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**Investigating the relationship
between empathy and language
proficiency in language learning.**

Case Study: 3rd Year LMD Students of English Department at Abbès Laghrou
University - Khenchela -

*A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of Master in Language and Culture*

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Dedication

In the name of Allah most merciful most gracious

To my soul “Mom”, to my eyes “Dad”;

The two persons who are the reason of being me in this life

The two persons who had great credit for my arrival at this stage of the study

I could never have achieved anything in my life without their support and their help

in the most difficult moments of my life

I love you Mom

I love you Dad

To the best and great gift in my life , to my brothers and sisters

To my dearest friends: Amal , Nedjet, Ryma

To my supervisor: Mr Slimani

Thank you all for your support .

Fatiha

Dedication

In the name of Allah most merciful , most gracious

To my parents , brothers and sisters

Thank you for your encouragement and above all your love.

Thank you for your patience and support.

To all my friends

To my supervisor : Mr Slimani

We dedicate this work for you.

Thank you all.

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Abstract

This study was an investigation to detect the relationship between empathy and language proficiency. It aims to put forward a few ideas about the nature of empathy and look at it as a process which plays a crucial role in first language learning and foreign language learning as well as the use of language for dialogues and connection building between humans. It states also the level of empathy needed in language learning and find out if there is correlation between empathy and other factors.

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Introduction

Hogan (1960) describes empathy as “apprehension of another’s condition or state of mind without actually experiencing that person’s feelings “ (p308) .Similarly, Mehrabian and Epstein (1972) articulate that empathy is the heightened responsiveness to another’s emotional experience (p526). In line with the pedagogical implications of increasing students ‘motivation and positive feeling in their classroom (Dorneyei and Otto 198). For the purposes of this paper , empathy is accepted as contributing to foreign language learner’s achievement (Wang 2005) . Hence, students ‘empathy levels appear to be almost important in relation to their achievement.

Linguistic and communicative performance of non _native speakers was once accepted to be inherently limited as previously shown by Medgyes (1992) although achievement in language learning depends partly on the existence of high quality interaction and communication shared in the learning atmosphere . In that sense , student’s needs , expectations and empathy level are essential in establishing a positive learning atmosphere (Wang2005) It goes without saying that people tend to learn in more robust manner when they feel good about themselves such as a positive feeling involves understanding one’s own weaknesses and strengths . From a theoretical standpoint as Feshbach (1987) argue , it is possible to suggest a number of possible effects of affect related dispositions and behaviors of learners on their own academic achievement (p1335). Similarly, the importance of learners’s psychological states of mind has been underlined in many methods and approaches in foreign language learning among which the humanistic approach is the leading one . As such empathy is necessary in order to feel good about ourselves because our negative feelings impede achieving our goals in the classroom environment.

Many research studies are needed to understand the relationship between students’ levels of empathy and their achievement in foreign language learning .Hence , the basic aim of this study is to find the correlation between them .Moreover, summarizing language proficiency level . The research might also help to raise awareness that language learning is a key for learning about

humanity .Understanding who we are, learning about each other and caring about each other .

Chapter one

Literature Review

Literature Review

In order to study what language learning is and discuss whether there is a possible correlation between empathy and language proficiency and empathy development, the literature review discusses three topics : **Empathy, Language proficiency and language learning.**

1.1 Empathy:

The term empathy was first introduced in 1909 by psychologist Edward B. Titchener as a translation of the German term *emfühlung* (meaning "feeling into"). Several different theories have been proposed to explain empathy.

