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Abbes Laghrou University - Khenchela  
Faculty of Letter and Languages  
Department of English



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**Option: Culture and Civilization**

***The Role of Contemporary  
American series in Eliciting  
Depression Among EFL  
Learners***

*Submitted by:*

- *Agaba Mohamed*
- *Aouaidjia Raouia*

*Supervised by:*

*Miss. Mekhaznia Wafa*

***Board of Examiners:***

**Chairperson** Yousfi Nabila.....*University Of Khenchela*  
**Supervisor** Mekhaznia Wafa.....*University Of Khenchela*  
**Examiner** Chouana Khaled.....*University Of Khenchela*

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## ***Dedication***

The paramount dedication goes to the ones who brought me to existence and made me the person who I am today, to the affection, love and support that my mom “*Assia*” incarnates, and to the person whom I respect and look up to, my father and my role model “*Sebti*”

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“The Best is Yet to Come”

*Mohamed Agaba*

## ***Dedication***

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*"Your education is a dress rehearsal for a life that is yours to lead." Nora*

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"I can no other answer make but thanks and thanks and ever thanks"

*William Shakespeare*

### ***Abstract***

For the fact that the aural skills are poorly tackled in the conventional classrooms, EFL learners innovated and endorsed new contemporary methods, as they adapted and fused the broadcasted media into the learning process; however, evidence suggests that media can influence societal attitudes and beliefs, and exerts various social complications. This influence is especially strong for mental health issues, particularly Depression, as we realize that the contemporary American series is the preference and the choice made by the learners in order to trigger the accidental learning, the particular contents that the latter introduce can be quite disturbing and raises a major concern, the thing that steers us to raise the question, what if the consistent exposure of this streamed contents would lead to shape mental health issues to the young generation. On the light of the previous revelations, the investigation is going through the dilemma and setting a quest to figure out the role of Contemporary American Series in eliciting depression among EFL learners. Throughout the three chapters and by applying mixed methods approach and through the means of a content analysis, the investigation scrutinizes into the contents of two chosen contemporary series, highlighting the way in which the latter exerts its influence on the spectators and projecting the violence and depictions related to the case. An audience analysis is also added for the sake of perceiving the learners' attitudes and opinions towards the matter, and gathering the necessary data to measure the extent and the pervasiveness of the phenomenon. The results obtained are quite interesting as we validated the relation and association between the streamed products and depression, and introduced the way in which the elicitation of depression occurs, as we realized that the majority of the spectators are suffering from the mentioned symptomology, showcasing anti-social behaviors and anxiety throughout the inquiry. The inspection goes further once we reveal the role of gender in eliciting depression, as we come to know that its pervasiveness is more common among female subjects due to their increased vulnerability.

**Key Words:** Broadcasted media, mental health, depression, contemporary American series, streamed products, anti-social behavior, anxiety, EFL learners. Gender

## ملخص

نظراً لحقيقة سوء معاملة وتدريس المهارات السمعية في الفصول الدراسية التقليدية، تبنى و[تكر متعلمو اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية أساليب معاصرة جديدة، حيث قاموا بدمج وسائل الإعلام وصهرها في عملية التعلم؛ ومع ذلك، تشير الأدلة إلى أن وسائل الإعلام يمكن أن تؤثر سلباً على المبادئ والمعتقدات الاجتماعية، وتشكل تعقيدات مختلفة. هذا التأثير قوي بشكل خاص عندما يتعلق الأمر بالأمراض النفسية، خاصة الاكتئاب، وعندما ندرك أن المسلسلات الأمريكية المعاصرة هي الاختيار والتفضيل الذي يقوم به المتعلمون من أجل تحفيز التعلم العرضي، نلاحظ أن المحتويات الخاصة التي تقدمها هاته المسلسلات يمكن أن تكون مقلقة ومثيرة للجدل، الفكرة التي تقودنا إلى طرح التساؤل عن إمكانية اثاره مشاكل نفسية للشباب خلال التعرض المستمر لهاته المحتويات. على ضوء الدراسات والمعلومات السابقة، التحقيق يدرس المعضلة ويسعى لمعرفة دور المسلسلات الأمريكية المعاصرة في إثارة الاكتئاب بين متعلمي اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية. من خلال الفصول الثلاثة لدراستنا، وتطبيق نهج الأساليب المختلطة ومن خلال تحليل محتوى مسلسلين معاصرين مختارين، يسلط البحث الضوء على الطريقة التي تؤثر بها الأخيرة على المشاهدين وتسلط الضوء على العنف والمشاهد المتعلقة بالقضية. كما توظف الدراسة تحليل عينة من المشاهدين من أجل إدراك مواقف وآراء المتعلمين تجاه هذه المسألة، وجمع البيانات اللازمة لقياس مدى الظاهرة وتفسيها. النتائج التي تم الحصول عليها مثيرة للاهتمام للغاية حيث قمنا بالتحقق من العلاقة بين المسلسلات الأمريكية والاكتئاب، وعرض الطريقة التي تحدث بها عملية اثاره الاكتئاب، وأدركنا أن غالبية المترجمين يعانون من الأعراض المذكورة، كما عرضنا السلوكيات الغير اجتماعية والقلق الذي ينتاب المتعلمين. ويذهب التحقيق إلى أن ذلك مجرد أن نكشف عن دور الجنس في إثارة الاكتئاب، حيث حددنا أن انتشاره أكثر شيوعاً بين الإناث.

**كلمات مفتاحية:** وسائل الإعلام، الصحة العقلية، الاكتئاب، المسلسلات الأمريكية المعاصرة، السلوك الغير اجتماعي،

القلق، متعلمي اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية، الجنس.

## **Résumé:**

Pour le fait que les compétences auditives sont mal abordées dans les salles de classe traditionnelles, les apprenants d'FLE ont innové et adopté de nouvelles méthodes contemporaines, tout en adaptant et en fusionnant les médias diffusés dans le processus d'apprentissage ; cependant, les observations suggèrent que les médias peuvent influencer les attitudes et les croyances de la société, et qu'ils exercent diverses complexités sociales. Cette influence est particulièrement forte en ce qui concerne les problèmes de santé mentale, en particulier la dépression, car nous nous rendons compte que les séries américaines contemporaines sont la préférence et le choix des apprenants pour déclencher l'apprentissage involontaire, que les contenus particuliers que ces derniers introduisent peuvent être assez dérangeants et soulèvent une préoccupation majeure, ce qui nous pousse à soulever la question suivante : que se passerait-il si l'exposition constante de ces contenus diffusés conduisait à façonner les problèmes de santé mentale de la jeune génération. À la lumière des révélations précédentes, l'enquête se penche sur le problème et cherche à déterminer le rôle des séries américaines contemporaines dans l'apparition de la dépression chez les apprenants d'anglais langue étrangère. Tout au long des trois chapitres et en appliquant une approche de méthodes combinées et par le biais d'une analyse de contenu, l'enquête examine le contenu de deux séries contemporaines choisies, en mettant en évidence la manière dont cette dernière exerce son influence sur les spectateurs et en projetant la violence et les représentations liées à ce cas. Une analyse du spectateur est également ajoutée afin de percevoir les attitudes et les opinions des apprenants à l'égard de la problématique, et de recueillir les données nécessaires pour mesurer l'ampleur et la portée du phénomène. Les résultats obtenus sont très intéressants car nous avons validé la relation et l'association entre les contenus diffusés et la dépression, et nous avons démontré la manière dont la dépression est provoquée, car nous avons constaté que la majorité des spectateurs souffrent de la symptomatologie mentionnée, mettant en évidence les comportements antisociaux et l'anxiété tout au long de l'enquête. La recherche va plus loin une fois que nous avons révélé le rôle du genre dans la provocation de la dépression, car nous savons que son omniprésence est plus fréquente chez les sujets féminins en raison de leur vulnérabilité plus élevée.

**Mots clés :** Médias diffusés, santé mentale, dépression, Les séries américaines contemporaines, production en streaming, comportement antisocial, anxiété, apprenants FLE, sexe.

## **Terminology:**

***Insomnia:*** a sleep disorder in which you have trouble falling or staying asleep.

***Hypersomnia:*** a condition which refers to either excessive daytime sleepiness or excessive time spent sleeping.

***Hyperactivity Disorder:*** a mental disorder characterized by difficulty paying attention.

***Neurochemicals:*** a small organic molecules or peptides that modulate the nervous system.

***Neurotransmitters:*** They are the molecules used by the nervous system to transmit messages between neurons, or from neurons to muscles.

***Dopamine:*** is a hormone and a neurotransmitter that plays several important roles in the brain.

***Serotonin:*** is a chemical that transmits messages between nerve cells and known as the happy chemical.

***Parkinson's Disease:*** a progressive nervous system disorder that affects movement symptoms.

***Circadian Rhythm:*** are 24-hour cycles that are part of the body's internal clock, running in the background to carry out essential functions and processes. One of the most important and well-known circadian rhythms is the sleep-wake cycle.

***Duloxetine:*** is a medication used to treat depression and anxiety. In addition, duloxetine is used to help relieve nerve pain in people with diabetes or ongoing pain due to medical conditions.

***Schizophrenia:*** is a serious mental disorder in which people interpret reality abnormally. It also may result in some combination of hallucinations, delusions, and extremely disordered thinking and behavior that impairs daily functioning, and can be disabling.

***Dissociative Identity Disorder:*** it is a reaction to trauma its symptoms range from amnesia to alternate identities depending partially on the type of dissociative disorder dealt with. Times of stress can temporarily worsen symptoms, making them more obvious.

***Paranoia:*** an intense anxious or fearful feelings and thoughts often related to persecution, threat, or conspiracy. Paranoia occurs in many mental disorders, but is most often present in psychotic disorders.

***Morphine:*** is a pain medication. It acts directly on the central nervous system to decrease the feeling of pain.

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### **General Introduction:**

Media is the utterance used to refer to the means of communication among people; the notion of media came to existence from the need of interaction between the individuals, the need to transmit ideas and seeking to project one's thoughts on a tangible perspective. Broadcast media is considered the most common contemporary portion of the latter for the time being, that describes the traditional forms of communication, encompassing, television and radio, this later replaced all the printed forms of media and became the main source of news and feedback, furthermore, it generated and shaped an entertainment destination that sets it as the main pillar of society's influence and a powerful tool to shape the public opinion.

We live in a world increasingly populated by screens Apart from our TVs and computers, we now have smartphones, the screen has become the wallpaper of our lives, creating alternative realities for us, that is to say, the media is soaked in our society down to the inevitability, it became a necessary medium that connects us to the outer world and allows us to cope and coincide with the ongoing changes, furthermore with the current technology development that integrated the different aspects of media with our daily lives the access to this references became at one's convenience.

Media has also shown its effectiveness as an educational tool and a powerful teaching material; it offers both cognitive and affective experiences that connect the EFL learners to events that are culturally relevant offering a showcase of complex ideas in a short period of time. In this context learners use both visual and verbal forms to enhance their communicative skills, one way-communication media (movies, documentaries, television shows) makes language acquisition easier and more dynamic, that is to say, EFL learners interaction with different genres of media is beneficial besides being a trend and way of self-entertainment.

On the other hand, the drawbacks of media cannot be neglected because as it seems to be the constant exposure to media can result in multiple issues and will lead to certain

troubles, replacing the usual interaction and the natural norms of living will definitely create the feeling of isolation and loneliness along sided with many other abnormal disorders, desensitizing viewers to violence and sexual behaviors, and shaping the public opinion on wrongful mindsets directs the spectators to the loss of social skills and reality distortion, in other words the outcome of the vulnerability of the human mind to the different sorts of media is a physically and emotionally valid.

One of the most Contemporary sorts of broadcasted media is American Series that gained a wide popularity among the young generation for its comedy , drama and thrill Netflix along with other streaming products possibly shapes our new monoculture that we all share, it became a trend and a way of life rather than just an entertainment destination, however certain contents that these shows introduce can be quite disturbing and raises a major concern from raw violence to direct projections of suicide and mental illness, the thing that steers us to raise the question, what if the consistent exposure to this streamed contents would lead to shape mental health issues to the young generation, what if this Unattendedtrend is more dangerous than we are aware of.

Evidence suggests that the media can influence societal attitudes and beliefs to various social complications. This influence is especially strong for mental health issues, particularly Depression which is a serious condition and a predominant state that effects the physical and mental health, characterized by the loss of interest in activities that an individual usually enjoys and persistent sadness mostly accompanied by an inability to undertake daily activities and sometimes associated with physical symptoms such as aches, digestive problems, low energy level and so on.

While everyone is exposed and threatened and all the varieties of the society can face the risk of depression, the unfortunate prevalence of this disorder is poorly understood in Algeria and its existence is almost questionable although the fatal aftermaths of the symptoms

that can be severe enough to lead to suicide , thus given this situation sets a platform and sheds the light on the possible relation between these Contemporary Series and the unsupervised issue of depression that our society is soaked in.

- **Literature Review:**

In view of the ongoing teaching methods and the educative system that is based on the wrongful belief and the misconception that the oral communication instruction develops naturally over time, in which that the cognitive skills involved in writing automatically transfer to analogous oral communication skills, also the strict emphasis on the grammar and the written forms of language, speaking and listening skills are overlooked neglected and poorly tackled in conventional classrooms, moreover the problems and hardships faced in assessing the latter objectively contributed in the issue.

On the same stream, teachers are working on bringing familiarity with the foreign culture and merging the learner into the targeted language, by the means of teaching methods that usually expose the learner to authentic samples in order to provide opportunities to use the language to a certain extent, which mostly works out when it comes to particular skills, yet, the amount of the exposure to this authentic study samples is not serving the fundamental purpose and the crucial objective that the “effective communication” represents and consequently the oral skills incarnates, being the vital factor and the ultimate objective of language teaching.

In the light of the previous revelations we can come to an understanding and realizing the rationale behind the measures taken by EFL learners, as they were left in an arduous situation where the oral skills are totally dilapidated and its acquisition is presumed as inevitable end, their resort to modern and more contemporary measures is quiet advantageous and valuable when it comes to language acquisition, as they seek and invent new approaches

that they find suitable in targeting their language difficulties in the quest of enhancing language development as a lifelong process.

The unorthodox procedures adopted by the EFL learners gave the idea of the formal strict classroom norms and methodized teaching a notion of independency and flexibility that made the learner more interested in the information delivered, consequently, the “technology based strategies” gained a wide popularity and success in the educational community, likewise, the researchers’ findings encourages and urges the learners to the importance of adapting and creating new methods to acquire language, in the quest of paving the way to independent learning and taking charge of the one’s own progress.

Hence, EFL learners are deliberately seeking to expose themselves to the foreign culture for the sake of triggering the accidental learning and developing their aural skills, at the same time involving their favorite shows and streamed contents in the acquisition process, as they praised the endorsement of this strategy and validated its beneficial outcomes concerning language acquisition, however, the controversial contents that this contemporary American series encompasses are evident and its potential association with depression and anxiousness experienced by the learners is highly probable.

Depression is one of the most common mental disorders in the world , according to *World Health Organization (2012)*, nearly over 300 million people are estimated to suffer from depression, at a global level , “*equivalent to 4.4% of the world’s population, increasing by 18.4% between 2005 and 2015, which indicates that depression will be the main cause of disease burden worldwide by the year of 2030* ” (*World Health Organization, 2017*),in the same context *Pratt & Brody (2014)* noted that about 7.6% of people aged 12 and over are suffering and dealing with moderate or severe depression, furthermore, endogenous studies dealing with the theme of depression are projecting the seriousness of this mental problem (*Hamdan, Hawamdeh & Hussein , 2008 ; Al-Maskari et al,2011 ;Thomas et al , 2018*).

Noting that depression is never a choice or a conscious matter that the one can deal with, as it seems to be “*the depression was not manufactured by the conscious mind but is an unwelcome intrusion from the unconscious, the elaboration of the mood is, as it were, a picture of the contents and tendencies of the unconscious that were massed together in the depression*” (Carl J, 2014: 3038), moreover most doctors and researchers believe that there are three primary causes of depression; biological, genetic (inherited), emotional or environmental and that a combination of factors contribute to the illness.

By the same token, Wheeler (2015), investigated The Relationships Between Television Viewing Behaviors, Attachment, Loneliness, Depression, and Psychological Well-Being and found that the latter is displaying a significant positive relationships, furthermore, Smith (2014) and Ward (2014) mentioned possible effects of watching television on mood, including feelings of depression and emptiness, feelings of “withdrawal” at the end of a show or a series, and emotional fatigue after all of the highs and lows of each episode, another study by De Wit (2011), in which explored the sedentary television watching and computer use behaviors associated with anxiety and depressive disorders and found that sedentary behaviors occur more frequently among persons with a mental disorder,

Psychologists call the type of this influence by *cognitive* and *Affect* media effect that occurs when media exposure influences a person’s mental processes or the product of those mental processes. The cognitive effect is the acquisition of factual information from media messages; for the fact that, the human mind can absorb this information through the process of memorization. However, the human mind can do far more than memorize; it can transform information into knowledge, also group media messages in different ways to create new meanings. It can generalize beyond media messages to generate principles about real life. while *Affect* refers to the feelings that people experience. This includes emotions and moods. The media can trigger emotions, especially fear, lust, anger, and laughter.

- ***Research Methodology:***

The primary and the fundamental focus of the investigation brought to the table is highlighting and shedding the light on the depressive symptomology generated and provoked by the Contemporary American Series, and also inspecting in the way that this contents elicits depression, indicating and demonstrating the factors implemented by the producers in which provokes the symptomology, as dissecting and exploring the manners and the way that the learners perceive this contents, and the way they are relating to the latter, another point deserves mentioning, is the extent and pervasiveness of this phenomenon among the young adults.

The proposed topic is going to employ a mixed method approach, in order to allow a combination of numerical measurements and deep profound exploration, as it includes a qualitative content analysis and an audience analysis through a questionnaire, the correlation and the fusion between the data is the best method that will answer the proposed research questions providing and adding a significant authenticity and credibility to the given topic.

Analyzing and considering both quantitative and qualitative data within the same study employs and extracts the advantages and the potential strengths of both qualitative and quantitative methods, allowing us to explore diverse perspectives and uncover relationships that exist between the complex and intricate aspects of our versatile research questions. Purposeful data integration enables us to seek a more panoramic view of our research landscape, viewing the phenomena from different viewpoints and through diverse research lenses.

Investigating and inspecting the general mood of a chosen series and discussing the character's personalities and the most relevant scenes within the plot of the series while taking into account the intentions of the producers and the aspects that are contributing in eliciting depression, also dissecting the settings and deducting the way that the spectators are

perceiving the ideas conveyed by the makers of the latter, and the way that learners relates to the whole production is basically assembled and brought together in order to seize the preferred and desirable data.

The qualitative content analysis we employed is implemented for the sake of scrutinizing through the possible reasons behind eliciting depression, furthermore, it allows us to seize an insight and an idea on the process in which this contents provokes depressive symptomology, moreover, shedding the light on the way that learners perceive the streamed products, as the way they are relating to the latter, and displaying the seriousness and the amount of controversial aspects laying within these contents.

