 17, it is obviously clear that the speed of speech of the lecturer is the most encountered difficulty by 18 of the students. Moreover, most of other numbers include also the option “d” (the speed of speech) which may indicate that learners divide their attention during the lesson to take notes and listen to the teacher's explanation. Thus, when they focus on some points, they may lose some others.

Answers to Q18: How could you describe your level in writing?

Table 21:

Students' Level in Writing

<u>Options</u>	<u>N°</u>	<u>%</u>
Very good	11	15.9%
Good	32	46.4%
Average	26	37.7%
Weak	00	00%
Total	69	100%

The objective behind this question is to know the level of the students' in writing. As Table 21 shows, the majority of the participants consider their level in writing as very good and good (43), while the rest (26) claim that it is average. It is possibly because writing is one of the basic elements to be mastered when learning a language.

Answers for Q19: Do you face any difficulties in recording notes during the instructor's lecturing?

Table 22:

The Rate of Students' Writing Difficulties when Taking Notes

<u>Options</u>	<u>N°</u>	<u>%</u>
Yes	49	71%
No	20	29%
Total	69	100%

The question is asked to see if students have problems when writing notes during lectures. The results presented in Table 22 indicate that most learners face difficulties in recording notes during the instructor's lecturing. This may indicate that students cannot take notes in coherent, organized, and understandable way that will be easier for them to review.

If “yes”, are these difficulties related to:

Table 23:

Students' Problems Related to Writing

<u>Options</u>	<u>N°</u>	<u>%</u>
a. Having problems with sentence structure	08	11.59%
b. Lack of mastery of vocabulary and grammar	04	5.79%
c. Facing mistakes with spelling	11	15.94%
d. Having problems with the organization of note	22	31.88%
a+b	01	1.44%
a+c	01	1.44%
b+c	05	7.24%
b+d	03	4.34%
c+d	04	5.79%
a+b+c	01	1.44%
a+b+d	01	1.44%
b+c+d	01	1.44%
a+d+c	01	1.44%
a+b+c+d	02	2.89%
No specification	04	5.79%
Total	69	100%

The question is posed to determine the writing difficulties learners encounter during note-taking. According to the data presented in Table 23, 22 out of 69 of the students are having problems with the organization of notes; while 11 are facing problems in spelling the words and 8 are having problems with the structure of sentences when taking notes in lectures. This can be explained by the fact that learners are lacking the main component of good writing.

Answers for Q20: What are your suggestions to overcome the listening and writing difficulties and improve your note-taking skills?

Most of the participants (62) made suggestions about overcoming the listening and writing difficulties and improving their note-taking skills. The students' suggestions can be summed up as follows:

- The good concentration at the lecture and keeping oneself surrounded with the foreign language atmosphere so that our ear gets adapted to listening to that language.
- Practicing writing small passages at home to improve the writing skill and take it as a routine which in turn develops note-taking skills.
- Focusing more on the listening skill, especially in oral expression and reading to acquire the correct form of the words.
- Improving the writing and listening skills through watching videos and songs which have no written version, and then trying to apply the knowledge gained in listening in writing activities.
- Training oneself to listen to fast speakers. This activity will improve our attention span and be able to do multiple tasks at time (i.e. listening to the lecturer and taking notes).
- Practicing writing to consolidate the knowledge of vocabulary and grammar.

Other suggestions were directed to the teachers and are summed up as follows:

- Teachers should be cooperative with their students and speak slowly during the explanation of the lecture.
- Teachers should give students enough time between the parts of the lesson to take more notes and organize them.

By asking this question, we aim to know the potential suggestions learners can provide in order to overcome the listening and writing difficulties and improve note-taking skills. According to the results collected, the students are aware of their needs in note taking skills

by claiming that they need extensive listening and more practice in taking notes to speed up their handwriting and improve their learning. Also, they suggested concentration when the teacher is lecturing in order to help them record effective points and understand the content. In addition, they consider the reading skill as an important tool to enrich their knowledge and enhance their vocabulary, grammar, and spelling skills.