Empathy is the ability to understand the feelings of others emotionally, see things from your own point of view, and imagine yourself in your own place. Basically, it's about getting yourself to put on another person's shoes and feel how they should feel. When you see another person suffering, you can immediately imagine yourself in his place and sympathize with what happened. This may be a little difficult. The empathetic ability allows people to "walk a mile to a strange place." It enables people to understand the emotions that others are experiencing. In difference or even complete hostility seems completely incomprehensible, but the fact that some people react in this way clearly shows that compassion is not necessarily a universal response to the suffering of others. . Empathy is sometimes thought essential to morality, the hallmark of love, a key to understanding the mental life of others, our natural safeguard against narcissism, even the emotional import of basic forms of mirror-neurological activity

The term "sympathy" was proposed by Titchener more than a hundred years ago, and the German term "sympathy" (Wispé, 1986) was adapted. According to Stottland and colleagues, the discussion of empathy can even be traced back to the "origin of philosophical thought" (Stottland, Matthews, Sherman, Hansen and Richardson, 1978) . Although empathy has a long history, Empathy is not a well-defined concept, but there can be many definitions in the field (Decety & Jackson, 2004; de Vignemont & Singer, 2006). This brings up several questions; first, when interpreting the research results related to "empathy", it is necessary to accurately define the content to be studied and the degree of confusion with related concepts. The complexity of the results affects the comparability of the research (Brown, Harkins and Beech, 2012; Gerdes, Segal and Lietz,

2010). Second, there seems to be a difference in the way researchers and practitioners understand empathy (Mann & Barnett, 2012), leading to inconsistencies between empathy research methods and their use in education planning, treatment, and empathy promotion education. Third, when concepts are understood in different ways, treatment difficulties can arise (Book, 1988; Clark, 2010), and some concepts of transference are more therapeutic than others (see Clark, 2010; Nightingale, Yarnold and Greenberg, 1991). These issues and suggested solutions will be discussed in detail at the end of this article. There are several notable attempts to separate empathy from many related concepts (see Batson, 2011; Eisenber, Shea, Carlo & Knight, 1991; Scheler, Becker, 1931 cited). Schönrade (1987; Preston and de Waal, 2002) refers to empathy as a general category, includes all related concepts such as emotional pollution, empathy, and compassion. To explain why empathy tends to merge with related terms, Aiz (2003) used Scheler's discussion (quoted in Becker (1931) to discuss empathy (a shared feeling based on a common situation), the related concepts of empathy (understanding the emotions of others through perspective, imitating the emotions of others without personal experience), compassion (deliberate emotional response), compassion (emotional pollution when one's emotions are "infected"), and sympathy (a form of intense compassion). According to Ickes, these terms differ in three dimensions: the level of knowledge about the emotional state of the target object; the degree of emotional communication; and the degree to which the distinction between oneself and others is preserved. Ickes pointed out that empathy for these three dimensions is in the middle range, and the meaning of "the word" is inherently vague, which sparked a debate on the first concept of empathy.

Signs of empathy:

There are several signs that you are prone to empathy:

- You can listen to others well. People often tell you their problems.
- You know how others feel.

- You often consider how other people feel. Others ask you for advice.
- Tragic events often leave you at a loss.
- You are trying to help other patients.
- You know when people make mistakes.
- Sometimes you will feel exhausted or depressed in social situations.
- You are very interested in others.

A person can experience different types of empathy:

_ Emotional empathy involves the ability to understand the emotions of others and react accordingly. This emotional understanding may cause someone to worry about the other's happiness, or it may lead to personal feelings.

_ Physical empathy involves a physical response to what the other person is experiencing. Sometimes people experience the feelings of each other firsthand.

_ Cognitive empathy includes the ability to understand the mental state of others and what they might think in response to a situation. This is due to psychologists' theory of mind, or considering other people's ideas. When we practice cognitive empathy, we practice using the perspectives of others. In fact, we can imagine what this person would look like in their situation.

Cognitive empathy is also known as accepting a point of view that helps to put yourself in the position of others.

Is this genetic empathy?

Studies have shown that genes affect the ability to express empathy. In fact, it has always been shown that women are more likely to capture emotional cues and recognize emotions more accurately than men.

The ability to have empathy has many advantages:

Empathy enables people to establish social connections with others. By understanding people's thoughts and feelings, people can respond appropriately to social situations. Research shows that social relationships are important. It is very important for physical and mental health.

Empathy for others can help you regulate your emotions. Emotion regulation is important because it allows you to control your emotions even when you are stressed, without feeling overwhelmed.