The audience analysis we are conducting throughout the investigation is providing us with the necessary numerical data that will contribute in more precise and accurate results, as it will answer our questions concerning the extent and the pervasiveness of the phenomenon and the role of gender in eliciting depression among the EFL learners, the measurement that the process provides is definitely needed and the contribution that it adds to the quest, is certainly important and significant.

Regarding to the quantitative approach employed, we realized the need and the necessity of having a numerical and empirical concept within our study, for the fact that the insufficiency of the qualitative content analysis to answer our mentioned and constructed questions, furthermore, the data retrieved from the qualitative analysis is adding a credibility and prospect to the latter, as it also validates our previous analysis and proves the truthfulness and integrity of our conclusions, moreover it will walk us through extra revelations concerning the phenomenon.

The questionnaire is implemented within our study and directed via social media to an equal number of male and female subjects, for the sake of inspecting the learner's attitudes and perceptions towards the idea of eliciting depression, also granting us the means and the

necessary data to measure the pervasiveness of the phenomenon, furthermore, allowing for a further inspection to figure out the role of gender in eliciting depression among the EFL learners.

In order to gain a better insight into the possible triggers of this mental problem in accordance with audiovisual content, the method will produce generalizable knowledge about the causes of depression associated to screen streaming, afterwards compared to a systematic content analysis of some chosen contemporary series , which will necessarily lead to a breakthrough to confirm or deny the role of this streamed products in eliciting learner's depression, further more it will also display the possible triggers of the phenomenon projected in the scenes of this productions. On the other hand, the extent of depression contagion and its effect on the lives of the learners will be measured by conducting an audience analysis that will provide statistic and more accurate numerical data.

The considered research is divided to three fundamental chapters. The first chapter is explaining the reasons that leads the learner to take resort to the means of watching Contemporary American Series, discussing the Controversial Perceptions on Media and its Validity in Learning, as we will go through the intricacies that faces the EFL learners when it comes to the aural skills, and the learning strategies adopted by the latter for the sake of overcoming the frustration made by the issue, furthermore, we will be discussing the way in which media effects and shapes the learner's attitude and its possible effects and repercussions along with its role in eliciting depression.

The second chapter is mainly speaking for a systematic content analysis, in which we re-considers the effect of Contemporary American Series, dissecting the chosen contents precisely and discussing the latter according to three perspectives; the general mood and the effects implemented within the contents, the main characters and their role and portrayal in

the plot, and the most relevant scenes based on the amount of violence and the type of depiction projected.

The third and final chapter is dealing with the audience analysis, as we validate and measure the extent and pervasiveness of depression among the EFL learners, and Examining EFL Learners' Attitudes towards Contemporary American Series, and projecting their opinions regarding the matter, as we handle the objective analysis of the feedbacks retrieved from the questionnaire and considering the gender role in the audience behavior.

For the sake of achieving validity, generalizability and replicability, a quantitative questionnaire was conducted as a main instrument for collecting data, in order to seize a numerical and accurate statistics that relates the depressive symptomology among the EFL learners with the Contemporary American Series viewing, furthermore, inspecting through the answers retrieved to gain a deeper insight through the matter, we are also striving to bring a kind of understanding to the gender role in eliciting depression, and if the impact on the women is any different from the impact laying on the men.

The study was conducted at Abbes Laghrour University of Khenchela, Master 1 English students are chosen as an available source of data collection, using the stratified composite samples, taking in consideration their better understanding of English language and their familiarity with the series, also as a youthful society members they are more likely vulnerable than most, likewise, Being the most controversial latest series that deals with depression, suicide and mental illness *Thirteen Reasons Why*, *Mr. Robot* will be chosen as a study sample that will be used for a qualitative content analysis.

A strong foundation has been set to investigate the role of Contemporary American Series in eliciting depression among EFL learners, particularly, to reach a breakthrough for the fundamental questions related to the validity of the matter, and measuring its extent and pervasiveness taking into consideration the role of gender in learner's

behavior. By relating and associating the two aspects throughout the research the main questions that we will be seeking to answer can be summarized in into four main points:

- Do the Contemporary American series elicit depression among EFL learners?
- What urges the EFL learners to take resort in watching the Contemporary American Series?
- How and to what extent do American series elicit depression among EFL learners?
- What is the role of gender in EFL learner's behavior?

The theoretical framework of the study will encompass and illustrate the most significant and important reasons that urges the learners to adopt new methods and consequently consuming the streamed products, as it will also provide an overview on the media effect, and the way it exerts its influence on the EFL learners, explaining the connection between depression and the effects mentioned, furthermore, in investigating the reasons and the manner that the series elicits depression, the content analysis is conducted to tackle the issue and specifically directed to figure out the way that spectators perceive the contents displayed. Moreover, the numerical data provided by the audience analysis will display and project the extent and pervasiveness of depression among the young adults, as it will certainly unveil the role of gender in the learner's behavior.

The study brought to the table a unique approach, that is going to tackle a major problem that our society is soaked in, that is to say, even though that the "negative effect of media" is a prevalent and a common type of research, the specific link among American series and clinical depression is quit undetermined, on this trill the study in our hands will bring new data into the table and will reveal a valuable information that will prevent a considerable threat. As such this research aims to detect if the American contemporary series are a reason of depression prevalence at Abbes Laghrour University in order to spread

awareness and limit certain harmful contents, furthermore, inspecting the extent of its prevalence as we can take the right precautions and help those who were victimized by this mental illness, encompassing the specific triggers that arises this issue to shed the lights on a poorly understood case in Algerian society, on the same track, the findings of this investigation is going to change the perspective and the custom belief that all the audiovisual contents are a beneficial tool of language acquisition.

The study sets us on a quest of proving the relation between the American contemporary series and depression, the researchers are hoping to reveal the reasons behind many abnormal behaviors that came out to the surface of our society, led by drug addiction, self-harm and suicidal thoughts, by such, creating a helping material that will spread awareness and support those who got victimized, expectantly, this investigation is going to provide us with the depressive contents laying within the contemporary American series and also the extent of the role of this streamed products in eliciting depression, that is to say, detecting the problem, evaluating its intensity and measuring the issue's prevalence in the future.

*First Chapter*  
*Controversial Perceptions on Media and its*  
*Validity in Learning*

**Introduction:**

Listening and speaking abilities are given a very little interest when it comes to the formal education, even though the latter are vital in effective communication process, the importance of these skills is undervalued, which is the main reason of learners seeking independent learning by the means of merging media in the acquisition process, Contemporary American Series is the choice made to trigger the accidental learning, however media influence is not something to be ignored, in matter of fact, when we come to understand how media can exert its influence on the users we shed the light on the disadvantageous consequences, led by various psychological issues. Depression is the leading aftermath of media effect featuring hopelessness and despair among the EFL learners, the interpretation and terminology of the latter along with its causes and effects are ought to be discussed in order to gain sight on the matter for the sake of setting the right precautions and preventing its possible damages.

***I- Intricacies Facing EFL Learners:***

In the process of information acquisition, particularly “the learning process” learners face many difficulties when it comes to mastering the field, especially EFL learners, the several aspects of language within different linguistic skills that needs to be absorbed and mastered shapes many complications in both teaching and learning process; that is to say the one’s learning ability will certainly be tested, thus it doesn’t stand only on the later but also on the showcase of these skills on the field whether its written or uttered, that means the actual performance and the implementation of the acquired knowledge. In the same context *Scrivener (2005: 146)*, argued that “*there is no point knowing a lot about language if you can’t use it*”. As a result, learners take charge of their own learning process and seek resort in other contemporary means and strategies.

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The efforts and the dedication of the learner will eventually lead to a positive improvement, and will certainly develop the one's skills on many linguistic levels; however, the vast gap between the cultures is one of the many problems that face the learners, hence teachers operate on bringing familiarity and merging the learner into the foreign language, by means of teaching methods that usually expose the learner to samples of the native culture, and gives them opportunities to use the language, which mostly works out when it comes to certain skills. On the other hand,

*“A fact that is highlighted by second language research is that progress does not occur when people make a conscious effort to learn. Progress occurs as a result of spontaneous, subconscious mechanisms, which are activated when learners are involved in communication with the second language. The subconscious element demands a new range of activities, where learners are focused not on the language itself but on the communication of meaning” (Littlewood, 1984).*

In the same matter *Bueno, Madrid & McLaren, (2004)* noted that many learners declare that in spite of spending many years studying the English language they apparently face major issues when it comes to effective communication.

*Rabab'ah (2002)* pointed out that there are multiple factors that shape difficulties in speaking among EFL learners, these factors are related to the learners themselves, the teaching strategies, the curriculum, and the environment. As an example, many learners lack the necessary vocabulary to get their meaning across, and consequently, they cannot keep the interaction going, inadequate strategic competence and communication competence can be another reason as well for not being able to keep the interaction going. Furthermore, due to the uneven participation which allows for only one participant to talk at a time; because of large classes and the tendency of some learners to dominate, while others speak very little or not at all. Unfortunately listening and speaking skills are poorly tackled, that is to say under such circumstances teachers are forced to convey the curriculum and mainly focus on the other linguistic features resting on the wrongful belief that this competence will naturally develop over time.

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In the same context *Chaney & Burk (1998)* argued that the oral communication instruction was neglected because of the misconception that oral communication competence develops naturally over time, and that the cognitive skills involved in writing automatically transfer to analogous oral communication skills. Furthermore, *Rabab'ah (2002)* mentioned that teaching strategies also contribute to this problem as they are inadequate, and they do not put emphasis on speaking, which results in a meagre development of this skill. Besides, vocabulary items are taught in isolation, and listening materials are not used by the majority of school teachers, because of the large number of teachers compared with the number of cassettes available. Teacher-training programs were found to be not very successful in changing the teachers' methodology.

On the same stream, *"There are courses that seem to do little else but focus on the formal features of language with little or no opportunity to use what has been learned to receive and produce real messages"* (*Newton & I. S. P. nation, 2009: 2*). While the majority of English teachers are native speakers of Arabic, learners spend most of their time doing grammar and vocabulary drills instead of actual oral practice and involvement in the target culture. The teaching strategies that are applied by teachers emphasize on teaching the form of the language, which is indicated by focusing on teaching grammar rules and vocabulary items, Students are mostly expected to produce short accurate sentences while the communicative use of the language is tossed aside, in addition, teachers think it is very important to use mother language in order to provide the meaning of some words and explain the grammar rules. They believe that using first language is very necessary to make sure that the students understand the meaning and comprehend the point.

On the light of the previous issue, EFL learners are left in a complicated situation where the oral skills are totally neglected and its acquisition is taken as inevitable end. In which *Clifford (1987)* noted that speaking is very important in second language learning.

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However, despite its importance, it has been overlooked in schools and universities due to different reasons like emphasis on grammar and unfavorable teacher-student proportions. Its absence from testing is due to the problem in assessing it objectively and the time it takes to carry out speaking tests.

That is to say in spite of the recognizable importance of listening and speaking skills and their well-grounded role as crucial fundamental aspects in serving the end of effective communication and interaction, which is the main goal and the ultimate objective of language teaching, the latter is still undervalued. In addition, according to *Harmer (2007: 46)* Speakers apply language according to their own goals, so speakers should be both listeners and speakers at the same time for effective communication, in other words, to achieve communication, the necessity of being a listener is equal to the need of being a speaker, in that context we should note that *“we live at a time where the ability to speak English fluently has become a must, especially who want to advance in certain fields of human endeavor” (Al-Sibai, 2004: 3).*

### ***II- Learning Strategies: from Old-Fashioned Means to Innovative Methods***

With all what has been discussed earlier *“It is worthy to mention that researchers recognize that learners can improve their speaking ability by developing learning strategies that enable them to become independent learners” (Nakatani, 2010).* Hoang & Daniel (2017) displayed the need to move forward in language learning strategies that promotes student’s ability to find what works for them, to overcome or drop old methods and be flexible in trying unfamiliar strategies. It is also vital for teachers to be open to other procedures that have been found or developed by students themselves. This may include the use of technology and personal interests that promote the desire to learn and develop language acquisition beyond the classroom. Teaching language then moves beyond learning language and associated strategies, for motivating students to learn the skills and equip them to develop positive

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approaches that can be used beyond tertiary education and enhance language development as a lifelong process.

*“It is widely acknowledged that learning strategies have become one of the main factors that help students to learn a second or foreign language successfully” (Oxford, 2003),* in this matter, many researchers have tackled this problem and their findings continually reminds the learners with the importance of adapting and creating new methods to acquire language, in the quest of paving the way to independent learning and taking charge of the one’s own progress, *(Kumaravadivelu, 2001; Oxford, 2003; Herrera & Murry, 2011),* thus *Brown (2006)* posed that some individuals learn their second language effectively despite the methodology applied by teachers. In other words, some learners have developed their own strategies and used them for learning a second language successfully, along the same lines, it is worthy to mention that at some point EFL learners are obliged to take charge and bear responsibility of their own progress along with being expected to become the self’s own judge, and gain the ability to examine their own points of strength and weakness when it comes to certain skills.

As the matter of fact EFL learners expanded their field of expertise and established a better awareness about language teaching methods, and as active learners they determined their own path and found out what works for them as a learning material and an acquisition strategy outside the formal strict classroom norms and methodized teaching, that is to say that EFL learners gained a sort of independency when it comes to learning process, regardless to the traditional forms of EFL teaching, the unorthodox procedures taken by them is an insight to their interests and an incarnation of their motivational models. The procedures and contents that motivate the learner and capture his interest urge him to seek more knowledge and unconsciously makes him more absorbent to the information delivered, in addition to what has been mentioned, most of these methods shapes a great combination between daily normal

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activities and learning environment, the fusion between the one's life and learning methods give a limitless possibilities when it comes to the acquisition process which is considered a revolution in learning fields.

By the same token EFL learner's "technology based strategies" gained a wide popularity and success in the educational community, while the world is heading to technological advancements and witnesses a growth in facilities in all spheres and domains, typically the potential use of technology to fund the learning process is on the table, in that matter, many researchers addressed the subject and pointed out to the usefulness of the latter in improving language competence particularly aural skills, mentioning the possibility of enhancing listening and speaking proficiency, and generally linguistic competence with more ease is just the missing ingredient for EFL learners, subsequently the decision of implementing technology mediums in learning is made.

Based on the common regulation that "*length of exposure to a foreign language is thought to be one of the principal variables effecting achievement*" (Naiman et al, 1996: 15) and that "*Speaking fluency appears to develop with increased exposure to second language input*" (Al-Sibai, 2004: 3) "*Input refers to the language data which the learner is exposed*" (Zhang, 2009), the use of audio-visual mediums has gone viral in learner's community, the usage of this mean allows the learner to get a direct exposure to the foreign language and culture as much as needed, the materials that doesn't depend solely upon reading to convey the meaning but on the correlation between both senses showcases a unique features that promotes a faster learning, and shapes an effective authentic framework, also to be considered as a motivational tool that takes the learner out of the orthodox classic written forms of studies and offers him an enjoyable interest-based medium that conveys his needs.

While the role and importance of audio-visual materials in the teaching and learning process cannot be over emphasized Dupuy, (1999) investigated "narrow listening" an

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approach based on *Krashen's* idea, this involved learners at listening as many times as they wish of 1 to 2 minutes aural texts on a range of familiar and interesting topics of their choice, the learners in the study reported improvements in their listening comprehension, fluency and vocabulary along with increased confidence in the target language, moreover *Oketunji, (2000)* stressed that audio-visual materials lessens major weakness of verbalism and vitalize subject matters while providing interesting approaches to new topics and offers an initial correct impressions along with promoting faster learning and supply a concrete materials needed, also in the sake of stressing the effectiveness of visual materials in learning *Swank (2011)* estimated that about 40% of our concepts are based upon visual experience, 25% upon auditory which leads us to the realization of the importance of audio-visual materials used by EFL learners in the name of language acquisition as a fusion between different senses that contributes together for a maximum clarity and a better insight into various contents.

On the same stream, learners deliberately expose themselves to foreign streamed products in order to stimulate the accidental learning. Hence, due to the emergence of contemporary American series in the world as the leading cinematic model, the most used audio-visual materials by learners in a normal sense are the latter, featured as an entertainment and educational entity which provides enjoyable unconscious learning. Contemporary American series became the destination of our learners as well as the center of their interests and conversations, shaping a great mean to spend time admiring the marvelous drama and fiction and the depiction of real life situations and problems while peaking a look into the past, future and present of foreign cultures and diversity of adopted morals, otherwise speaking, besides being an educational mean, contemporary American series became a trend and a well-known beneficial destination to EFL learners.

***III- The Adaptation of Media in Learning***

In general media is a term used to describe all the means of communication particularly the outlets used to deliver information and data including print media, photography, cinema and broadcasting elements, moreover the latter can function on multiple levels, media can be an entertainment destination or a way of communication among the individuals as it can be much more than that, functioning as a way to shape public opinion or a medium to spread awareness and information about myriad matters, on the other hand media can generate misconceptions and impose wrongful ideas and high levels of inaccuracy and poor coverage of important matters.

Regarding to media's beneficial and positive features its adaptation in the learning process is remarkable, materials derived from media sources and the general use and integration of media in the EFL classroom provides a genuine and original sample of the foreign culture in which brings familiarity and reduce anxiety among the learners, there is a large convenience and ease in fusing media materials with teaching approaches from the simplest forms of printed media to the audio-visual techniques, that granted an aid and made the foreign language learning process simpler and more efficient by reducing the gap between the native and the foreign cultures and the anxiety created by it.

***1- The Way Media Affect and Shape the Learner's Attitude:***

Besides the practical aspects and the advantageous use of audio-visual materials in learning process, *media effect* is something to behold for account and discussion, for its possible repercussions and damaging influence. In the bottom line of the matter, *media effect* is an influence exerted by the media on the consumers by means of the contents displayed in which can provoke certain unhealthy behaviors, that particularly raises the question whether if the use of contemporary series as a learning material is fully recommended or quite the opposite. Media influence is a topic that many scientists and researchers held for discussion,

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many theories brought to the table for investigation and inspection and subsequently it became a large field of study, it's a phenomenon that displays the ways in which the human mind functions and shows that as the same way that EFL learners unconsciously obtain beneficial knowledge, by a necessity they will unintentionally absorb whatever being displayed.

Accordingly, it is worthy to mention that media' influence is not something to be overlooked and underestimated, as much as the efficiency of audio-visual techniques in learning process, it still has its own aftermaths and the consequences might be pernicious, taking into account that media messages are so constant and so pervasive that we are continually being exposed to media information, therefore, we need to acknowledge that the media are continually exerting an influence on us and that influence is quite significant and not to be overlooked. The amount of the applied pressure by media and its contents is relentless meanwhile the consumers are unfamiliar with the possible repercussion and issues that it may generate.

Media effects are usually described as cognitive, effective or behavioral in which *Perse & Lambe (2017: 4-5)* explained that cognitive effects are those that concern the acquisition of information such as what people learn and how beliefs are structured in the mind, whereas news and public affairs information is often the focus of cognitive effects, also, what is more compelling is the cognitive impact of entertainment that shapes an important area of study, "effective effects" on the other hand, involve the formation of attitudes in other words the positive or negative evaluation about something, more interesting fact that another important area that "effective effects" cover is the emotional reactions to media content, such as fright or amusement, or the development of feelings toward other objects as a result of media exposure such as generation of fear in society as a result of watching violent contents,

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one more description to add is behavioral effects that are known as observable actions linked to media exposure.