2.2.2. Discussion of the Results from the Questionnaire

The aim behind the present study is to investigate note-taking strategies and their main difficulties that third year License students encounter during lectures. Through this study, we aim also to draw the learners' attention on this strategy and its importance. The analysis of the students' questionnaire reveals the following findings:

Students' Awareness of the Importance of Note-Taking Strategies

The findings of the first section demonstrate that students have background knowledge and some basis concerning note-taking skills. The results of question 2 show that most of the participants rely on note-taking during the lecturer's explanation (see Table 2). This may reflect the students' belief in the benefits of this process. These findings agree with Williams and Eggert (2002), Brazeau (2006), and Castello and Monereo (2005) who found that note-taking remains a common and important practice for students in the classroom. The findings of this question also agree with Kiewra, DuBois, Christian, McShane, Meyerhoffer, and Roskelley (1991) who reported that 98% of college students engage in some form of note-taking during lectures.

The students confirmed that recording notes facilitates learning through considering it as a necessity to remember and organize ideas, to understand the lecture's content, and to concentrate and remain attentive on a lecture (see Tables 3, 8, 9). These results agree with Bligh (2000), Kiewra et al. (1991), and Bohay, Blakely, Tamplin, and Radvansky (2011) who found that students recall and understand more lecture material if they record it in their own

notes than the students who do not take notes and consequently perform better on tests. Learners stated that recording information is a useful task and a reminder to rely on for later use particularly to prepare for exams (see Tables 5, 12). The results are supported by Kiewra et al. (1991), and Bligh (2000) who found that their view of notes results in higher achievement on various performance tests. They also found that review helps learners to consolidate noted information, reconstruct previous unrecorded lecture points, prevent the natural process of forgetting, or relearn forgotten information. On the other hand, these results disagree with Kobayashi (2005), and Peverly, Ramaswamy, Brown, Sumowski, Alidoost, and Garner (2007), Stefanou, Hoffman, and Vielee (2008) who found evidence that note-taking may be of limited benefit and, in some cases, may negatively affect the students' performance.

Most of the students believe that those who do not take notes forget the lecture content very quickly by explaining that it is a strategy which helps in grasping well and remembering the lecture content (see Table 13). This was also confirmed by Piolat, Olive and Kellog (2005) and Williams and Eggert (2002) who found that students learn and memorize the material during note-taking, particularly when they are engaged in deep comprehension. The reached findings reveal that students are aware about the usefulness of employing note-taking as a study tool during lectures, and this answers the research question of whether third year License students are aware about the importance of note-taking strategies.

The Sources of Students' Note-Taking Difficulties

The results of the second section reveal that most of third year students encounter various difficulties in taking notes during lectures (see Table 14). These results agree with Hartley and Marshall (1974) who pointed out in their research that most of college students fail to record the important points of the lecture content and face problems to produce comprehensive notes. Besides, the findings show that students' problems of note-taking are

related to listening and writing particularly in the speed of the lecturer's explanation, the unfamiliarity with the teacher's accent and pronunciation, problems with the spelling of words, problems with vocabulary and grammar of the language, and disorganization of ideas (see Table 15). These results are similar to Suritsky (1993) research findings who found that 45% of students' note-taking problems were due to writing difficulties and 26% were related to listening problems. The findings also agree with Boyle (2010) who pointed out that students have problems in balancing the effort of writing and listening at the same time. Additionally, Makany, Kemp, and Dror (2009) found that students have a difficulty to make a balance between following the lecturer' speed, choosing the important information, and writing fast enough all at once.

Reasons of Listening and Writing Note-Taking Difficulties

According to students' results, we can deduce that both listening and writing have an effect on the process of note-taking. The analyses show up that the majority of students ranked their level in listening between good and average (see Table 18). Table 19 indicates that 48 of students cannot listen successfully when taking notes during lectures. The teacher's speed of speech and the lack of background knowledge related to the topic presented are considered as the major reasons that prevent students from being able to take notes. In addition, the unfamiliarity with the lecturer's accent and lack of concentration are also problematic (see Table 20). The findings agree with Hamouda (2013) who claimed that accent, pronunciation, speed of speech, different accent of speaker, lack of concentration, and anxiety were the major listening problems encountered by EFL Saudi learners. The results are also supported by Abidin (2013) who indicated that the main problem faced by the Chinese students is the lack of prior knowledge, and this inhibits their understanding in the listening process. Moreover, the differences in the accent of the lecturers prohibit the proper understanding of the listening content, in addition to the short span of concentration.