In the same context, *Potter (2012: 172)* mentioned that the cognitive media effect exert two kinds of influences, one is to get the viewers to accept the attitudes as they are presented, in which the researchers found that the person can acquire many deferent attitudes from exposure to media messages, some of those attitudes are intended and planned by the senders as in advertisements when they simply want the viewers to accept the evaluation of their product, under other conditions audience have also been found to acquire certain attitudes from media messages when the senders were not trying to convey those attitudes (unintended) because regardless to the objectivity of the senders, imbedded attitudes expressed by different people will keep to exist, subsequently people will embrace it as their own, furthermore *“people have also been found to acquire certain attitudes that are expressed in fictional messages even after one exposure to a dramatic content people can accept the attitudes presented there on controversial issues such as support for the death penalty” (Slater, Rouner & Long, 2006: 249).*

The second influence by *Potter (2012: 172)* is the acquisition of standards within media messages and as an aftermath of getting people to accept standards is that people will use this acquired standards to shape their own new attitudes, that is to say standards are crucial in the construction of attitudes, besides, when we generate an attitude we make a judgment about something and that evaluative judgment is our attitude towards the matter, and basically we cannot make an evaluative judgment without comparing something to a standard, yet in the case of media we compare messages we get to our standards that many of them comes from our environment, parents, friends and other institutions such as religion, education, the criminal justice system and so on. So far it is worthy to mention that some of our standards are derived from media, in other words, media shapes an unintentional source of

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our personal norms and beliefs and gives a generalized prejudices towards ourselves, society, and our inclusive environment.

***2- Variables Affecting the Degree of Media Effectiveness***

As the matter of fact, when we go through all the approaches applied by scholars and researchers such as *Potter (2012: 35-36)* when writing about media effects, we can basically see that there are “eight” main issues that to be concerned yet providing a generalized definition of media effect. These issues are “timing” (immediate vs. long term) and “duration” (temporary vs. permanent), “valence” (negative or positive), “change” (difference vs. no difference), “intention” (or non-intention), “the level” (micro vs. macro), “direct or indirect effect”, and “manifestation” (observable vs. latent), whereas the latter issues can be interpreted and explained as follows:

*Timing:* as an example, when parents notice that children begin to act aggressively when they watch TV, those parents are more likely to establish a kind of a connection between the TV shows and their children’s aggression. Indeed, the media exert instant effects, but also exert influences on people over the long-term, when it takes a longer exposure before we can see any indications of an effect.

*Duration:* It refers to the persistency of Some effects that last a short time, then go away, while other effects are permanent.

*Valence:* it is mainly whether the effects are positive and exerts a helpful changes or the contrary, a negative effect that shapes a burden.

*Change:* A change in behavior or a change in attitude, and in the case when there is no change, typically we think that there is no effect, but some effects, maybe the most critical and dominant media effects, stand out as no change, known as the reinforcement effect as it is the case when most advertisers want to reinforce existing buying behaviors.

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*Intention:* While some of media messages are basically made to exert a kind of an attitude or a behavior, there are many effects that appear even though the producers of those media messages, as well as the consumers, did not have the intention for them to occur.

*Level:* the media exerts influences on macro-level entities such as the public, society, and institutions; as it has its effects on the individuals.

*Direct and Indirect:* Sometimes the media exert a direct effect on individuals, while other times the effect is more indirect, such as through institutions that in its turn exerts an effect on the individuals.

*Manifestation:* Some effects are easy to be noticed, but other effects are very difficult to observe and this does not necessarily mean they are not occurring or that the media are not exerting an influence.

**3- Most Common Effects of Media**

When it comes to the influence on individuals, *Potter (2012: 44-45)* have discovered and summarized all media effects by adopting six types of effects on individuals, which are cognition, belief, attitude, affect, physiology, and behavior. All individual-level media effects studies and theories examine how the media exert an influence on one or more of these six types. A *cognitive media effect* occurs when media exposure influences a person's mental processes, because basically the human mind can absorb information from media through the process of memorization; However, the human mind can do far more than memorizing, it has the ability to transform information into knowledge to generate new meanings and principles about real life. The second effect is *Beliefs* that originates from media; essentially the media continually create and shape our beliefs by showing us more of the world than we are able to see directly for ourselves. Each of us holds beliefs about the existence of things that we have never seen directly. Another effect which is *Attitudes* that are judgments about different affairs, when the media present stories it often triggers the need for us to make our own

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judgments about controversial issues, one more effect is the *Affect* refers to the feelings that people experience including emotions and moods, that is to say media can trigger emotions, especially fear, lust, anger, and laughter. Accordingly, the *physiological effect*; that is the body response that can be displayed as the change in heart rates and blood pressure, muscles tense as a result of media exposure. The last effect is *Behaviors* that are typically defined as the actions of an individual; researchers expose people to particular media messages, and then observe their subsequent behaviors for things like aggression.

*McGuire (1986: 178)* pointed out to several of the most common mentioned “intended” media effects like the effects of advertising on purchasing, and political campaigns on voting, public service announcements on personal behavior and social improvement, also propaganda on ideology, likewise he pointed out the most commonly mentioned “unintended” media effects, essentially like the effects of media violence on aggressive behavior, also media images on the social construction of reality, along with that the effects of media bias on stereotyping, and also the effect of erotic and sexual material on attitudes and behaviors, on top of that the effect of media forms on cognitive activity.

Taking into account the previous revelations that display the intensity and significance of “media effect” and to what extent it can escalates, we come to the realization that these effects includes, behavioral and psychological repercussions that manifests a substantial concern incarnated in immoral and unhealthy issues. As it seems to be, media can elicit aggression, *Slater et al (2003)*, found that exposure to violent media prospectively predicted aggressiveness, and this latter prospectively predicted violent media content, also, *Freedman (2002: 194)* considering in detail a great deal of research on the effects of exposure to media violence, claims that the exposure to violent programs is related directly to aggressiveness, likewise, *Berkowitz & Powers (1979)* predicts that justified violence (violence portrayed as morally correct) enhances the likelihood of aggressive behaviors, moreover, number of

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studies that assesses direction and size of effects of media violence conducted from 1956 through 1990 have consistently found significant effects of media violence on violent behavior and attitudes (*Anderson, 1977; Paik & Comstock, 1994; Wood et al, 1991*).

As for media violence, “*the dominant cognitive approach to connecting violent media content and aggressive behavior is based on learning, that is through exposure to media content viewers know when and how to act aggressively*” (*Perse & Lambe, 2001: 205*). *Anderson, Allen & Bushman’s (2017) General Aggression Model* predicts indirect effects of exposure to media violence on aggression through three response states: cognition, emotion, and arousal. Therefore, the change in cognitive process exerts by a necessity a change in emotion and the latter will manifest as a behavior, accurately speaking violent behavior, moreover, the constant exposure to violence and disturbing contents will eventually lead to desensitizing people to violence in the real world and subsequently, for some people, watching violence in media becomes enjoyable and does not result in the anxious arousal that would be expected from seeing such imagery, the relief and the reprehensible view of the violent behavior as a positive action and an acceptable matter is itself a psychological issue that raises concern.

The effects mentioned by the scholars and researchers on cognition, belief, attitude, affect, physiology, and behavior do not only elicit violence, that drags the society to the danger zone and threatens people’s lives, it also, evokes many other issues that forecasts a dark future. One more effect that *McGuire (1986: 178)* mentioned is the wrongful construction of reality based on media images, that is to say that, the constant and pervasive exciting stories, plots and the perfect sceneries within, makes the consumers expecting more of the real life and place their faith in fantasies that might never happen, In other words, the fictions displayed in media stretches to the persons virtual conceptions and manifests in a distorted reality, *Bryant, Carveth & Brown (1981)* exposed participants, over a six-week

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period, to either heavy or light viewing of movies depicting crime, they found that those in the heavy exposure conditions indicated a greater likelihood of being a victim of violence and more fearful of victimization than those in the light exposure conditions, thus, questioning reality and exaggerating in the boundaries of the physical world and living on a false mindset anticipates an ailing unsocial society.

The revelation of the possibility of reality distortion suggests by a necessity an aftermath of the disappointment that occurs once the one notices the gap between the expectation and the frustrating reality, that is to say that media is forming and projecting norms of how things should be, “*media provide media users with social identity gratifications*” (Harwood, 2009), in which Tajfel & Turner, (1979) concluded that people have a strong need to identify with group norms, and to bolster their self-esteem by comparing their social identity to the norms and attitudes of relevant out groups, in other words, the users of media tend to compare themselves to the norms and attitude adopted by the latter setting a group of standards and models to be followed by the public however when the comparison is not satisfactory it generates negative emotions and a sense of inferiority, stress and anxiety are also factors for such an issue.

The previous issue works on many levels, body image is a major problem, seeing so many people who are supposedly perfect according to media standards on a daily basis leads the one to make a judgment or more accurately self-comparison to what is considered a standard and assumed to be perfect, and not everyone comes to healthy conclusions in this situation.

*“In the UK much of the evidence about the prevalence of body image satisfaction or dissatisfaction has derived from readership surveys run by glossy magazines one survey conducted in 2000 by top santé was reported in a national daily newspaper as having found about half of a sample of 5000 woman with an average age of 37 years classified themselves as overweight, more than 8 in 10 (83%), said that they felt inhibited by their body and that their life would be considerably improved if they were happy with their body” (Wykes & Gunter, 2005: 03).*

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In that context *Rodin, (1985)* stated that many individuals experience body dissatisfaction in the form of weight concern, and that a sizeable majority will actively seek to reduce their weight.

On the light of the previous situations, the two factors of stress and anxiety are one of the expected consequences of media effect, *“the depiction of violence may increase anxiety by making the world seem more hostile and crime-ridden” (Morgan & Shanahan 2010; Nabi & Riddle 2008)*. In turn, *“anxiety impairs functioning through both its primary symptoms (sleep disturbances and concentration difficulties) and development of secondary problems (depressive symptoms and substance use)” (Marmorstein et al, 2010; Starr & Davila, 2011)*, that is to say that anxiety and stress manifested by the mentioned media effects elicits many symptoms that raises concern and leads to secondary problems like depressive behavior, *“Taking into account the upward social comparison, it might be that repeated exposure to idealized images on social media and television decreases self-esteem” (Boers et al, 2019)*.

On the other hand, the distorted sense of reality and low self-esteem isolate the individual and by a necessity provoke unsocial behavior ,*Boers and his team (2019)* found that lower self-reported measures of self-esteem, as measured through the Rosenberg Self-Esteem 4-point scale, were associated with more severe depression among teenagers, they wrote, "Based on the social comparison hypothesis, we argue that watching more television over time increases the likelihood of upward social comparison to occur, in turn potentially triggering and enhancing depression", furthermore, *Primack A. Brian et al (2009)*, says that much screen use may affect our emotional wellbeing, and has been associated with anxiety and depression, in other words media is linked directly to depressive symptoms that the users face.

***IV- Media Eliciting Depression as its Major Detriment***

With all what have been mentioned above, and as a conclusion of the previous studies we can note that depression is one of the major results of media exposure, which raises an obvious concern when it comes to the possible aftermaths that it brings to the table particularly the sense of inferiority, stress and anxiety when the one lives on the margin of society and lacks the simplest social skills by generating expectations that are beyond the boundaries of reality, forecasting a distorted society that seeks towards unrealistic world, the means and resorts that learners adopt to improve their learning process can do far more than just improving speaking and listening skills and the unexpected effects behind these means are devastating and deeper than it appears on its surface, under these circumstances spreading awareness is a necessity, gaining knowledge about all the aspects of the matter and getting all up to the speed of the updates, is a must, all in favor and in order to make the right precautions in the rights time.

***1- What is Depression***

Feeling down and having some setbacks is a normal part of life, however when emotions such as hopelessness and despair take hold and won't go away it may be more than just sadness, in response to life's struggles, depression changes how you think, feel, and function in daily activities. It can interfere with your ability to work, study, eat, sleep, and enjoy life. Just trying to get through the day can be overwhelming. When it comes to mental health among college students a great deal of interest is given recently. *“Three quarters of all lifetime cases of diagnosable psychological conditions begin by age 24” (Kessler et al, 2005),* in the same token, *“young adulthood appears to be a vulnerable time for developing psychological problems for college students” (Blanco et al, 2009).*

*“The term depression is often used to designate a complex pattern of deviations in feelings, cognition and behavior” (Beck T, 1970: 06),* that is to say, it's the unusual pattern

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and reaction towards life situations and matters, depression has been defined in various ways as disorder that affects the psychology and physical reaction towards people. The term can be understood differently from a person to another, however when it is diagnosed it is then known as a disorder, it makes the one to lose interest and the sense of responsibility. According to *National Institute of Mental Health (2011)*, Depression is the second leading cause of disability by 2020 and also it is the fourth leading cause of disability in America.

*“Depression is understood and known as an internalizing problem in people which is classified by its symptoms for example, depressed mood or excessive sadness, loss of interest in activities, so as sleeping problems, difficulty in thinking, and loss of concentration which as well associated with depression. (Merrell, 2008: 19).*

The *American Psychiatric Association* (n. d.) defines depression as a major common and serious medical illness that is devastating and negatively affects how the one feel and react to life issues, in other words it controls the cognitive process and by a consequence the actions are involved. Depression triggers feelings of sadness, loss of interest even in enjoyable activities. It can lead to a variety of emotional and physical problems and can decrease a person’s ability to function at work and at home, isolating the latter from society consuming his thoughts and feelings by despair.

In the same context, depression is a common serious mental illness with major health, economic, and social aftermaths. Another definition that is worthy to mention, the latter is *“a disorder characterized by sadness, loss of interest or pleasure, feelings of guilt and low self-esteem, disordered sleep and appetite, decreased energy and poor concentration” (Dinas, Koutedakis & Flouris, 2011)*. Depressive feelings and symptoms can be pervasive or chronic, often recurrent and can considerably impair an individual's ability to carry out activities of daily living. *“In the most extreme cases, depression can lead to suicide, reaching for approximately 850,000 fatalities each year” (WHO, 2011)*.

**2- The Extent of which Depression can be Destructive:**

According to the *World Health Organization (2012)*, depressive disorders were ranked as the third leading cause of the global burden of disease in 2004 and by 2020, depression will be the second leading cause of world disability, by 2030; it is expected to be the largest contributor to disease burden. It is now estimated that 350 million people globally are affected by depression, and this alarming number is a wakeup call to address this global non-communicable disease. *National Institute of mental Health (n. d.)* noted that depression is a major contributor to the global burden of disease and affects people in all communities across the world. The *World Mental Health Survey* conducted in 17 countries found that on average about 1 in 20 people reported having an episode of depression. For these reasons, depression is the leading cause of disability worldwide. The demand for curbing depression and other mental health conditions is on the rise globally. A recent World Health Assembly called on the World Health Organization and its member states to take action in this direction.

Everyone is vulnerable to depression and it is one of the most widespread mental problems, often co-existing with other serious illnesses. Young children and teens can get depression, likewise it can occur at other ages, in simpler words, it can affect anyone, from young people to seniors. People should be aware of the early signs of depressive disorder. Depression is more common in women than in men, but men do get depression too. *“The burden of depression is 50% higher for females than males. In fact, depression is the leading cause of disease burden for women in both high-income and low- and middle-income countries” (Mathers C & World Health Organization, 2008: 36)*. Loss of a loved one, stress and hormonal changes, or traumatic events may trigger depression at any age. *“One out of ten people suffer from major depression and almost one out of five persons has suffered from this disorder during his lifetime (one-year prevalence is 10% and lifetime prevalence 17%)” (Kessler et al, 1994)*.

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These numbers show the public health importance of depression, and the great impact that it poses on society and individuals, but behind the numbers there are human beings who ache and suffer and this is certainly more important. *Patel et al (2010) and Araya et al (2006)* explained that the severity of psychic pain of a person with depression can be presumed if one considers that many patients prefer death to their suffering. In view of the fact that the overwhelming majority of people who commit suicide are persons with mental illness and especially depression, highlighting the unarguable need for early detection of depression in primary care services.

***3- Diagnosing Depression:***

Depression in its severe cases can lead to death. The symptoms alone are enough to shape a great deal and a major issue, for the sake of diagnosing the latter *Beck et al, (1961)* defined the depressive symptomology as the behavioral manifestations of depression, however it is worthy to mention that the diagnosis is not always obvious and clear the manifestation of the symptoms may not be severe enough to meet the criteria for a medical diagnosis of a major depressive episode. *Conradi, Ormel & de Jonge, (2010)* argued that the depressive symptoms such as lack of attention, memory loss, and difficulties with planning and taking decisions are often overlooked, although they affect up to 94% of all patients, and make a huge impact on the ability to work. The prevalence of depressive symptoms has been increasing among college students. *“In consonance with a study of college students receiving counseling services between the years of 1988 and 2001, a 20% increase took place in the number of students seeking help for depressive symptoms” (Benton et al, 2003).*

*The American Psychiatric Association (2010)* provided specific symptomatic criteria for the medical diagnosis of Major Depressive Episode and mentioned the symptoms that indicates the existence of depression, however, to meet the criteria for the medical diagnosis of the latter, at least five of the symptoms must be present for at least a two-week period of

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time, generating distress and impairment in the individual's life. The occurrence of any of these depressive symptoms may increase the risk of developing a major depressive episode. The symptoms indicative of a Major Depressive Episode includes depressed mood for most of the day along with major decrease in interest or pleasure in all activities and a notable change in appetite in addition to a significant weight loss, as well as fatigue and loss of energy, feelings of worthlessness or inappropriate guilt, a notable recurrent thoughts of death and suicidal thoughts, the one with depressed mood will also suffer from insomnia or hypersomnia that is to say; memory issues and a diminished ability to think or concentrate coinciding with psychomotor agitation or retardation.

On the same track, many other works (*Fava & Cassano, 2008; Little, 2009; Patel, Pereira & Mann, 1998; Murray & Cox, 1990*), defined depression symptoms as feelings of sadness or unhappiness, irritability and frustration, even over small matters, loss of interest or pleasure in normal activities also reduced sex drive along with insomnia or excessive sleeping changes in appetite and often a weight loss, however, there is a little difference when it comes to the symptoms in children and teens than they are in adults, in other words depression symptoms differ from a person to another accordingly with the variation of age. In younger children, symptoms of depression include sadness, irritability, hopelessness and worry yet symptoms in adolescents and teens are shaped in anxiety, anger and avoidance of social interaction. Changes in thinking and sleep are common in adolescents and adults but not when it comes to younger children. In children and teens, depression often occurs along with behavior problems and other mental health conditions, like anxiety or attention-deficit. Correspondingly depression can occur in older adults and unfortunately, it often goes undiagnosed and untreated, because symptoms such as, fatigue, loss of appetite, sleep problems or loss of interest in sex may appear to be caused by other illnesses. Older adults with depression mostly have less obvious symptoms. They may feel dissatisfied with life in

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general, bored, helpless or worthless. They may always want to stay home, rather than going out to socialize or doing new things. Suicidal thoughts, mainly for adults can be a sign of serious depression that should never be taken lightly, especially in men. Of all people with depression, older adult men are at the highest risk of suicide.

**4- Major Causes of Depression**

Several studies (*Palmer, Gates & Lader, 2003; Guaiana, Barbui & Hotopf, 2007; Anderson, 2000*) dealt with the causes of depression came to the conclusion that the vulnerability to depression can be inherited. The biological vulnerability to depression can be transmitted from a generation to another. Families that suffer from depressive symptoms have been studied. The researchers found that those with the illness have a different genetic form than those who do not become ill. However, the opposite is not true. That is, not everybody with the genetic form that causes vulnerability to depression will develop the illness. Apparently, additional aspects, probably a stressful environment, are involved in its onset and protective factors are involved in its prevention. In other words, depression seems to occur in generation after generation, although, it can also occur in people who have no family history of depression. An external event is enough to initiate an episode of depression. Thus, a serious loss, chronic illness, difficult relationship, financial problem, or any unwelcome change in life patterns can trigger a depressive episode. As well as, the combination of genetic, psychological, and environmental factors is involved in the onset of a depression. Factors that contribute to the development of depression sometimes affect some groups more than others. For example, minority groups who feel impacted by discrimination.

Furthermore, the same studies concluded that, disregarding the ethnicity, men seem to be particularly sensitive to the depressive effects of unemployment, divorce, low socioeconomic status, however, possess a few good ways to cope with stress. Women on the other hand, particularly who have been the victim of physical, emotional, or sexual abuse,

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either as a child or perpetrated by a romantic partner are vulnerable to developing a depressive disorder. Yet, it seems that men and women have similar risk factors for depression although women are twice as likely to become depressed as men. Nonetheless, scientists do not really know the reason for this difference. Psychological factors also contribute to a person's vulnerability to depression. Thus, persistent deprivation in infancy, physical or sexual abuse, clusters of certain personality traits, and inadequate ways of coping all can increase the frequency and severity of depressive disorders, with or without inherited vulnerability.

On the same stream, investigators found that different psychiatric illnesses appear to be associated with a lack of some neurochemicals in certain parts of the brain. For example, a lack of "Dopamine" at the base of the brain causes Parkinson's disease. In other words, depression seems to be associated with altered brain chemical systems. These neurochemicals may be lower in depressed people. However, it is worthy to note that depression is "associated with" instead of "caused by", because it not really known whether low levels of latter in the brain cause depression or whether depression causes low levels of neurochemicals. What the scientists do know is that certain medications can alleviate the symptoms of depression. Certain medications used for a variety of medical conditions are more likely than others to cause depression as a side effect, specifically, some medications that are used to treat high blood pressure, cancer, seizures, extreme pain. Even some psychiatric medications like some sleep aids and medications to treat alcoholism and anxiety can contribute to the development of depression also many mental-health conditions or developmental disabilities are associated with depression as well. Individuals with anxiety, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, substance abuse, and developmental disabilities may be more vulnerable to developing depression.

Likewise, *Fava & Cassano, (2008)* reported that depression runs in families and resides in individual's genes indeed, however a stressful or unhappy life events is also a usual

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trigger of depression. Many factors can cause depression, including, Alcohol or drug abuse, medical conditions and long-term Pain, sleeping problems and Stressful life events Death of a relative or a friend, Divorce, failing a class, Job loss, Social isolation, in matter of fact, according to *Flaherty (2018)*, several studies suggest that graduate students are at greater risk for mental health issues than those in the general population. Basically due to social isolation and the abstract nature of the work and feelings of inadequacy, warns, of a mental health crisis in graduate education. The *National Institute of Mental Health (2016)* included the previous and noted that people get depressed because of a combination of things that are shaped in “Genes”, “Brain chemistry and Structure” along with Environmental and Psychological factors.

***5- Major Outcomes of Depression***

Depression is the most common of mental health disorders; it may differ from a very mild condition, to severe depression accompanied by hallucinations and delusions. On the worldwide level, depression is a major cause of disability and premature death. When the negative reactions to life`s situations become repetitively intense and frequent we develop symptoms of depression When it comes to demonstrating serious consequences of depression in college students. Negative outcomes may occur. The most significant negative outcome is suicide. “*Suicidal ideation has been reported in as many as 44% of college students during the previous year*” (*Abramson et al, 1998*). *McCarthy & Salotti, (2006)* noted that almost 10% of college students have actually thought about committing suicide and many of these students do follow through with their suicidal thoughts. It appears that student`s attitudes toward suicide and depressive symptoms are related. “*The greater the number and intensity of depressive symptoms experienced by college students, the greater their risk of suicide*” (*Gibb, Andover & Beach, 2006; Taliaferro et al, 2008*). The stress and pressure in the lives of college students will eventually lead to suicidal behavior. Students may become so

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discouraged by unresolved problems and increasingly getting overwhelmed and hopeless, seeing suicide as the only escape.

In the same context, *“the misuse of alcohol has been identified as a high risk behavior in college students that is related to depressive symptoms”* (Beck et al, 2008).

*“A study of 900 undergraduate students reported that students who classified as depressed, reported drinking alcohol less frequently in social situations, but more frequently in a context of emotional pain. It was suggested that these students were using alcohol as a means of coping with stress, thus self-medicating to alleviate their emotional pain”* (Beck et al, 2008).

Another effect to cast the light on is *“Smoking that has been identified as a high risk behavior related to depressive symptoms”* (Kenney & Holahan, 2010; Ridner, 2005). Additionally, *“depressive symptoms report greater amounts of emotional suffering. This suffering may impact life satisfaction and academic performance”* (Brown & Schiraldi, 2004). The American College Health Association (2017), has estimated that 14% of students on college campuses reported depression as affecting their functioning over the past year.

In the same terms, *Pietrangelo Ann & Cherney Kristeen (n. d.)*, pointed out that Depression can cause headaches chronic body aches and pain that may not respond to medication also affects certain neurological diseases such as Alzheimer’s. People with depression may have trouble maintaining a normal work schedule or fulfilling social obligations this could be due to symptoms such as inability to concentrate, memory problems and difficulty in making decisions, also depression can cause weight gain and obesity, furthermore, depression is closely related to stress hormones that speed heart rate and make blood vessels tighten putting your body in a prolonged state of emergency over time this can lead to heart disease, untreated depression raises the risk of dying after a heart attack. Depression also affects your immune system making the one vulnerable to infections and diseases.

Likewise, *Betterhelp, (n. d.)* website published an article about the *effects of long-term depression*, mentioned that depression leads to Cardiovascular Deterioration People who are

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depressed for a long period are at higher risk for heart attack. Also, once a heart problem has arisen, those with major depression find it much more difficult to recover, moreover depression can cause changes in appetite and inadequate eating behaviors that can cause you to gain a large amount of weight over time or completely the opposite, raising the risk of becoming malnourished, furthermore depression can also affect your finances in the way of affecting your workplace performance. The latter is often decreased significantly when a patient is severely depressed, when the workplace performance suffers, or the one is unable to handle the stress and pressure of work and stay home, it leads to financial stress that can simply worsen depression.

**6- Possible Remedies**

*Fava & Cassano (2008)* shed the light on the importance of Healthy lifestyle habits that can contribute in preventing depressive episodes, and minimizing the chances of a second one. Having enough sleep and following a healthy, nutritious diet joined with regular exercise along with a notable involvement in enjoyable activities such as spending time with family and friends, without neglecting the importance of spiritual and religious matters seeking relaxation, will definitely lead to a major improvement, however if the individual suffer from moderate to severe depression, the most effective treatment plan will likely involve a combination of talk therapy, lifestyle changes, and medication. Talk therapy and antidepressant medication helps through times of grief, stress, or low mood, and also make the patient less likely to become depressed again.

*National Institute of Mental Health (n. d.)*, listed that *cognitive-behavioral therapy* and *interpersonal therapy* as the two main types of psychotherapy or “Talk therapy” that are commonly used to treat depression. *Cognitive-behavioral therapy* seeks to change people’s negative methods of thinking and behaving that contribute to their depression, on the other hand, *interpersonal therapy* brings understanding and guides the patients to work through

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troubled personal relationships that provokes their depression or make it worse. For mild to moderate depression, psychotherapy is considered to be the best treatment option. However, for severe depression or for certain people, psychotherapy may not be enough, in that case, a combination of medication and psychotherapy is the best choice when dealing with severe cases, in which it can help keeping depression from happening again. Also, a study about treating depression in older adults found that those treated with a combination of medication and *interpersonal therapy* were less likely to have depression again if they continued their combination treatment for at least two years.

Likewise, the *National Institute of Mental Health (n. d.)*, noted that medications work through balancing the chemicals in the brain called *neurotransmitters*. Although scientists are not sure exactly how these chemicals work, they do know they affect a person's mood; however, Medication's effect differs from a person to another, which requires the trial of several different types of medications to select the right prescription. Side effects of medication can be troublesome, headache, nausea; insomnia and nervousness are few of the common side effects. *Wijeratne & Sachdev (2008) and Langreth (2010)*, noted that antidepressants are medications that increase the amount of the neurochemical serotonin in the brain; the place where brain cells are connected to each other. By keeping serotonin present in high concentrations it helps in activating cells that have been deactivated by depression, thereby relieving the depressed person's symptoms.

By the same token, *Barbee, (2008)*, concluded that in severe depressive cases, particularly those that are recurrent, there is a requirement of antidepressant medications along with psychotherapy for the best outcome. If the person suffers one major depressive episode, there is a 50% chance of a second episode and if the individual suffers two major depressive episodes, the chance of a third episode is 75%-80%. In "three episodes" case, the likelihood of a fourth episode is 90%-95%. Therefore, after the first depressive phase, it is

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preferable that the patient come off medication gradually in which patience is required because treatment of depression takes time. Sometimes, the doctor will need to try a variety of antidepressants before finding the most effective combination of medications. The side effects of medications can be further minimized by starting them at low doses and gradually increasing the latter to achieve full effects. Even though patients tempt to stop their medication when they begin to feel better, yet, even if the patient feels better beforehand, doctors often will continue the treatment for at least six to 12 months to avoid the risk of depression quickly returning after quitting treatment, furthermore, some medications must be stopped gradually to give the body time to adjust.

**Conclusion:**

This chapter is begun by specifying and demonstrating the rationale and the reasons that advocates and urges the EFL learners, to adopt and reconcile media and the American Contemporary Series as a plan and an approach to comprehend and improve their foreign language acquisition, which steers us to cast the light on the seriousness and vitality of media influence, scrutinizing for a better insight through the patterns and the aspects that media exerts its influence, after we come to understand the media effect and acknowledging its crucial association with depression, we investigated and explored the latter's interpretation and terminology, as we also highlighted its symptoms and effects and listed the possible remedies that shapes an assistance to those in need.

*Second chapter*  
*Re-considering the Effect of Contemporary*  
*American Series*

**Introduction:**

After dealing with drama works and the factors that attaches the learners into this kind of streamed products, we have chosen to go through a profound analysis of one of the two most famous and controversial Contemporary American Series, and for us to explore and figure out what about this series that elicits and drags the learners into a depressing mental state we will study the general mood and atmosphere of each series considering the audio visual effects that contributes to the matter, the second procedure is to inspect and discuss the main characters personalities shading the light on the aspects related to the topic, eventually we will examine the most relevant troubling scenes as we scrutinize in the pattern that ties the entire dilemma.

***I- Drama Series Genre :***

When it comes to drama in American Contemporary Series, there are a lot of efforts spent to achieve the embodiment and generate the genuine feelings of real life situations, most of these works are based on successful novels reproduced and incarnated in a fascinating fusion of feelings, which explains the difficult plot twists and the realistic situations, moreover the series brings familiarity to some complicated issues providing the chance to get a better insight into common social problems, in a manner we can say that these contemporary series has somehow managed to invest real life issues in the entertainment business, the series taken as a sample are no different, in a matter of fact these works basically deals with troubled individuals that react differently to unfortunate life events, as well as it relies on the emotional and relational development of realistic characters, in other words we can say that these drama productions aim to tell an honest story of human struggle.

By the same token, drama series genre is a broad term that can vary and encompass endogenous topics and themes from social problems to political matters portraying romance sports and crime putting the characters in conflicts with themselves, others or a natural

phenomenon relying on in-depth development of realistic characters dealing with emotional issues and bringing crucial moments to a tangible sense, in other words it tends to engage real life issues and incorporates dramatic elements that contributes in the depth of the plot, its dramatic theme includes current issues that troubles the society, revealing the human nature at its genuine form along with tragic and painful resolutions particularly a survival of some tragic crisis, that is to say that these productions seek to expose and draw attention to the human nature and the outcome of being so, on the other hand what has been mentioned shows that when it comes to drama productions there is an endless possibilities and a limitless extent of creativity.

In the same context the previous clarifications of dramatic contents elucidate the attachment of the young generation to these streamed products, teenagers in a general sense are still in the quest of finding themselves and forming their identity, relatively building personal concepts and attitudes towards the questionable matters that these series deal with, not to mention that watching series became a bias feature, being aware of the latest controversial series is a factor that contributes in social interaction and a mean to keep pace with social life and as it seems to be, the weird and odd controversial series are the center of interest among teenagers during this era. The series didn't only bring an entertainment feature but also gave the teenagers something they can relate to, that is to say, a shelter was made by giving the teenagers an escape that provides them with the opportunity to see people in their age, face the same issues and consequences they have.

The contents that showcase issues that teenagers face brings a kind of familiarity to the matter and by a necessity explores the reasons behind these problems which shapes a condolencing material that makes the youngsetsers feel involved and affiliated and manifests in a sense of belongness that attaches them to these streamed products, in other words, the young consumers of these streamed products are understanding and compationate with the

characters that face the same hardships in life. The semilliar situations and problems that characters face establish a connection and an alliance between the teenagers in real life and the fictional characters. The outcome is quite obvious, due to the previous revelations, teenagers became a regular or extreme consumers of these series and by a necessity this habit will works as a substitute matter for social interaction and will certainly fill their needs when it comes to some kinds of communications.

The over time spent watching Contemporary American Series is taken from their sleeping hours and personal time exerting a pressure on their social life which isolates them from society and effects their biological process and as a consequence of exhaustion and isolation, the consumers will lack basic communicational skills and also lose their energy and efficiency needed in their daily life, fatigue and inefficiency can be a factor of anxiety and depression, another point to shade the light on is that despite that the series depict real life stories and situations it always involves fictional traits that allure the consumers to believe in certain attributes that might never take place, that is to say living or believing in fantasies which displaces them into the margin of society and pulls them even more distant from normal social behaviour along with manifesting in a wrongful cognitive process and a distorted reality. The abnormal exertion of feelings towards fictional characters will certainly results in an abnormal behaviour.

***II- About Thirteen Reasons Why:***

***1- Senarion Overview:***

Thirteen Reasons Why is an American high school drama developed for Netflix by Brian Yorkey, based on the best-selling books by Jay Asher, the first season of the series where released on march 2017 extended for the fourth and final season released in June 2020, the novel takes place in a town called Crestmont follows a story of a high school teenager; Clay Jensen as he returns home to find a mysterious box with his name on it. Inside

he discovers a group of cassette tapes recorded by Hannah Baker his classmate who tragically committed suicide two weeks earlier. Hannah unfolds an emotional audio diary, detailing the thirteen reasons why she decided to end her life. Through Hannah and Clay's dual narratives, *Thirteen Reasons Why* weaves an intricate and heartrending story of confusion and desperation that will deeply affect viewers.

*Thirteen Reasons Why* thrived on business level the series gained a wide popularity among the viewers and marked its presence in the most viewed contents, and took a hold on many awards and nominations, on the other hand the release of the show caused a wide spread public concern about the risk of suicide contagion among teenagers especially in those who have suicidal thoughts. The portrayal of sensitive content unleashed a wave of criticism by some researchers and medical professionals questioning whether the series violated guidelines in depicting suicide might trigger "imitative" behaviors among high school students and vulnerable people, Netflix reacted to criticism by adding a trigger warning that acts as a kind of a disclaimer and as a mean to spread caution, furthermore Netflix edited the suicide scene of season one that originally included a bloody depiction of Hannah slitting her wrists in a bathtub.

The plot of *thirteen reasons why* is both complex and exciting, the more we go through distressing events the story gets more appealing and mystifying, the series encompasses thirteen episodes per season however the fourth and the last season consists only on ten episodes, *thirteen reasons why* deals with the lives of teenagers at the fictional Liberty High School, as the series begin, Clay Jensen, a junior student at Liberty, receives a mystery box containing seven tapes recorded by Hannah Baker, his friend and crush who took her own life. On the tapes, Hannah unfolds a deeply emotional audio diary, revealing the 13 reasons behind her suicide with each person being represented on a tape, which initiates and expose a series of misfortunate events.

The second season revolves mostly around courtrooms because of the lawsuit of Hannah's parents against Liberty high school, shading the light on other sides of the case as each individual on the tapes is called out to trial. It carries a highly emotional, graphic and controversial content. The third season revolves around the murder of former Liberty High School student Bryce Walker, of which Clay is the main suspect while the students of Liberty High are once again forced under the microscope while the investigation threatens to expose their darkest secrets. Season four is oriented towards Clay's mental health, which has deteriorated severely due to the accumulated shocking events. The high school also enacts firm security measures at campus which causes racial profiling on students of color resulting in a nervous breakdown among the pupils.

**2- Mood and effects:**

Thirteen Reasons Why' general mood is basically sad, after all, the series is laced with death in a way that is dark and mysterious to a certain extent, a usual manner that the issue of suicide is commonly associated with. Some would call the story to be blue and depressing however there is a kind of a dark humor embedded in the story as the protagonist Hannah made jokes about her death it gave a sense of anxiousness and uncomfortable feeling, the dark mood that overrules the story gives a pessimistic sensation that lasts during the whole story however there is a kind of aspiration and anticipation or maybe a hope for justice to take it rightful place or it could be a hope for the final redemption.

Despite the interlaced dark humor, Thirteen Reasons Why still sealed to a serious and somber mood, in most of the series the mood is tense and anxious as the protagonist Clay Jensen waits frightened for his tape to begin, in matter of fact, the whole story keeps the viewer on the edge of his seat for what it contains of suspenseful effects it seems that the whole story is based on an anticipation for the exposal of the next truth, however when Hannah reaches her breaking point it shifts to an overwhelming emotional tragedy while all

these mixed feelings are transmitted, bared and felt through the protagonist Clay Jensen as a person who admired the victim from what we can see he was devastated and slowly drown into madness.

Likewise, we can relate that the mood of the story is conveying depression and anxiety and since the whole story is seen through Clay Jensen perspective and focused on his emotional agony, the spectators are more likely to experience the same feelings in which it forces them to a depressive state going through the sorrows and traumas that the protagonist is facing, the intensity and severity of the serious anxious mood permeated by a sense of disturbing humor is contributing in a further depressing content.