The analyses indicate that students' level in writing expression is the same as listening comprehension; they both range between good and average (see Table 21). Most of the students claim that they face difficulties in recording notes during the instructor's lecturing. The fundamental reasons behind those difficulties are the disorganization of notes and the spelling mistakes, besides to problems with sentence structure and lack of mastery of vocabulary and grammar. The obtained findings correlate with Al-Khasawneh and Maher (2010) study that indicated that students faced difficulties in many elements of writing such as a lack of wide range of vocabulary, organization of ideas, spelling and grammar errors. They also agree with Fareed, et al. (2016) findings of the study which showed that students had serious problems in relation to language proficiency, such as grammar, vocabulary and syntax. Other problems associated with their writings were lack of ideas, weak organizational structure and over reliance on mother tongue.

The reached findings of the second section determine that listening and writing are the real reasons and the main sources behind students' problems in taking good notes and for being active note-takers. Consequently, the last two research questions are answered, that is, the listening and writing difficulties are source problems of note-taking.

The findings of the present study unveil that note-taking is a very beneficial and appropriate strategy in documenting the heard information. Consequently, the results of the questionnaire have confirmed the hypotheses which postulate the following assumptions:

- Third year license students are aware about the importance of note-taking strategies.
- Third year License students may encounter difficulties in note-taking strategies in relation to listening and writing.

2.2.3. Suggestions and Recommendations

This study investigated note-taking strategies and their listening and writing difficulties. Based on the findings of this study, both teachers and students are provided with the following recommendations:

For teachers:

- ✓ Teachers should start the lecture with a kind of small revision of the previous lecture, to gain more attention, and at the end of the session; they should provide students with a small description of the coming lecture.
- ✓ Teachers should employ methods such as making breaks during lectures and try to repeat the important information in order to give students a chance to correct their notes mistakes.
- ✓ Teachers should also pay attention to their accents because they hinder learners' process of taking good and effective notes.
- ✓ It will be better for teachers to slow their speed of speech to make students able to follow the lecture, understand the content, and take notes at the same time.
- ✓ Teachers should provide a written outline for learners to help them organize and take relevant notes.

For students:

- ✓ Students should always have background knowledge about the coming lecture through asking teachers and searching on the net about them.
- ✓ Students should take responsibility for their learning through developing listening and note taking skills.
- ✓ Students should practice the writing skill outside the classroom which in turn enhances the process of note-taking, masters their vocabulary and grammar, and helps in developing the spelling skill.

- ✓ Students should look for patterns of organization in the lecture to take effective notes.
- ✓ Reading books to learn new forms, sentence structure, better style to enrich vocabulary, and acquire formal expressions and grammar rules to rely on when taking notes.
- ✓ Note taking should never be a transcript of every word said, but rather a summary of important information and questions.
- ✓ It is very essential to have a good vocabulary in writing in English, an excellent way to improve vocabulary through daily reading of anything written in English such as books, newspapers and stories. This way can help students to learn new words, new expressions and new meaning.
- ✓ Learners should always review their notes after each class to help them discover the mistakes they have done in spelling, grammar, and vocabulary and correct them for an easier revision for tests.
- ✓ Students should train themselves to be active listeners during lectures, so they need to improve their listening skills using the following tips:
 - Listen with the text: songs with lyrics, movies with subtitles, audiovisual books.
 - Listen and re-listen in different speeds.
 - Try to listen to different kinds of English accents to make ears familiar with them

Conclusion

The present chapter explains the research methodology that is utilized to confirm or reject the research hypothesis and reports the results. Throughout the analysis of the students' questionnaire, it is shown that third year Licence students recognize the value of note-taking strategies in the learning process. However, they are facing serious problems that hinder them from picking out effective notes from lectures. These difficulties are related to both listening and writing which are considered as the basis of the process of note-taking.