Another point that deserves to be mentioned is the circumstances of the events, the soft hazy lighting that submerges the show on the level of the four seasons, the serious tone of characters' voices, the slow music synchronization with the tragic events, the general weather, all weaves from dark to sad which gave the product a huge pessimistic mysterious atmosphere that captivates the viewers into a tense and anxious dimension and walks him through this misfortunate events that involves and binds him on a tangible perspective to the feelings of the characters in a general sense and to the feelings that overwhelms the story.

After what has been mentioned we come to the realization that the producers of this series is trying to showcase the emotions in the most realistic and pragmatic form, for the sake of reaching and triggering the spectator's feelings, which is in this case a series of the most tragic heartbreaking events, the fusion between the effects that works on all the five senses directs and leads the spectators toward a depressive and anxious state and consequently we can say that it can be a strong and a direct relation between the series and depression among EFL learners.

**3- Central Characters to the story:**

Thirteen Reasons Why is portraying a very controversial characters as we can see that each individual of the series is dealing and grappling with serious issues of his own, the characters are facing even a harder time after Hannah's suicide and the immense pressure laying on their shoulders is managing to tear down their sense of reason, as they sink through different situations we can notice a pattern of drugs and alcohol use and mostly and generally depressive behavior that overruled the whole high school, leading to several suicide attempts and murder, which gives an anxious and disturbing feeling to the viewer as it brought the pain of the characters and the suffering to a tangible perspective, that is to say the viewer can feel and have an idea about what the characters are going through.

The victims of the series are the most damaged as they have to suffer and tolerate the bullying and the pressure exerted by their personal issues, we can realize that the producers are trying to introduce the injustice and the pain of the victims when we notice that the camera work is focusing on the emotional pain that resides within their faces and the tears subside over their cheeks, their reactions and agony is something that the spectators are relating to, and the very reason behind the success of the production.

Despite the common feature of bullying, the mentioned characters are certainly different as we witness their various reasons behind their actions and their diverse reactions and attitudes towards the events of the plot, every character served a purpose, and as we can realize the producers attempt to get the genuine authentic depiction of reality and their successful efforts spent to make the production a heartrending melancholy, on the other hand we can imagine the forthcoming effects on the spectators emotions and mental state.

• **Hannah Baker:**

Hannah Baker is the center of the series' plot and one of the main characters, the show is basically a series of events that followed her suicide, which explains why she appeared only

as a figment of the imagination or as a flash from the past, she narrated the first season through tapes in which she explains the reasons behind her death, as such she appears throughout the show in flashbacks and clay's hallucinations and dreams, the character went through a lot of mental and physical pressure and tormented by the society particularly the "Baker's Dozen"; the term is used to refer to the 13 reasons and the twelfth persons laying behind her suicide in which each individual played a role in her deterioration and as she describes it:

*"Started with Justin., then Jessica who each broke my heart, Alex, Tyler, Courtney, Marcus, who each helped to destroy my reputation. On through Zach and Ryan, who broke my spirit. Through tape number 12, Bryce Walker who broke my soul" (Season 1, Episode 13: tape 7, side A).*

Hannah's personality is quite sardonic and outgoing, along with a sarcastic sense of humor., displaying a really sociable and proud quick-witted personality, she is Funny, easy-going, kind and compassionate person, despite Hannah's extroverted and thoughtful mentality, she had some defects that led her to vulnerability, she was childish and overly-melodramatic and unable to be aware of others' true intentions, yet as the events or the "reasons" why she took her own life begin to unfold she shifts unconsciously, she shuts down on herself and turns into a more edgy, introverted person, when Hannah completely gave up to depression and just before her death she became quite and suicidal her mental health and emotional state were devastated as she believed her life had no worth.

When Hannah was first introduced in the series she had a long, wavy brown hair. Her stance was straight yet we can see that shifts by the start of junior year, she had her long hair cut shorter and hoped to start a new life, wishing to leave her old self behind in the past. From the first look we come to the realization that Hannah is a victim of several young adult issues however while watching the story we recognize that Hannah herself in her previous high school, Ridgeview High, was a bully to a girl, it is revealed that Hannah Baker, Lindsay Patterson, and Alicia Morris spread around a photo of a girl which led the entire school to

bully and tease her, Hannah and the others girls were suspended from Ridgeview High for their part in it.

Regarding to the previous revelations, we can say that the meaning behind Hannah's deviation from an extroverted happy individual to a depressed damaged one is the unfairness of life while we comprehend that everyone is vulnerable to depression, we can also notice that the makers of the series are focusing on the smallest details, from her appearance to her facial expressions, trying to highlight her emotional devastation sensitizing the viewers to the matter and emotionalizing the tragic scenes which demoralizes the spectators and relates them on a personal level to the issue, the thing that brings us to relating the latter directly to depressive symptoms.

- **Clay Jensen:**

Clay Jensen is the protagonist of our story and the main character of Thirteen Reasons Why, as the whole season is dealing with his emotions and flashbacks and conflicts while listening to the tapes that Hannah recorded, trying to understand and collect the pieces of Hannah's story. In the second season Clay's main objective is getting justice for Hannah while grieving and coping with his hallucinations of her death. The third season revolves around Clay being the main suspect in the death on his enemy Bryce Walker, although he holds a deep hatred towards Bryce he starts a quest to find and uncover the killer. Clay is the main narrator in the last season seeing again his therapist that helps him to cope with his mentality, while he narrates and deals with his traumatic incidence, after all he manages to graduate at the end of the season.

Clay is introduced as an introverted and socially awkward person, however, behind his quite attitude he is a decent and honest individual, a good friend and an intelligent student. He had a crush on Hannah Baker yet he never confronted her directly. As it seems to be Clay was previously rumored to be "homosexual" by other classmates at Liberty High School, but the

rumors apparently died before the events of the series occur. On the other hand, after Hanna's death Clay seems to be slowly crushed under the shock and pressure of the sudden tragedy, as he shifts and loses control over himself, his personality dives through a self-destructive state in which he turns to be an edgy and unexpected person for the sake of avenging Hanna's death and later on enters in a mental break down resulting in day light hallucinations. Down further Clay may have been in a bad state previously as his parents offer him "Duloxetine" an antidepressant used to treat people who suffer from depression or general anxiety.

The main feature that this character manifests is regret, and since most of the events are seen through Clay's eyes we can see the bleak atmosphere he conveys, the character keeps the viewer on his toes, as the producers made sure to focus on the intensity of his feelings, and the bloody hallucinations that he is going through, his anger, grudge and anguish triggers tense feelings, the wrongful actions he proceeded during the series seems justified in which leads us to question whether the spectators will go by an imitative behavior, another aspect that we should mention is if Clay's despair a possible relation to depression elicitation.

- **Bryce Walker:**

Bryce Walker is one of the main characters and the antagonist of *Thirteen Reasons Why*, he is the co-captain of Liberty high's football and baseball team and Hanna Baker's twelfth reason for committing suicide, despite the fact that Bryce Walker dies in the third season yet he keeps appearing as hallucinations tormenting his victims and the ones responsible of his death, his prominent background as the rich popular senior athlete of Liberty high and the absence of his parents gave him unrestricted freedom that explains his narcissistic attitudes, the actions that he displayed managed to hurt and damage everyone around him and promotes him to be the worse among the "Baker's Dozen".

Bryce Walker is the typical high school bully Hannah was one of his many victims that he raped and assaulted, he displays a narcissistic attitude as he sees himself superior to

others showing no remorse for his evil actions nor sympathy for his victims, in matter of fact he does not even appear to view his assaults as being rapes, indicating the existence of a psychological issue and unethical mental state, he is cruel, arrogant, spoiled, manipulative, violent, and selfish person and potentially a very dangerous individual, on the other hand, just before his death in the third season we can notice a change in Bryce's personality and his struggle to shift his mentality and actions toward a positive endeavor.

The character of Bryce is highly provocative and intriguing, the camera work and the sound effects is focusing on his disturbing look and manipulative voice, probably for showcasing the way in exerting his desire and controlling the individuals around him as he impose his authority on his colleagues, the makers of the series are also trying to shade the light on the evil that resides in this character and his capability to make use of his cruelty, which frightens and troubles the spectators and trigger their anxiousness towards society and consequently steering them to the first step towards depression.

- **Alex Standall:**

Alex Standall is the third reason behind Hannah's death, however before Hanna's incidence Alex shared a great friendship with her which explains why he felt responsible and guilty for her suicide despite his minor reason for being on Hanna's tapes, he is a kind and caring person as he was willing to confess and admit his crimes, in matter of fact Alex himself had an experience with suicide as he tried to take his life twice throughout the series over his immense guilt, he shows a notion of honesty and responsibility along with an edgy and suicidal personality furthermore Alex also had a past with bullying and depression which was a factor for his mental breakdown.

*"They think that these are going to save someone's life? Suicide's not an option'. Yeah, you know what? Clearly it is an option"* (Alex Standall. Season 1, Episode 3: tape 2, side A).

The spectators will probably relate to the character as the one who is tortured by his conscience, the thing we notice is Alex's behavior trying to act by the righteous decision

however held back by his weakness and fears, the producers made sure to shade the light on his notable trials to make things right and finally breaking down over the immense guilt in the trial of taking his own life, the thing that leads us to question if the viewers will see this as an option in order to get rid of the emotional pain or leading them to reflect on their own guilt and their emotional agony experienced in their weak moments, either ways the kind of feelings the character conveys is definitely provoking a depressive sensation.

- **Jessica Davis:**

Jessica Davis is Hanna's best friend and the second reason behind her suicide, she is an arrogant and a stubborn person and possibly cruel and cold hearted as she shown no remorse for Hanna's death, however Jessica is also a victim that endured bullying and abuse, she is one of Bryce Walker victims as he raped her while unconscious, throughout the series Jessica is devastated and tormented by her trauma and consequently drawn to alcohol and drugs use and goes through a denial phase to avoid confronting her fears, as she loses her reputation and position in Liberty's high school.

The first thing we can notice about Jessica is her distorted way to deal with the emotional pain as she goes through a denial phase, yet, when she was confronted with the bare truth, she finds herself trying to cope with her agony through drugs and alcohol consumption, the thing that can be understood by the latter, is that the producers are aiming to convey the way that teenagers seek to reduce their pain or maybe shading the light on the amount of pain she was going through, yet, the viewers can relate the process to a depressive episode and perceive the depiction as a solution and a substance to avoid the emotional pain, the thing that reminds us with one of the major causes of depression.

- **Tyler Down:**

Tyler Down is Liberty's high school photographer and Hannah's fourth reason for suicide, he is weak and insecure, he has a low self-esteem and a hesitant personality, Tyler is

an awkward anti-social character that has no social skills nor the courage to speak out his mind, throughout the whole series Tyler gets bullied and rejected by society due to his awkwardness he could never fit in as he devotes himself to photography, due to the accumulated misfortunate events with the constant and pervasive bullying and after it escalated to the point in which he gets raped and assaulted by the football team, Tyler finally reaches his mental break down and goes rogue in attempting a shooting in the school party targeting the ones who mistreated him, one other point we should note that Tyler had a past with self-harm and suffered from a trauma after being violated.

*“You should be blaming the kids that make this school a terrible place. You should be blaming the kids that make other kids want to kill themselves” (Tyler Down, Season 1, Episode 5: tape3, side A)*

Tyler’s character is the representation of the unsocial individuals that lives on the margin of society, as we notice that despite the severity of the events occurring to him, his reactions are mostly introverted while he cries in silence, the producers highlighted the calmness and coldness of his reactions to carry out the idea of his previous experiences and his past torments in which explained by his familiarity to the matter, Tyler’s role in the series is significant as he shows the agony of the lone, and bring us to the realization that the spectators will recognize the cruelty and harshness of the society and leads them to comprehend the fearful concept of belonging and fitting in.

- **Justin Foley:**

Justin Foley is one of the main characters of Thirteen Reasons Why, he was mentioned as the first and the ninth reason behind Hanna’s suicide, he is a very troubled person as he comes from a broken family, Justin never met his father growing up he dealt with his mom’s violent partners that assaulted and even molested him, Justin’s mom is also a part of his abusive past as a violent drug addict that did not offer care but often neglected him.

Justin Foley has a weak personality and a weak mindset that made him unable to make his own decisions and acting by his own rules, he apparently seems to be overruled and

manipulated by the opinions of his friends especially Bryce Walker, despite his good heart and his kind soul Justin harms the ones he loved, after the misfortunate events we see Justin escaping from confrontation as he hides and involves himself in a severe drug addiction to deal with his mental a psychological burden. Later on we see Justin struggling for change and tries to encounter his fears.

We can easily detect the controversial aspect that Justin's character poses, as we get the idea behind his involvement in substance use, the fact that he also suffers from many other issues and traumas relates him directly to several troubled viewers, the very reason of the producers' intentions to reach the hearts of spectators, however the fact that he suffers through the whole series ending by his death conveys the idea of the harsh and cruel world which may distress and demoralize the viewers and even leads them to turn hopeless.

- **Kevin Porter:**

Kevin Porter is one of the main characters of Thirteen Reasons Why and Hannah's last and thirteenth reason, he is Liberty's high school new counselor, he is kind and caring and compassionate however ineffective as a counselor, he failed to prevent Hannah from committing suicide and afterwards Alex Standall, after listening to the tapes Kevin was greatly devastated and shocked as he knew he failed at his job, he seems to go through a mental break down because of his guilt and struggling to prevent further similar attempts and goes against the high school's policy.

The makers of the series are trying to shade the light on the wrongful treatments and procedures in dealing with such issues, by showing Kevin's failure at his job in saving an innocent life, in despite of following the procedures and operating according to the school's policy, however, this very thing can be seen differently by the young spectators as they might perceive is as if the troubled young individuals are forsaken by the system or maybe conveying the idea of hopelessness and the absence of help.

- **Courtney Crimsen:**

Courtney Crimsen is the fifth reason behind Hannah's suicide, she is a popular and a lovable individual in Liberty's high as she seems to be the kind and caring type of a person however Courtney is hiding her true identity as being a selfish and cruel, arrogant, manipulative, cowardly, uncaring person, later on, we discover that she is adopted by a homosexual parents and she herself is a "Lesbian", being under pressure and afraid of people opinions forced her to adopt this dual personality which explains to a certain degree her depressing miserable manipulative side.

- **Ryan Shaver:**

Ryan Shaver is the subject of the eighth tape as he contributed in Hannah's suicide, the first thing you notice is that Ryan is homosexual, he is a proud to the point of arrogance mostly selfish, he is intelligent and seems to be elegant in his actions, despite his cold heart and calm temper he seems to have a sense of justice and quite truthful, although he harmed Hannah and betrayed her trust he didn't lie about his actions as he was disgusted by the actions of the bullying in Liberty's high.

- **Sheri Holland:**

Sheri Holland is portrayed as the sweet and kind type of a girl, although she is the tenth reason behind Hannah's death, she has a quite minor contribution to the matter, she comes from a broken family as her parents are divorced and we see her struggle throughout the series because of her immense guilt and despite her coward nature she seeks redemption and constantly trying to take responsibility for her actions.

- **Zach Dempsey:**

Zach Dempsey is the subject of the seventh tape and Hanna's seventh reason for taking her life, Zach dealing with his father's death that dragged him to a depressive and suicidal mental state, he seems to be in a conflict with his good intentions and pure heart and

his violent and cruel side as he bullies the weak throughout the series he often converts and seeks redemption, unlike the other athletes at Liberty's high school Zack shows concern and sympathy for the others.

- **Marcus Cole:**

Marcus Cole is Hanna's valentine date and the sixth reason behind her death, Marcus is an intelligent sociable person but on the other hand he is an extremely cruel selfish individual as he shown also to be manipulative and deceitful, willing to act by extreme measures to protect his reputation and his goals, he didn't display any hesitation nor remorse over any misfortunate event, the confidence and convictions behind his actions are self-centered, egotistical and narcissistic as he has no respect for others feelings.

**4- Most relevant scenes:**

Thirteen Reasons Why is an overwhelmed, emotional and heart breaking tragic story as it contains a lot of what we can call violent, disturbing, scenes that are graphic depictions of unethical and unjust actions, suicide attempts, bullying and rape are surely the main themes that the series focus on, however throughout the story we keep seeing a pattern of drugs and alcohol use, vandalizing, and mostly high school students going rogue and facing hard times as a consequence of their actions, in matter of fact we can say that the series shades the light on the victims of depression and suicide, bullying and rape while in process necessarily depicting the latter in a way that touches the hearts and sensitizes the viewers.

- **Hannah Baker's Death:**

Throughout the entire series the most relevant and controversial scene that the whole story revolves about is Hannah's suicide, the graphic incident is absolutely upsetting and disturbing while we see Hannah Baker the junior student at Liberty high school taking her own life, devastated and suffering from a crippling depression Hannah decides to slit her wrists in the bath tub and slowly drained out of blood, the scene is horrifying and hard to

watch despite the fact that the actual attempt is a flash back from the past as the viewers know that Hannah Baker is already dead, afterwards the bloody scene there is the revelation of the parents reaction when they discover their daughter's deed and the traumatic unveiling is quite gloomy and distressing.

All we can conclude is that the impact of this scene is quite significant, the injustice towards Hannah regarding to all what she went through is playing a major part in the strength and power of the scene, as the viewer will definitely sympathize with the victim, the emotions that this incident holds is immense along with the gloomy music and setting that drags the viewer in a depressing mental state, as Hannah's blood drains out the situation gets more intense which heavies the heart and generates mixed emotions of guilt and sorrow, as the scene ends the viewer can not miss the terrified look on the eyes of Hannah's parents traumatized by their daughter's dead body, the agony and torment of the father and the mother is felt by the viewer as it exerts a profound disturbing emotion,

The camera work that focused on the reactions of the parents and Hannah's resting face did not miss the immense amount of blood that soaked the room, in a successful attempt to leave an impact on the spectators, in which can be perceived as traumatizing and overwhelming, what we can conclude is that the scene has a deep impact on the viewers and a significant contribution in eliciting depressive symptoms as we can predict the effects of desensitizing the EFL learners to such behaviors and promoting a severe idea that will steer them to an imitative behavior.

- **Jessica's Rape:**

The first scene that made the viewers aware of the seriousness and the cruelty of the matter discussed is definitely Jessica getting raped by Bryce Walker, Hannah Baker witnessed the crime by accident as she was hiding in the closet watching the unpleasant sight of Jessica laying unconsciously on the bed after she drank too much alcohol in a party at her house

while Bryce Walker attempts to take advantage of the situation, Justin Foley being Jessica's boyfriend tries to protect her and save her from the assault nevertheless Bryce violently paves the way to her and violates Jessica in a heartrending scene which had a profound impact on Hanna's mentality.

Without mentioning the fact that the scene is representing a crime towards ethics and towards a victim, the sight and the idea is quite frightening, as the viewer will be antagonized and agitated by the gruesome action, the scene conveys the feelings of betrayal by her partner that allowed such event to occur and also the repellent act of Bryce that disturbs the viewers, in other words the idea is frightening because it lays out the fact that the possibility of this crimes to happen is significant, in matter of fact, generating a situation where the victim is completely vulnerable and powerless shades the light on the dark side and the awful part of life that most people disregard and ignore, in order to focus on the bright angle, yet this scene shakes the convictions and the trust invested in people and leads the viewer to be fearful of society and the outcomes of the assumption of being safe.

- **Hannah Baker's Rape:**

The breaking point of Hanna's mental health and psychological state was portrayed in this scene as it shows Hannah Baker joining a party at Bryce's house afterwards getting violated and raped by the latter in a hot tub, the victim failed to escape and at some point we can see the lifeless condition of Hannah when she didn't display or show any reaction in the process, the spiritless empty look she had on her face projected the amount of emotional and physical pain she was experiencing, while Bryce has shown no mercy or sympathy towards her and its made clear that his cruelty is far more worse than we thought it was.

The scene is extremely troubling and annoying, the camerawork ensured to convey the disturbing nature of such vile crime, the intensity of the depiction is great which made the latter a hard scenery to watch, the viewer is exposed to the reality and the main reason behind

Hannah's death and the tragedy laying in her story, the incident breaks her soul which keeps the viewer on his toes from the stressing scenery that frightens the hearts and quivers the eyes, pulling the spectators into a gloomy and sad context and placing them in a hopeless sympathized position, furthermore the impact of the scene is transmitted and observed through Clay's agony and pain as he is listening to the tapes which exerts even more weight on the ones shoulders.

- **Alex Standall Suicide Attempt:**

The amount of pressure Hannah's tapes exerted on the listeners is dreadful especially for a character like Alex as he was devastated by his guilt, and the scene of his suicide attempt had a bloody aspect, after he went out of control and started a fight with one of Liberty's athletes and took a rebellious path as he seemingly was trying to get rid of his remorse towards Hannah, Alex wrote a suicide note and shot himself in the head through his mouth, despite the fact that the bullet through the mouth cavity is lethal, he managed to survive, the spectators can see the bloodshed on the ceiling and the sound of the gun fire as the ambulance came to the rescue.

It is extremely scary the fact that the scene conveyed how this kinds of attempts is easily done and can simply happen to anyone, which intimidates the viewers from the actual world, another point worthy to mention is that the setting of the scenery is meeting with the idea that Alex saw suicide as an option considering his psychological torment, in other words, the attempt is quite disturbing however the outcomes seems to be comforting as he survives and lives to recover from his injuries, which implies that the act is a kind of a radical and an extreme solution, the thing that makes us question if the spectators are going to perceive it as an option.

- **Tyler Down Assault:**

Assault is a common issue that *Thirteen Reasons Why* deal with while Tyler Down is a bullying target at Liberty's high school as we see him goes through a lot of physical and verbal harassments throughout the story, yet in this scene the events escalates to a controversial depiction when a group of athletes join together in attacking Tyler at the high school's bathroom, bashed in the face multiple times, drowned in a toilet bowl and brutally sodomized with the handle of a broomstick. The boys walked out leaving him half-naked and bleeding on the floor. This scene was likely implemented to show that men and boys can be sexually assaulted too, on the other perspective we can see that the camera is focusing on Tyler's facial expressions as he cries heavily.

The scene is quite intense for the fact that it is extremely violent and bloody along with the shameful and abusive manner, while it is hard to keep eyes on the screen, the scene will deeply impact the spectators as they realize the agony and the humiliation of the victim, and also the cruelty of the cold blooded offenders that outnumbered and overpowered the helpless student, the extent of aggressiveness in the behavior implemented in the scene absolutely bothers and troubles the viewers and gives them chills, the amount of negativity produced by such a depiction is significant to the point of antagonism the thing that impels us to relate it directly to depression.

- **Bryce Walker's Murder:**

The scene is the total typical vengeance and the representation of the "reap what you sow" expression when Bryce Walker gets a violent end, Zach Dempsey dislocating his arm and breaking both of his legs out of rage and leaving him in a bloody situation, having no one to assist and help him, Bryce begs Alex Standall and Jessica Davis for aid before he verbally provokes Alex, that in his turn pushes him into the river to meet his final destination, Bryce

***Second chapter: Re-considering the Effect of Contemporary American Series***

drowning due to his severe injuries scenery is the most violent so far as the grudges held against him was the main reason and the fundamental factor behind his vicious end.

The spectators will be confused and question the righteousness of the justice taken by hands, and by a necessity it will provoke some inside contradictory feelings as they sympathize with Bryce and somehow praises his death as he received what he deserved, the scene is extremely violent and by its turn disturbs the eyes and generates negative feelings, dragging the viewer into a wrongful retaliating mentality, and potentially feelings of sorrow due to Bryce's intentions to repent, death is not an easy matter to convey however the dark and gloomy setting of the scene manages to seduce the viewer into the suitable emotion that is mostly associated to depression.

***III- About Mr. Robot:***

***1- An overview of the Story:***

Mr. Robot is an American drama thriller series invented by Sam Esmail for USA Network which is an American basic cable channel. Led by Rami Malek as Elliot Alderson, a cyber security engineer and hacker suffering from social anxiety disorder and clinical depression. The first season debuted on USA Network on June 2015 Extended to a fourth and final season concluded on December 2019, Elliot is recruited by a rebellious anarchist known as "Mr. Robot", to join a group of hackers called "F society". The group aims to destroy the financial system of the world by wiping out all debt records of "E Corp", the largest company and conglomerate in the world.

Mr. Robot collected and obtained a notable number of drama series awards; 68th Primetime Emmy Awards for the Outstanding Lead Actor in Drama Series and 73rd Golden Globe Awards for the Best Television Drama Series along with other remarkable and numerous nominations and awards, furthermore being a Psychological and Techno Thriller series, Mr. Robot is admired for its realistic scenes and technical accuracy which gave the

series a notion of authenticity and credibility among the critics, in matter of fact “Rotten Tomatoes” consensus reads declared that "Mr. Robot” is a suspenseful cyber-thriller with timely stories and an intriguing, provocative premise." ( Rotten Tomatoes, 2015), Setting a record as the only show to earn perfect episode scores for an entire season.

Elliot is the protagonist of the story, a brilliant introverted young programmer who works as a cyber-security engineer, suffering from schizophrenia which he futilely tries to keep under control along with his therapist; it also happens that he narrates the events addressing the viewers as an imaginary friend. When a strange secretive middle-aged man calling himself Mr. Robot, offer him a chance to take his vengeance to the next level and help to take down E-Corp, the corrupt multi-national financial company that Elliot refers to as Evil Corp as he believes that the company is held responsible for his father’s death.

Elliot eventually achieves his goals and reaches his ambitions, however in the process meets significant physical and emotional setbacks, as he risks his life and loses the ones he love, when the story events goes further we realize that the plot is highly complicated as we come to the realization that Mr. Robot is in fact Elliot himself, and appears to be that Elliot’s sense of reality is insubstantial and fragile, while Mr. Robot is a personality that he created to deal with certain psychological issues, the twists of the story are quite remarkable particularly as we reach the end of it and we come to the final revelation; the Elliot we knew is a splinter personality from the actual and original Elliot.

**2- Mood and effects:**

The entire series is experienced through the glasses of a psychopathic, depressed and generally troubled protagonist, and by his turn conveys the world as a dark cold place, the mood is quite serious and depressing, and the scenes are soaked in an anxious atmosphere, the character pulls the spectators into a cycle of confusion when the credibility of the reality is questioned, the strange and mysterious dimension of the story carries a pessimistic sad

mentality that lasts during the story, yet it triggers the human curiosity and gives a thrilling and exiting sensation, furthermore the sarcastic concept in the character's behavior softens the general climate.

The notions of confusion, tragedy, and loneliness shapes a major part of the plot, as we feel the pain and suffering that the character is dealing with, the crippling loneliness and the amount of pain that the latter is suffocating in is immense as it drives him to madness, the seriousness and the somber environment that the idea covers overrules the mood of the series, another perspective that deserve mentioning is that the introverted exploration of the world led to an anxious and uncomfortable watching experience as the series involve the spectator and addresses him directly into the fictional dimension.

The judgment we can declare is that the amount of hopelessness laying within the story showcases the world as a dangerous horrifying place and leads the spectator to shape an attitude towards the society that provokes and exerts an anti-social behavior which is a major factor that contributes in depression and anxiety, along with the violent depiction, the series are also soaked deeply in portraying mental illness as a positive advantage in which can provoke an imitative behavior, yet, the loss of the social skills and the fearful view of social behavior is a direct link that associates the mentioned series to depression.

The first thing that the one notices about the series is the dimmed lighting that overrules the story and the sad low tone in the characters' voices, which reveals and transmits a sad and bleak sight of the world along with a cynical dark Escalating music intensity that contributed in shaping a suspenseful dark mood, as we hear the cries and the screams of the sorrowed aching characters synchronized with a sad and tragic music, adding a special gloomy effects to the matter, furthermore, the complexity and hopelessness imbedded in the plot of the story is sufficient to declare it as a pessimistic melancholy.

The overall mood of the series is set to expose the world accordingly to mental illness standards as we perceive the admixture of the previous mentioned moods and effect as an effective trigger to generate a fearful and introverted assumptions and attitudes towards the world, as we can notice that the producers are focusing on Elliot's mental process and the way he perceives the world in a successful trial to bring familiarity and understanding to the ailing individuals we call insane, yet we find that in the process the producers conveyed the mental illness as an advantage and a kind of a super power that allows you to be unique and effective which might provoke anti-social behavior among EFL learners.

### **3- Essential Characters to the plot:**

Mr. Robot do not engage and adopt numerous characters in the plot as the conventional series but rather the whole story is dependent only on a few main characters that approaches the same issue from different perspectives, from the other hand the personalities we meet and get to know throughout the series are quite intriguing and appealing, since they convey unusual mentality as psychopathic and troubled individuals, Mr. Robot personalities are unique and despite their shared issues they are totally different, which projects the possibilities and the multi-outcomes of the same syndromes.

- **Elliot Alderson:**

Elliot Alderson is the protagonist of the story, he is an introverted socially awkward individual as he holds in a lot of rage and anger towards the society that he is unable to join and participate in, he is a troubled person as he suffers from Dissociative Identity Disorder, social anxiety, clinical depression, delusions and paranoia, due to the hardships he went through particularly being physically abused by his father, Elliot's mental illness blocks and prevents him from forming healthy social relations, the thing that led him to extreme loneliness as we see him cry heavily through the rough nights. However, beyond all his mental issues Elliot is a smart and brilliant hacker and the master mind behind a genius plan.

Throughout the series we notice that Elliot's judgments of the outer world are barely trusted and mostly questioned, as he sees the society's individuals as pawns or subjects in a bigger game, as expected for a mentally ill individual he suffers from hallucinations, the very thing that brings us to the reasons why we keep seeing Elliot developing a dependency on drugs over and over again, in the series' world or the way Elliot perceives himself we can realize that he is shown to be superior to others and way more knowledgeable and aware as he hacks through people's lives and mentalities while acting the prosecutor and the judge.

For what we can see, the producers are also showing the consequences of Elliot's behavior as he suffers from a crippling depression and a severe loneliness due to his introverted personality and consequently creating other personas that helps him and protects him from the outer world, we also watch Elliot cries heavily through the rough nights when he can no more endure his loneliness. The whole agony that Elliot deals with is in fact highlighting his fears and hatred towards the society and conveying the idea to the spectators in which they speculate that the world cannot be trusted.

- **Mr. Robot:**

Mr. Robot is originally a splinter personality of Elliot Alderson, he is an edgy, violent and dangerous person, the purpose of his existence is protecting Elliot from confrontation, as he plans to bring down the world's largest conglomerate, unlike Elliot he is confident, charismatic and intelligent, he is a fearless adventurous soul that portrays a leader character, he can be a manipulative and persuasive individual although he tends to seek radical and edgy solutions, as he is influenced by a revolutionary mindset that steers him towards endless conflicts.

The fact that Mr. Robot is Elliot's escape and his way to socialize and get things done is another aspect that highlights the anti-social behavior as a necessity and an option to avoid the anxious and troubling world that Elliot lives in, as we witness Mr. Robot's unpleasant

view of the world while his protecting Elliot from it, his social and extroverted personality is shown as a necessity and an obligation that is not the favorable way to perceive the world, which make us come to the realization that the spectators are probably shaping an attitude towards the actual world.

- **Tyrell Wellick:**

Tyrell Wellick is the associate of Elliot Alderson in his plan of taking down the world's largest corporation, he is extremely ambitious and ready to take any necessary measures to reach his objectives, he is violent and edgy while he goes out of control and act by his instincts, his sanity is questioned as he turns to be delusional and mentally unstable, on the other hand he is an intelligent and diligent hard-working individual that invests all his energy and time for his quest , another aspect he displays is despite his resentful nature he seems to be genuinely loyal to Elliot.

The way Tyrell seeks power and craves success pushes him to act by extreme measures as he perceives the world as a competitive place that despises the failure, his gentle voice tone and good appearance that contradicts with his violent nature conveys a psychotic notion and also shows the extent of the human selfishness and cruelty in which effects the viewers attitudes towards society, his paradoxical personality manages to annoy and troubles the spectators and rises a controversial thoughts revolving around the possibilities of similar realistic existence.

- **White Rose:**

White Rose is the main protagonist of the plot, he is a homo-sexual character that possesses a great power as a minister of china and the leader of a secret dark army, he is shown to be extremely manipulative and devious, as he uses Elliot's grudge towards the system for his own personal benefit, White Rose is also portrayed as a smart and intelligent individual and somehow obsessed with the notion and the idea of time, he takes severe and

violent measures to control and steer his subjects in the favor of his plans, yet his violent and unstable nature reveals itself by the end of the series.

The character is the incarnation of evil and the source of the world problems, his cold and cruel attitude towards human life is remarkable as we understand that the producers are highlighting his devious tone and deceitful look, the fact of the existence of this type of characters that frightens Elliot and the alleged reason behind his anti-social behavior reinforce the notion of fear from society as we can notice that the camera work and the actual script is showing how diminished the human life is, and consequently conveying the idea to the spectators that will feel hopeless and ineffective, a way that can relate us to depression or more accurately depressive symptoms.

***4- Most relevant scenes:***

Throughout Mr. Robot series we keep seeing a pattern of drugs dependency and use not mentioning all the sorts of violence that revolves in most of the scenes, suicide attempts and blood-soaked homicides and murderous endeavor which is a familiar and a prevailing factor in the story, does not contribute directly to its main core, however what makes the latter an exceptional drama work is the fact that the spectators has the ability to experience the world throughout the mentality of a troubled and introverted personality, in matter of fact the series portrayed a genuine and an original experience of a mentally ill individual and conveyed his unique perspective and view to the world in which brings a familiarity to the matter and helps the public to get a better insight into the feelings of the latter.

- ***Elliot Cries Over Loneliness:***

The scene is quite heartrending as we see the protagonist of the story Elliot unable to bear and contain his feelings of loneliness anymore, while he cries heavily in the dark corner of his room curling up on himself, aching and screaming for help, after witnessing the scene we realize the extent in which loneliness can be a severe case and a destructive feeling, the

spectators will be also sensitized about the hardships and the feelings that some individuals go through. The scene is quite distressing and daunting as we feel sympathized towards the protagonist while seeing the consequent of him developing a severe dependency on Morphine and handling the pain while detoxing his body from the latter.

We notice that the camera work is based from a lower or a higher angle that allows us to see the way that Elliot is closing on himself and shaking, the thing that the producers implemented to convey a better realistic sensation, we also observe the dark setting of the room and the simplicity of the furniture that are made to highlight the loneliness imbedded, we highly suspect that the scene increases the mentioned feeling of the viewers as they notice their isolation and perceive it as a purpose or a reason behind their sadness.

- ***Tyrell Wellick's Crime:***

The scene when Tyrell Wellick shows his violent and vicious side as he strangles a woman on the roof of the company's building out of the grudge and rage that he could not constraint, the impact of the scenery is heavy on the hearts of the viewers as they watch the victim struggle for air and slowly passing out into her end, horrified and tortured by the latter, while no sorrow was shown from Tyrell as he declared:

*"...Two days ago, I strangled a woman to death just with my hands. That is a strange sensation. Something so tremendous done by something so simple. The first ten seconds were uncomfortable, a feeling of limbo, but then your muscles tense, and she struggles and fights, but it almost disappears in the background along with everything else in the world. At that moment it's just you and absolute power, nothing else. That moment stayed with me. I thought I'd feel guilty for being a murderer, but I don't. I feel wonder"* (Tyrell Wellick. season1, episode9).

As the display bothered the spectators it left them with bitter and pessimistic emotions unveiling the horrific side of the world in its simplest ferocious forms, which steers us to believe that the scene is evoking the anti-social behavior and increases the chances of isolation.

- **Irving Kills Santiago:**

The scene is extremely violent as Irving; a member in the Dark Army exterminates Ernesto Santiago; a special FBI agent and also a mole of the Dark Army, as we see Irving swinging an axe into Santiago's chest in a bloody setting and a savage manner, the scenery is not ending here in matter of fact Irving keeps striking Santiago's corps viciously spraying his blood all over the field, showing no sign of hesitation while blackmailing another agent "Dominique" into replacing him and spying in the favor of the Dark Army. The spectator will be shocked for the fact it happened in unexpected manner, also disturbed and agitated for the ferocious and brutal crime, consequently alienating the spectators from society provoking anti-social behavior and the preference of isolation.

- **Shayla's Death:**

The incident has a shocking impact on the viewers, when Elliot loses his partner and girlfriend Shayla Nico, unveiling her dead body in the trunk of a car, killed by a delusional drug dealer in an act of vengeance from Elliot, as we see him aching from the guilt and holding his tears, the scenery conveyed very pessimistic emotions, we feel sympathized towards the victim, and for the reason that the world and setting of the series is transmitted through Elliot's mentality and point of view, we can sense and feel his pain resulting in a bleak and depressed mood.

**Conclusion:**

After a profound and a systematic inquiry throughout the designated American Contemporary Series, we can notice that the content of the both series is overruled by pessimistic depictions and agitating scenes as we come to the realization that the intensity and pervasiveness of such ideas drags the viewers and subsequently EFL learners to a depressing mental state, additionally, we succeeded to shade the light on the most relevant characters and scenes as we concluded that much of the latter is a controversial issue that revolves around a

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troubled psychopathic subjects, the characters investigated has shown a pattern of depression, anxiety and violence, however concerning the described scenes we can perceive the viewers reactions and feelings as distressed, gloomed and shocked.

*Third chapter*

*Examining EFL Learners' Attitudes towards*

*Contemporary American Series*

### ***Third chapter: Examining EFL Learners' Attitudes towards Contemporary American Series***

#### **Introduction:**

The third chapter is intended to go through the audience's perspectives, attitudes and opinions towards the contemporary American series in eliciting depression, while analyzing the answers they conveyed through the questionnaire we are conducting, consequently aiding us to reach a break-through and a final satisfactory conclusion, the experience of master one English department students with the theme brought to the table is the essence of the study, as we are going to associate the Contemporary American Series directly to the depressive symptomology of the EFL learners, also providing an insight through the extent and the possible reasons behind depression, by the process of scrutinizing and inspecting the declarations and the feedbacks retrieved.

As we also discuss the revelations and interpret the latter in sake of analytical purposes, also scrutinizing through the reasons behind the phenomenon and its extent among the EFL learners, we will take into account, their gender, different experiences and their familiarity with the matter, this chapter is the last pillar that supports this research from a numerical objective aspect and a fulfilling section that assesses and attempts to bring the matter on the realistic field.