General Conclusion

Note-taking is the process of recording a piece of information in a descriptive and systematic way that facilitates learning and remembering the lecture material. However, most of students do not record points during the teacher's explanation due to the difficulties they face related to listening and writing. The main aim behind conducting this research work is to investigate note-taking strategies used by third year English language students at the University of Mohammed Seddik Ben Yahia, and the difficulties they encounter in relation to listening and writing during lectures.

The overall research work consisted of two major parts: the first one devoted to the theoretical framework of the study while the second part covered the practical side of this investigation. As far as the theoretical part is concerned, the first chapter dealt with a general review of the literature of the research topic. It provided an overview of note-taking strategies and their phases. In addition, it highlighted the most common methods along with the skills and stages to be followed for effective notes. Furthermore, it sought to explore the students' listening and writing difficulties during note-taking. The second chapter reported the practical aspects of the study. It comprised two sections. The first section was entitled research methodology. It included the research paradigm, research design, data collection and limitation of the study. The second section dealt with the analysis of the obtained data and the discussion of the results in the light of the related literature.

The present investigation was carried out to answer the research questions that focused the students' awareness of note-taking strategies importance and their listening and writing difficulties. More specifically, it sought to test the hypotheses stated that third year License students may not be aware of the importance of note-taking strategies and may encounter number of difficulties in relation to listening and writing. To examine the aforementioned

hypotheses and answer the research questions, a questionnaire was administered to 70 third year License English language students at Mohammed Seddik Ben Yahia University.

The findings showed that the students are aware of the effectiveness of the process of note-taking. In addition, they indicated that note-taking is a challenging task and that listening and writing are the source of their difficulties.

Because note-taking is highly valuable in learning; this study recommends for further researchers to conduct this topic in a more efficient and systematic manner through experiment such as classroom observation for more precise and reliable results.

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Chapter 1: Lecture Note-Taking Strategies and Difficulties

Chapter 2 : Field Work

General Conclusion

References

Appendix

NOTE-TAKING STRATEGIES AND DIFFICULTIES

APPENDIX

Students' Questionnaire

Dear students,

This questionnaire is used for the purpose of our research .It mainly deals with note-taking strategies and its difficulties. We would appreciate your collaboration if you could answer this questionnaire.

Part One: Note-Taking Strategies

1. Do your teachers provide handouts about lectures? Yes No

2. How often do you take notes during lectures?

Always

Sometimes

Rarely

Never

3. Do you believe that note-taking strategies is?

A necessity to remember and organize ideas

A tool to concentrate and remain attentive on a lecture

A means to improve your knowledge

4. Do you think that note taking strategy facilitates learning process?

Yes No

5. What is your objective behind taking notes?

To understand better the lecture content

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To record information for later use

To get good marks in exams

Others, specify.....

.....

6. Do you follow a specific method to organize your notes?

Yes No

If yes, what is the method do you usually use?

a) Separate sentences

b) Outlining

c) Charts

d) Mapping

Others, please specify.....

.....

7. Do you include the date and course title at the beginning of your notes?

Yes No

8. Do you organize your notes after lecture?

Yes No

9. Do you paraphrase key points of the discussions or reading materials rather than writing words verbatim (as they are written or said)?

Yes No

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10. When you are taking notes, you usually use:

Abbreviations

Diagrams

Symbols

Other (s), please specify.....

11. Do you review your notes after each class?

Yes No

12. Do you think that students who do not take notes forget the lecture content quickly?

Yes No

Please, explain.....

.....
.....

Part Three: Note-Taking Difficulties

13. Do you face problems when you are taking notes during English lectures?

Yes No

If yes, give an example or examples of these difficulties

.....
.....

14. Are you able to take notes in class, keep up with the instructor, and understand the concepts at the same time?

Yes No

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15. Do you have enough time to take as many notes as you want?