Furthermore, the chapter is a complementary passage that provides the practical study to the previous analytical conclusions and allegations, as it proves the association of the contemporary American series to the EFL learner's depression and highlighting the extent and the pervasiveness of the phenomenon, furthermore, affirming our previous claims related to the possible triggers of depressive symptoms and the way that this contents are exerting its influence on the spectators.

#### ***I- Questionnaire:***

In the previous chapters we came to significant and prominent conclusions and premises as we succeeded in identifying a relation and a pattern between the American

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Contemporary Series and depression among the EFL learners, yet we think and presume that a questionnaire will evidently validate the matter and add a sense of credibility to the suggested assumptions, as well as, allowing us to assess and estimate the extent of depression prevalence among the learners and examining the latter's familiarity with the depressive contents and reviewing their opinions towards the concept, all for the sake of getting a better insight into the implied dilemma.

#### ***II- Sampling:***

Considering the circumstances and taking the shortage of time and the epidemic's quarantine into account, an online inquiry was employed, and depending on the stratified composite sampling, directed to 50 subjects of the master one English department students at Abbes Laghrour university, in light of their familiarity with the language compared to their youthful and young age, likewise, their presumed vulnerability to the violent depictions. The questionnaire is conveyed and carried through social media, and the results are analyzed through a systematic process.

#### ***III- Method of the Study:***

The first thing we should mention is that the questionnaire is directed to an equal number of male and female participants, for the reason of achieving the equivalence and for allowing us to consider and compare the different aspects of gender while inspecting the given answers, we also made sure to add the notion of age that will constrain and confine the study with the young adults in which our investigation is revolved about.

The second aim of the inquiry is to check the familiarity of the learners with the streaming companies and the major source of these series, observing their preferences when it comes to the genre of the contents for the sake of relating it to our previous discussions and also in the quest of identifying a pattern of the depressive contents and reaching to the

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revelation behind the choice taken by the learners, we also made sure to specify and restrict the answers to our analyzed sample in order to disclose the connection we suggested.

In the next focus, we investigated the frequency and the time invested in viewing the series and attempted to report the time spent in one session for the sake of highlighting the level and intensity of exposure and to recognize the severity of the possible media effect, furthermore this specific inquiry will provide us with more data that is going to steer us to further realizations once relating it to the different depressive symptomologies while the interpretation behind the time devoted to these series is shedding the light on the possible issues contributing to the matter.

The main aim of the subsequent questions is related to diagnosing and analyzing the type of feelings conveyed by the series and the general sensations and mood swings that the spectators go through while and after watching these contents concentrating on the manifestation of negative emotions and the frequency of this declines as it will allow us to test the severity of the latter, we also made sure to investigate the pervasiveness of the mentioned feelings which is a measure of the impact exerted by the concerned series giving us an idea about the viewers general mental state.

The last questions are constructed to assess the existence of depressive symptomology and gives us a precise and concise answers that fits our needs in the subject as it will also determine the percentage and the extent of depression prevalence among the EFL learners, we also gave the subjects a chance and opportunity to show and demonstrate their opinions and attitudes towards the idea, the consideration of the participants' points of view and judgments is certainly a vital aspect that will steer and guide our interpretations.

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**IV- Questionnaire Analysis:**

**1- Are you?**

<i>The choice</i>	<i>Percentage</i>	<i>Participants</i>
Male	50%	25
Female	50%	25

**Table 1:** *the gender of the participants*

For the equal chances and in order to get an equilibrium within the analysis, the *Table 1* is displaying, the questionnaire that was apparently directed to an equal number of subjects, with the percentage of 50% males and 50% females, in other words, the number of female subjects contributing in the inquiry is the same number of the male subjects with the digit of 25 participants each, and a total of 50 units.

**2- How old are you?**

<i>The choice</i>	<i>Percentage</i>	<i>Participants</i>
Less than twenty	0%	0
From 20-30	84%	42
Above 30	16%	8

**Table 2:** *the age of the participants*

The results displayed in the second table (*Table 2*), shows that most of the subjects (84%) are between 20 and 30 years' old, while that only 16% are aged above 30, however, one the other hand it seems that there is no under 20 year aged participants.

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**3- Are you familiar with the contemporary American series displayed on the steaming companies such as Netflix and HBO Max?**

<i>The choice</i>	<i>Percentage</i>	<i>Participants</i>
Yes	88%	44
No	12%	6

**Table 3:** *familiarity with the streaming companies*

The third table (*Table 3*) is exhibiting the familiarity of the studied sample with the streaming companies that provides the depressive contents, as it shows remarkably that the majority of the subjects (88%) are familiar to the matter, while there is a small minority (12%) that are unaccustomed and unfamiliar with the online streaming companies, that is to say the learners are highly familiar with the matter.

**4- What is your preference and favored category concerning these shows?**

<i>The choice</i>	<i>Percentage</i>	<i>Participants</i>
Drama	68%	34
Comedy	44%	22
Horror	30%	15
Adventure	34%	17
Action	46%	23
Science-Fiction	20%	10
Other	14%	7

**Table 4:** *category preferences*

As we can see in the fourth table (*Table 4*), the most preferable genre when it comes to the Contemporary American Series is Drama with the percentage of 68%, up next the Action series that gained a 46% from the total sample, the results also show that the Comedy series are favored with the interest of 44%, as well as the Adventure contents that are also

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quite favored with the rate of 34%, apparently 30% from the sample also appreciates the Horror series while the Science-Fiction genre is the least favored (20%), yet 14% from the subjects suggested other genres that they also admire.

#### **5- Have you watched any of these series?**

<i>The choice</i>	<i>Percentage</i>	<i>Participants</i>
Thirteen Reasons Why	86%	43
Mr. Robot	70%	35

***Table 5: familiarity with the studied series***

The results shown in the fifth table (*Table 5*) reveals that most of the sample with 86% total, are familiar with the Contemporary American Series, “Thirteen Reasons Why” which indicates the subjects’ knowledgeableness with the mentioned contents, Mr. Robot from the other hand is less known even though that the majority of the sample (70%) is also familiar with it.

#### **6- How often you watch series?**

<i>The choice</i>	<i>Percentage</i>	<i>Participants</i>
On a daily basis	62%	31
Once or twice a week	18%	9
Few times in a month	20%	10

***Table 6: the frequency of watching the series***

The feedback to the question posed to evaluate and inspects the frequency of watching series is shown according to the statistics presented in *Table 6*, more than half of the subjects (62%) attend and watch the series on a daily basis, however, 20% of the sample view the contents few times in a month, the rest of the sample (18%) seemingly prefers to watch the series once or twice a week, in which implies that the series are highly employed by the learners.

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**7- How many hours you usually spend on watching these shows in one session?**

<i>The choice</i>	<i>Percentage</i>	<i>Participants</i>
1-2 hours	10%	5
2-4 hours	34%	17
4-6 hours	44%	22
8-10 hours	10%	5
More than 10 hours	2%	1

***Table 7: the time spent watching the series***

The feedback presented in *Table 7* is showing the time invested by the learners in watching the series, and as we can notice 44% of the subjects' average time spent viewing the contents is from 2 to 6 hours per session, in the second status 34% of the sample indicated that 2 to 4 hours is the regular time they invest in the latter, another 10% of the specimen reveals that 1 to 2 hours is the usual time they spend watching, as a 10% declares that the conventional time spent is from 8 to 10 hours in each session, the last 2% claims that they invest more than 10 hours in viewing their shows.

**8- What is the feeling you experience while and after watching your show?**

<i>The choice</i>	<i>Percentage</i>	<i>Participants</i>
Positive emotions	12%	6
Neutral	18%	9
Negative emotions	70%	35

***Table 8: feelings experienced***

*Table 8* is exhibiting the classification and interpretation of the feelings conveyed by the learners after watching Contemporary American Series as most of the emotions mentioned (70%) had a negative aspect when the positive emotions that could be found reached 12%, the rest of the answers inspected (18%) can only be perceived as neutral. The

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verdict we make is that watching the series is resulting in a pessimistic feeling in most of the cases, as the answers expressed the same meanings of loneliness depression, sadness and tears shed.

**9- Do you generally go through a notable decrease in mood level?**

<i>The choice</i>	<i>Percentage</i>	<i>Participants</i>
Yes	94%	47
No	6%	3

***Table 9: existence of mood declines***

As the *Table 9* is illustrating we can presume that the superior majority (94%) from the subjects is going through a notable decrease in mood level, on the other hand only the minority of 6% of the sample has denied and refuted the aspect.

**10- If yes, how often you experience this mood declines?**

<i>The choice</i>	<i>Percentage</i>	<i>Participants</i>
Always	42.55%	20
Very frequently	38.30%	18
Occasionally	10.64%	5
Rarely	8.51%	4
Very rarely	00%	00

***Table 10: Frequency of mood declines***

It is obviously shown from the tenth table (*Table 10*) that the majority of the sample is dealing with a relentless experience with mood declines as a 42.55% from the sample experiences the mood decrease on a constant manner while 38.30% is dealing with the latter as a very frequent usual occurrence, however, only 10.64% stated that they were dealing with the issue as an occasional matter, the rest of the subjects indicated that they have a rare manifestation.

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**11- For how long does this feeling usually lasts?**

<i>The choice</i>	<i>Percentage</i>	<i>Participants</i>
Few hours	25.53%	12
Few days	21.30%	10
One week	38.30%	18
More than two weeks	14.90%	7

**Table 11:** *persistence of mood declines*

The feedback about the persistence of mood declines experienced by the learners is exhibited on *Table 11*, and as we can see 38.30% from the sample declared that the feelings lasts for one week, while 14.90% stated that the feeling usually persists for more than two weeks, the thing that reveals that more than half of the sample is experiencing a major symptomology of depression, 21.30% of the subjects indicates that the feeling persists for a few days, 25.53% of the participants says that the manifestation last for only few hours.

**12- How would you describe your state of mind?**

<i>The choice</i>	<i>Percentage</i>	<i>Participants</i>
Happy	14%	7
Moderate	26%	13
Sad	40%	20
Depressed	20%	10

**Table 12:** *participants mental state*

While inspecting the participants' state of mind and as the *Table 12* is demonstrating 20% of the subjects described their mental state as depressed and 40% as sad, which indicates a severe negative mental state for more than half of the sample, 26% has shown a moderate and average mindsets and 14% declared that they were happy.

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**13- Do you think that you may suffer from any or one of the following symptoms?**

<i>The choice</i>	<i>Percentage</i>	<i>Participants</i>
Sleep disturbance	68%	34
Fatigue and loss of energy	52%	26
Memory and concentration issues	26%	13
Social isolation	36%	18
Other	16%	8

***Table 13: symptomology occurrence***

*Table 13* is exhibiting the feedbacks of the question that investigated the existence of the symptoms among the EFL learners which has shown that the majority of the participants (68%) are dealing with sleeping problems, furthermore, more than half (52%) is suffering from fatigue and loss of energy, also 36% of the subjects declared that they are experiencing social isolation, memory and concentration issues are also a major factor that the sample related to by 26% of the participants, 16% of the study cases has listed other interesting symptoms that raises a major concern and can be summarized as follows:

- Suicidal thoughts
- Weight loss and decrease in appetite
- Anxiety and constant fear
- Unexplained anger

**14- Do you think that watching these kinds of series is the reason of such disorders?**

<i>The choice</i>	<i>Percentage</i>	<i>Participants</i>
Yes	78%	39
No	22%	11

***Table 14: attitudes towards the matter***

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*Table 14* is illustrating the attitudes towards the Contemporary American Series, as it shows that the superior majority of participants (78%) is approving with the fact that these kind of series is behind the depressive symptoms as they believed that it contributed in their feeling of isolation and creating a sense of laziness and apathy while it is time consuming and certainly exhausting while it effects the circadian rhythm, furthermore, some of them mentioned the gap created between western and Eastern societies displayed in series as a possible reason behind the symptoms, on the other hand, the minority (22%) refutes the idea and reject the latter, in series defense, they declared that it is an escape and an entertainment medium and that it is mostly a temporary affection that depends on the personality of the viewer.

#### ***V- Results:***

The inquiry brought to the table led us to shed the light on many important aspects in the proposed research, as we came to the realization that the superior majority of our learners are familiar with the streaming companies and the American contemporary series, furthermore, we managed to get a perception on the learner's preferences in which that the Drama works are the most selected and privileged among the other genres, that also gained a significant acclaim in its turns, we also highlighted the extent of streaming products consumption while the majority of the subjects viewed and watched this series on a daily basis and with an average of 4 to 6 hours per session, the thing that we would perceive as intensive exposure.

In the same context, most of the subjects have shown a negative reaction and highlighted a pessimistic impact provoked and generated by watching the series, as we realized that the greater part of the participants is experiencing a notable mood declines on a frequent or a permanent basis, in which sustains from few hours to more than two weeks, the thing that we directly link to depression symptomology as a notable number of the subjects

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described their mental state as depressed and sad, designating the existence of several other symptoms, particularly sleep disorder and fatigue, social isolation along with memory and concentration issues and also added that they suffer from a significant weight loss and unexplained emotions such as anger, and the most controversial answer that caught the attention is “suicidal thoughts”.

Additionally, while examining the EFL learner's attitudes towards the possibility of a depression contagion from the mentioned series, the majority of the subjects endorsed the idea and referred and specified various reasons that included the waste of time that these series shape which leads to generate a sense of laziness and apathy among the spectators, another aspect that the learners mentioned is the gap created between western and Eastern societies displayed in the series in which conveys a feeling of unworthiness and diminutiveness, another intriguing suggestion made by one of the subjects is that the time invested in watching, may also effect the circadian rhythm and causes related repercussions.

#### ***VI- Further Indices:***

The familiarity of the EFL learners with the streaming companies and the mentioned series is valid, as we interpret the reason behind this acclaim we imply that these products became a trend and a positive feature that aids the viewers to socialize and gain a certain credibility among their peers, furthermore, from the subjects' declarations we perceive the idea of their proud attitudes and the alleged privilege gained by being aware of the latter, which explains the extent of dissemination of these series.

The high percentage of the drama preference among the EFL learners does not only indicate the desires of the subjects and it is not only confined and restricted to the appreciation towards the mentioned genre, but it is also implying a deeper concept, for what we can perceive from the presumptions of the responsible producers and the entertainment industry that is obviously targeting the young adults by the means of the heartrending

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contents and providing the exact emotional dilemma that the young adults relate to, in other words the high preference given to the drama works is indicating and showcasing the intentions of the producers as they convey the issues that a young adult would feel connected to.

Besides the pure pragmatic commercial decision behind this kind of emotional industry, we can also acknowledge the innovative and the revolutionized approach and attempt to discuss and bring familiarity to sensitive subjects that the youngsters are dealing with and raising awareness about the negative unfavorable possibilities of the untold, yet, we can note the risk behind such measures and depictions in which can aggravate and deteriorate the situation and bring the matter even to a worse condition, as we have seen in the cases of intensive exposure to this contents the subjects have shown a negative symptomology related to social anxiety and depression that escalated even to suicidal thoughts.

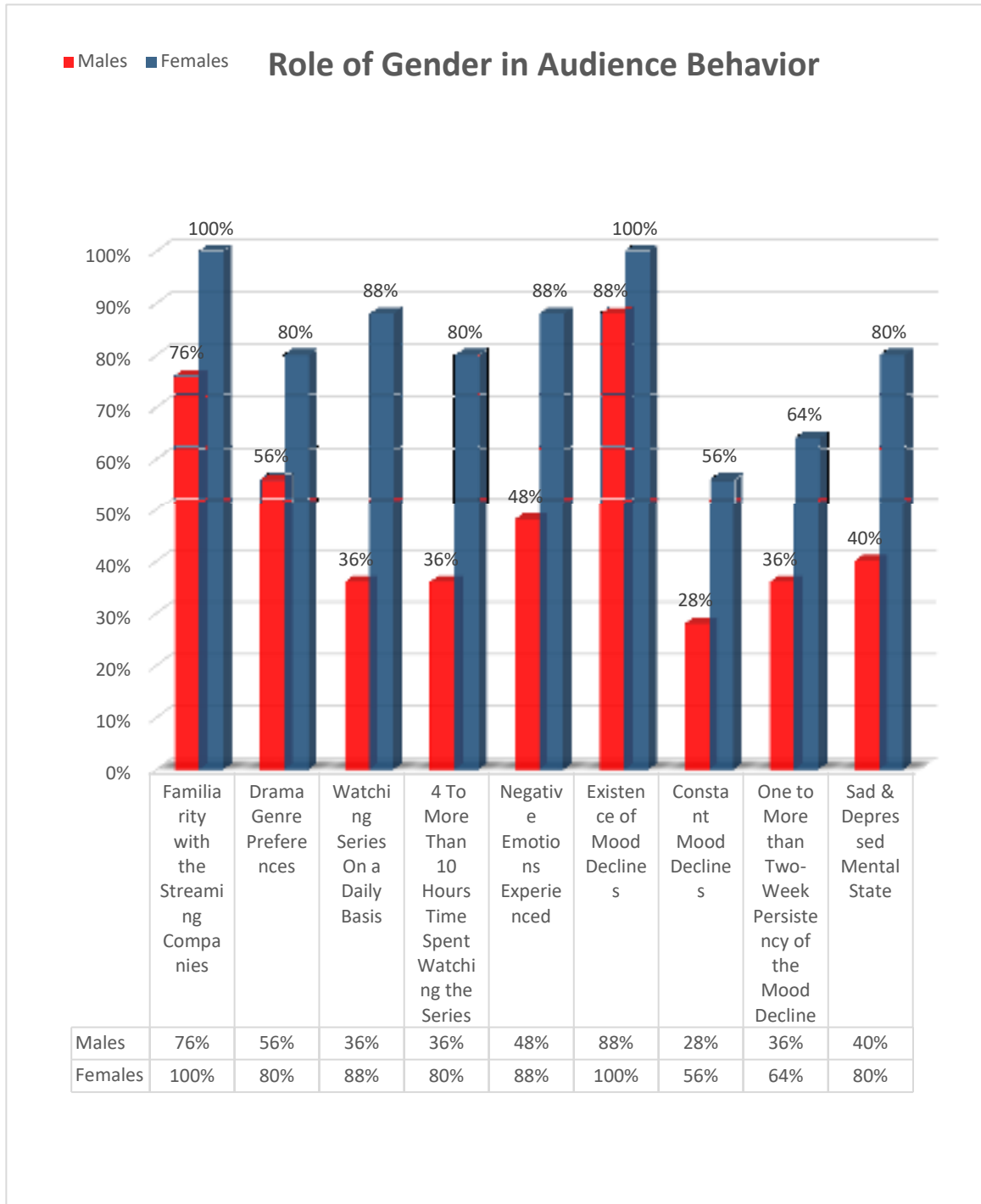
The frequency and the time invested in watching the series is giving us an idea about the use and the role of the Contemporary American Series in the EFL learners lives as we can clearly detect that it takes an evident amount of time while most of the sample spent an average of 4 to 6 hours on a daily basis viewing the mentioned series, in which shows that it became a major part of their lives, the thing that we can relate to the suggestions that some of our subjects made about the unveiled gap between cultures that makes the spectators have a certain expectations from the society and consequently and repeatedly left disappointed and unsatisfied.

Besides the previous revelations, taking almost the half of the learners' day is an issue itself as it prevents them from constructing a healthy social relations or at least a conventional social interaction, as some of the subjects declared their lack of time and social skills that contributes in a healthy behavior, furthermore, other learners stated that the series promoted a sense of laziness and apathy which implies that the series worked as a substance and a

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replacement of the actual and authentic interactions and consequently developed an apathetic behavior while the learners are not willing to spend or devote any effort in a social action.

***VII- Gender Role:***



*Figure 1: Role of Gender in Audience Behavior*

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*Figure 1* is representing one further step we took into analyzing such a complex psychological matter, in which we discussed the role of gender in audience behavior, noting the different aspects and features between the male and female subjects in relevance with the investigated topic, that is to say, if the extent and the risk of depression contagion is any higher when it comes to different genders, and the dissimilar ways between males and females in perceiving the contents displayed, furthermore the figure is allowing us to assess the extent of exposure and the time invested into the series in comparison with depressive behaviors taking into consideration the two mentioned genders.

#### ***1- Analysis:***

- ***Familiarity with the Streaming Companies:***

The first thing we notice about the latter is that 100% of the female subjects is familiar with the streaming companies while only 76% of the male participants are aware of such concepts, which indicates that the females are more knowledgeable and conscious about the source of the Contemporary American Series than males, furthermore we can perceive that the female participants are more engaged into the matter.

- ***Drama Genre Preference:***

When it comes to the Drama work preference we can clearly distinguish that the majority of female subjects (80%) are more attracted and fond of Drama series, while almost half of male participants (56%) are promoting and appreciating Drama, which is a notable contrast and divergence between the two genders, the thing that probably will be a factor that will determine the extent of depressive affect.

- ***Frequency of Watching the Series:***

As it is exhibited in *Figure 1* the percentage of the female participants that watches the series on a daily basis is major and dominant (88%) over the inferior number of male subjects (36%), in which we perceive that the matter is accounted for the social differences

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and the life status that is substantially different between both genders, as we recognize the probability of the diversity of life style in consideration to the Algerian culture.

- ***The Time Spent Watching the Series***

As the time spent by the subjects in watching Contemporary American Series varied, the exhibition of *Figure 1* is showing that 80% of the female participants invested at least 4 hours extended to more than 10 hours in watching the streamed contents, on the other hand only 36% of male subjects have devoted such time, which indicates that the amount of exposure exerted on the female subjects is more intense and recurrent.

- ***Negative Emotions Experienced:***

We can realize after scrutinizing through the answers given by the studied sample that all the female subjects (100%) declared that they have experienced and went through notable negative emotions while or after viewing the mentioned series, as they specified the feelings by sadness and pessimistic unexplained sensation, on the other hand, only 48% of the male subjects asserted the existence of such affects and repercussions.

- ***Existence of Mood Declines:***

As we can see in *Figure 1* the existence of mood declines is asserted by 100% of the female subjects, a lesser number of male participants (88%) confirmed the latter, the mood declines are presumed to be directly related to viewing the streamed contents, moreover, we can see the larger impact laying on the females more than the affects exerted on the male subjects.

- ***Constant Mood Declines:***

The sample studied reported a high frequency of mood decrease, and as the *Figure 1* is displaying, we can recognize that 51% of the female participants reported a high consistency of mood decline as they asserted a very frequent or a constant decrease in mood level, under

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the same conditions, the male subjects disclosed a 28% in mood deterioration, which is a substandard percentage when compared to the females' feedback.

- ***Persistence of Mood Declines:***

64% of female subjects have reported a one to more than two-week persistency of mood decline, as they noted that the low state of mind lasted for long and prevailed on the general mental condition, on the other hand, 36% of male participants noted the latter, in which we understand that the effects of the Contemporary American Series last longer in females than it does with males.

- ***Participants' Mental State:***

The sad and depressed mental state is the term that 80% of the female subjects used to describe their general mental state, which is the majority of the investigated sample, however, less than half (40%) of the male participants reported such mental problem, as we come to the realization that the depressive factors are more prevailing in women than it is with men.

#### **2- Results:**

After examining the role of gender in the pervasiveness of depression relatively to our theme of research, we noticed that women are more familiar and knowledgeable with the streamed products than men, furthermore, while investigating and examining their evident and undeniable fondness with the drama series, we came to the realization that depression is more recurrent and common in females rather than males, as we noticed that the vulnerability of the women towards the latter, is higher and more prevailing than men.

On the other hand, with the conventional cultural belief that women have more time in hands than usually the men's do, we perceived the feedback and the rates of the frequency and the time devoted in viewing Contemporary American Series, as we noticed that the percentage of the time spent in watching the streamed contents by the female subjects is indisputably prevailing and dominating the male rates.

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In the light of the previous revelations we can essentially interpret and justify the feedback given about the mood declines and the negative emotion experienced by the male and female subjects, as we have discovered that 100% of the female participants are suffering from negative emotions and mood declines after watching the series, which is a significant percentage when compared to the male rates, the thing that implies that the higher amount of exposure clearly and definitely effected the occurrence and the manifestation of such issues.

The consistency and the persistency of the mood declines experienced is also very different once investigated accordingly to gender status, as we noticed that the superior majority of the female subjects are facing more constant and more relentless lasting mood declines, the revelation that steers us to confirm the previous indications and suggestions in which that the female EFL learners are more vulnerable and more contaminated by the depressive symptomology than males.

We can compile the previous suggestions and disclosures once we realize that the percentage of the depressed female subjects (80%) is twice' the males (40%), as we resolved and concluded that the amount of exposure to the Contemporary American Series is a major factor that contributes in eliciting depression among the EFL learners, and that the pervasiveness and the extent of depression prevalence is more frequent and common in women more than the case with men.

#### **Conclusion:**

The audience analysis employed, demonstrated and displayed the discussion held on a realistic aspect, as it confirmed our analytical procedures and theoretical based studies, moreover it led to several revelations related to our study case, as we succeeded to link and associate depression to the Contemporary American Series that are heavily consumed by the EFL learners, furthermore, we have unveiled the extent of depression pervasiveness among the students, and we seized an idea about the possible reasons behind the dilemma, another

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point that deserves mentioning, is that the inquiry paved a path towards possible solutions and upcoming precautions.

## ***General conclusion***

**General conclusion:**

At the end of our investigation and after a deep and a systematic scrutinizing through the chosen samples of the contents displayed, we came to the realization that the American Contemporary Series compromise a great deal of depressive elements which contributes and acts as factors that elicits depressive symptomology, as we have seen the producers intentions to reach the spectators emotions and their trials to convey a heartrending contents raising the discussion on sensitive matters in dealing with the unspoken controversial concerns, consequently, the realistic depictions of this issues and the setting displayed is basically luring the viewers into a depressive mood.

In other words, the whole sample series revolves around mental illness and depression, substance use and suicide depictions, which work as a whole cinematic creation that demoralizes the viewers and drags them to depression, as we have concluded that the violent depictions effect the spectator's attitudes towards society and real life, triggering a sense of anxiousness that is contributing to social isolation and promoting the notion of fear from society, the thing that is related directly to depressive symptomology, another point deserve mentioning is that the EFL learners are relating to the streamed contents for the fact that it projects their life struggles and issues.

We have also retrieved a further revelations related to our topic, through a qualitative audience analysis, in which we validated and confirmed the previous declarations and concluded the fact that the series are having a major and an essential role in eliciting depression among the EFL learners, we have also unveiled the extent and the pervasiveness of depression among the EFL leaners as we noticed that the majority of our sample handling and currently suffering from major depressive symptomologies, sever enough to raise a questionable declarations from the subjects while they mentioned the suicidal thoughts experienced.

Another point we shed the lights on, is the reasons behind the dilemma, as we have understood that the contents displayed are heavily consumed by the EFL learners and it is shown to be highly addictive and attaches the young adults within the drama plots, for the fact that we identified the preference of the drama works compared to the other genres of series, the insight we gained through the reasons behind triggering depression is also laid out by the declarations of the subjects as they mentioned the amount of time invested in viewing the series that directly effects the *Circadian Rhythm* and contributing in social isolation, also the negative reaction that is highlighted by a pessimistic impact provoked and generated by watching the series.

In the same context, we have also compared and dealt with the gender role in eliciting depression as we came to the conclusion that the higher majority of the depressed subjects are females, we also noticed the remarkable involvement of the feminine gender into the streamed contents as we highlighted the vulnerability of the women to depressive symptomology and that the impact exerted by the displayed contents is undoubtedly harder on women, for the fact that the consistency and the persistency of the feelings experienced is more severe and relentless when it comes to females.

As a result of the newness and the originality of our discussed topic, we struggled and faced a great difficulty in finding the sources and references required in conducting and bringing our topic on the discussion table, furthermore, the linkage between the fields and endeavors of the media, didactics and psychology is by some means a tricky and delicate process, another unfavorable obstacle that stood in our quest is the confinement and the epidemic that made the Empirical Study impossible and forced us to take alternative measures.

The mentioned investigation is offering and laying a limitless and endless possibilities when it comes to the further studies, as it paved the way by associating the two notions of

media and mental issues, and fusing between the controversially psychological problems and media effect, the future studies are ought to be conducted on a larger samples and scrutinizing through the possibilities in triggering other matters and concerns and the prospects of using the latter in a positive setting and directing the impacts into a more beneficial and favorable direction, furthermore, it raises a major concern and interest and implying further investigations regarding to the potential repercussions and the calamities falling behind the matter.

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## *Appendices*



# Questionnaire: The Role of Contemporary American Series in Eliciting Depression Among EFL Learners

Dear student,

We appreciate the honesty and seriousness invested answering the following questions, as it is the only way that guarantees the success and credibility of the suggested research that revolves around the role of Contemporary American Series in Eliciting depression among EFL learners.

“Your personal opinion matters”

\*Obligatoire

Are you? \*

- Male
- Female

How old are you?

- Less than twenty
- From 20 - 30
- Above 30

Are you familiar with the contemporary American series displayed on the steaming companies such as Netflix and HBO Max?



Yes

No

What is your preference and favored category concerning these shows?

Drama

Comedy

Horror

Adventure

Action

Science-Fiction

Autre :

Have you watched any of these series?

Thirteen Reasons Why

Mr Robot

How often you watch series?

On a daily basis

Once or twice a week

Few times in a month

How many hours you usually spend on watching these shows in one session?

- 1-2 hours
- 2-4 hours
- 4-6 hours
- 8-10 hours
- More than 10 hours

What is the feeling you experience while and after watching your show?

Votre réponse

Do you generally go through a notable decrease in mood level?

- Yes
- No

If yes, how often you experience this mood declines?

- Always
- Very frequently
- Occasionally
- Rarely

Very rarely

For how long does this feeling usually lasts?

- Few hours
- Few days
- One week
- More than two weeks

How would you describe your state of mind?

- Happy
- Moderate
- Sad
- Depressed

Do you think that you may suffer from any or one of the following symptoms?

- Sleep disturbance
- Fatigue and loss of energy
- Memory and concentration issues
- Social isolation
- Autre :

Do you think that watching these kinds of series is the reason of such disorders?

Yes

No

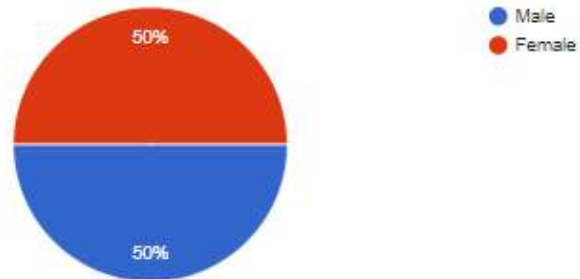
Why?

Votre réponse

Envoyer

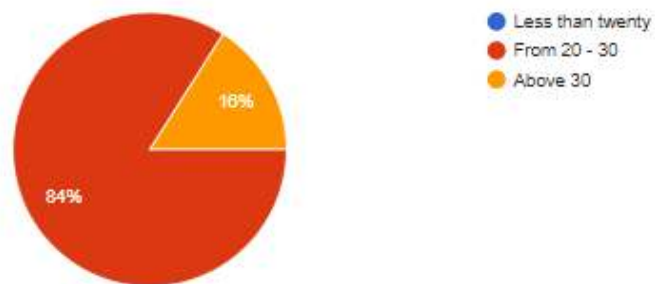
Are you?

50 réponses



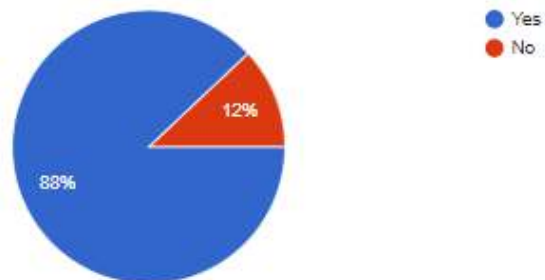
How old are you?

50 réponses

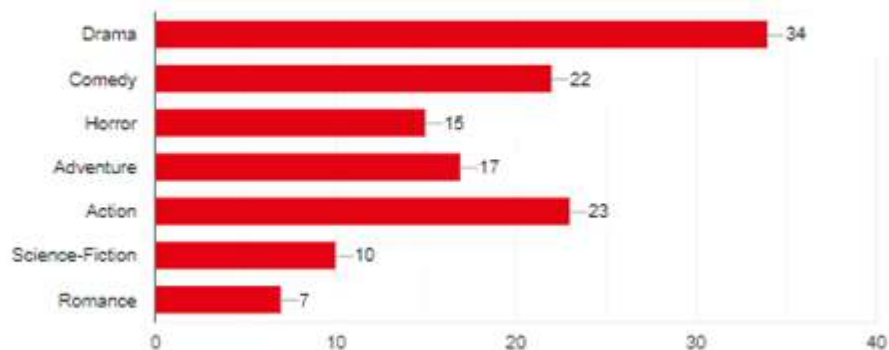


Are you familiar with the contemporary American series displayed on the steaming companies such as Netflix and HBO Max?

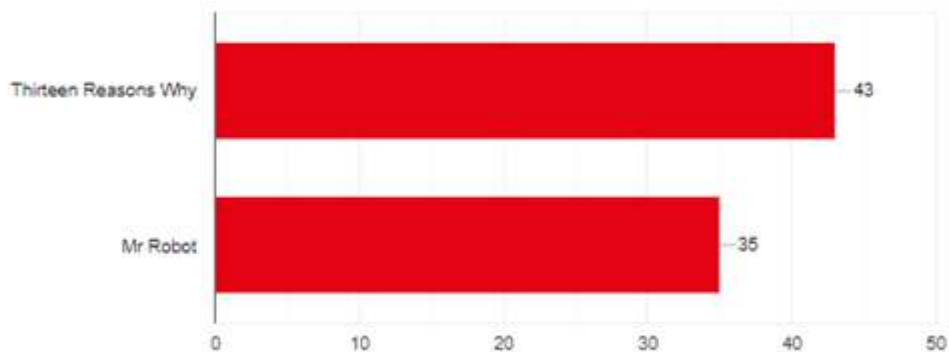
50 réponses



What is your preference and favored category concerning these shows?

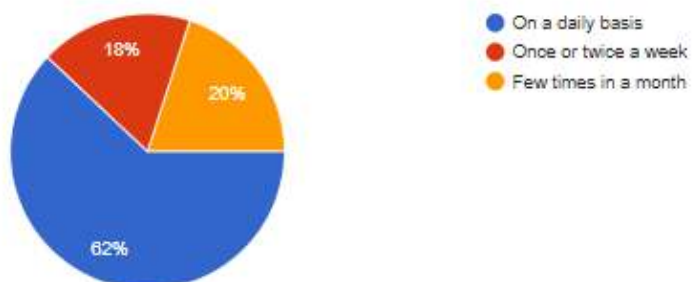


Have you watched any of these series?



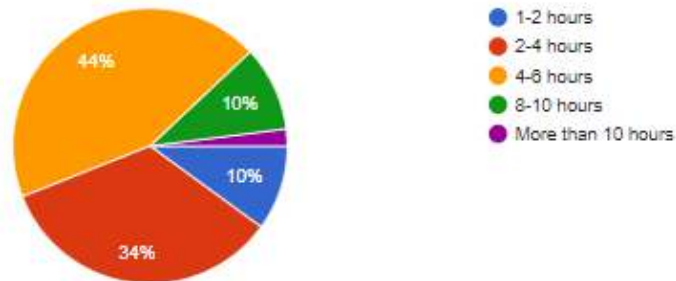
How often you watch series?

50 réponses



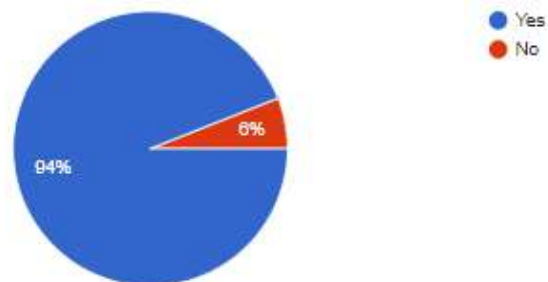
How many hours you usually spend on watching these shows in one session?

50 réponses



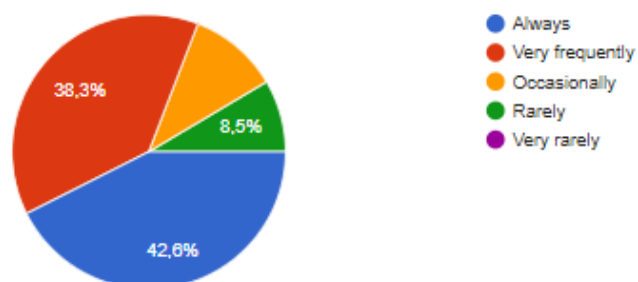
Do you generally go through a notable decrease in mood level?

50 réponses



If yes, how often you experience this mood declines?

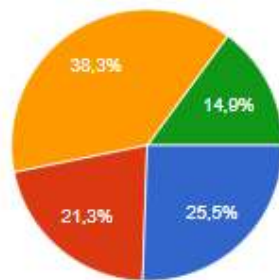
47 réponses



For how long does this feeling usually lasts?



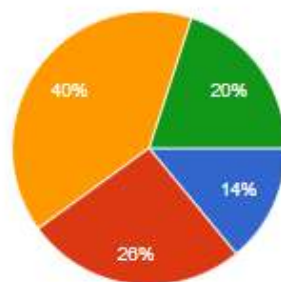
47 réponses



- Few hours
- Few days
- One week
- More than two weeks

How would you describe your state of mind?

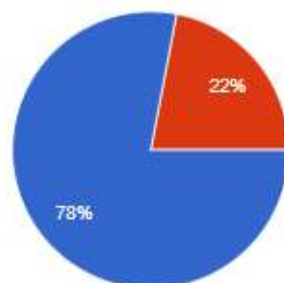
50 réponses



- Happy
- Moderate
- Sad
- Depressed

Do you think that watching these kinds of series is the reason of such disorders?

50 réponses



- Yes
- No