Yes No

16. How could you describe your level in listening?

Very good

Good

Average

Bad

Very bad

17. Do you encounter any difficulties in listening comprehension during taking notes?

Yes No

If "yes", are these difficulties related to:

-lack of background knowledge related to the topic presented

-lack of concentration

-unfamiliarity with the lecturer's accent

-the speed of speech is too fast

18. Are you an active writer?

Yes No

19. Do you face any difficulties in recording notes during the instructor's lecturing?

Yes No

If "yes", are these difficulties related to:

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-Having problems with sentence structure

-Lack of mastery of vocabulary and grammar

-Facing mistakes with spelling

-Having problems with the organization of notes

20. What are your suggestions to overcome the listening and writing difficulties and improve your note-taking skill?

.....

.....

.....

Thank you for your cooperation.

NOTE-TAKING STRATEGIES AND DIFFICULTIES

Résumé

L'objectif principal de ce travail de recherche est d'étudier les stratégies de prise de notes utilisées par les étudiants de troisième année de licence en anglais à l'Université Mohammed Seddik Ben Yahia. Il vise également à examiner les difficultés d'écoute et d'écriture dans la prise de notes. On émet l'hypothèse que les élèves de troisième année en anglais ne sont pas conscients de l'importance des stratégies de cette dernière prise de notes et qu'ils font face à des difficultés différentes en ce qui concerne les compétences d'écoute et d'écriture. Pour tester la validité de ces hypothèses, un questionnaire a été administré à 70 étudiants de troisième année licence en anglais à l'Université Mohammed Seddik Ben Yahia. Les résultats indiquent que les élèves sont conscients de l'importance de cette de notes dans l'amélioration de leur niveau et montrent qu'ils rencontrent un certain nombre de difficultés d'écoute et d'écriture à prendre des notes telles que le manque de concentration, la vitesse d'élocution, l'organisation des notes, le manque de la maîtrise du vocabulaire et de la grammaire, l'accent du professeur et les fautes d'orthographe. Sur la base de ces résultats obtenus, cette étude suggère aux enseignants de collaborer avec leurs élèves en répétant les informations importantes et en leur laissant suffisamment de temps pour noter les points et corriger les erreurs. Ils proposent également aux élèves de pratiquer à la fois leurs compétences d'écoute et d'écriture en dehors de la classe pour améliorer leurs manières de prise de notes et surmonter leurs difficultés.

Mots clés: Les Stratégies de Prise de Note, Ecoute, Ecriture.

NOTE-TAKING STRATEGIES AND DIFFICULTIES

الملخص

تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى التحقيق في استراتيجيات تدوين الملاحظات التي يستخدمها طلاب اللغة الإنجليزية في السنة الثالثة في جامعة محمد الصديق بن يحيى. كما تهدف إلى فحص صعوبات الاستماع والكتابة في تدوين الملاحظات. من المفترض أن طلاب اللغة الإنجليزية في السنة الثالثة ليسوا على دراية بأهمية استراتيجيات تدوين الملاحظات وأنهم يواجهون صعوبات مختلفة فيما يتعلق بمهارات الاستماع والكتابة. لاختبار صحة هذه الفرضيات، تم إجراء استبيان على 70 من طلاب السنة الثالثة ليسانس لغة إنجليزية بجامعة محمد الصديق بن يحيى. تشير النتائج إلى أن الطلاب يدركون أهمية تدوين الملاحظات في تحسين مستواهم ويظهرون أنهم يواجهون عددًا من صعوبات الاستماع والكتابة وتدوين الملاحظات مثل قلة التركيز ومعدل سرعة الكلام وتنظيم الملاحظات ونقص إتقان المفردات والقواعد ولهجة المحاضر والأخطاء الإملائية. بناءً على هذه النتائج التي تم الحصول عليها، تقترح هذه الدراسة أن يتعاون الأساتذة مع طلابهم من خلال تكرار المعلومات المهمة ومنحهم الوقت الكافي لتسجيل النقاط وتصحيح الأخطاء. كما يقترح على الطلاب ممارسة مهارات الاستماع والكتابة خارج الفصل الدراسي لتحسين استراتيجيات تدوين الملاحظات والتغلب على الصعوبات التي يواجهونها.

الكلمات المفتاحية: تدوين الملاحظات، الاستماع، الكتابة.