Empathy promotes beneficial behavior. ... Not only when you sympathize with others, you are more likely to show helpful behavior, but when other people show sympathy, they are also more likely to help you.

Impact of empathy:

Not everyone can feel empathy in all situations. Some people may be more natural overall, but they also tend to have more compassion for some people and less compassion for others.

Some of the different factors that play a role in this trend are:

- How people perceive others
- How people attribute to others' behaviors
- What do people attribute to others' plights past experiences and expectations seem to have two main factors at the most basic level? Empathy: genetics and socialization

1.2 language learning

Language learning is a way to open the door to the world, to work, to science, to culture, to society and even to business. Language is part of the cultural heritage of millions of communities around the world. In this sense, communication is one of the most important elements for citizens to travel the world, if you will.

According to Albert C. Baugh, language is a way of communication between companies and within companies. It is a communication tool that crosses geographical boundaries. It will open the window of the world, open the door of opportunity and expand our thinking. The key to ideas and Thomas Cable (2002: 10) Language conveys thoughts and feelings to others, is a tool for their business, or the government of millions of people, is a means to convey science, philosophy, and culture.

The Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary (1989: 699) defines language as a system of sounds, words, and images that people use to convey thoughts and feelings. Robert Lado (1971: 12) said that language is closely related to one's feelings and activities, as well as nationality, religion, and feelings for oneself. Whether it is a beggar or a banker, a barbarian or a civilized person, everyone uses it for work, worship, and entertainment.

According to Albert C. Baugh and Thomas Cable (2002: 4), language is very important as the lingua franca of a country. Different population groups in a country or region will not be able to communicate. All these definitions reflect different aspects and goals of language; however, a language can be marked in different ways according to its function, nature, quality, etc.

In the history of language learning, according to Chomsky's theory, universal grammar emerged as a response to Skinner's behaviorism: human thoughts participate in the deep processing of meaning, rather than storing responses to environmental stimuli (Moeller and Catalano, 2015). Humans

are biologically programmed in language and have the innate ability to develop grammatical systems into internal thinking and learning processes (Moeller and Catalano, 2015).

According to Chomsky's theory, there have been many theories focusing on human cognition and learning, although many people don't think the language is programmed according to biology.

Among these theories, sociocultural theory (hereinafter referred to as SCT) clearly emphasizes the human perception of others, including social, cultural and historical factors (Ortega, 2007). The research is based on the three basic principles of Marxist theory:

- 1) Human consciousness is fundamentally social

- 2) Human activities are mediated through material artifacts and psychological and symbolic tools/symbols

- 3) Analysis of human activities

Learning is the complex process of discovery, collaboration and exploration encouraged by language. Language is a unique means of expressing, studying, and conveying meaning for humans and society. It is composed of interrelated and rule-based symbol systems. The particularity of culture, language is a clear sign of personal identity and is necessary for the formation of interpersonal relationships and understanding, expand the situation, expand experience, reflect on thoughts and actions, and make contributions to a democratic society. Language is the main foundation of all communication and the main tool of thinking. Language learning, a shared responsibility All students can learn successfully. Students, parents, teachers and the community are responsible for language learning. Students need continuous ability to use language in multiple forms.

The opportunity to learn a language first appeared at home, and then from childhood to moving to a larger community .The school creates an environment for students to develop language skills, skills and strategies to achieve their personal, social and academic goals. All teachers are responsi-

ble for language development. However, because they focus on language, the form and function of language, they play a special role. They help students develop and apply strategies for understanding, writing and coping with different situations.

According to the meaning of the language, it emphasizes the use in real life. Language learning will become a part of compulsory education, especially English, because it is an international language and the foundation of work and life. English as your mother tongue, you should try to understand how the language is used in different contexts and cultures. I think effective language learning should start with oral and listening practice, because this is the core meaning of language and communication. Although learning English may take a long time, we have been learning. In order to learn English as a foreign language, students need language experience. They practice their skills by making language a part of daily life. Teachers carefully study and understand activities and communication materials. If they have sufficient language skills, they can find their own applications. Sometimes language is produced by imitating the language style of the material presented by the teacher, especially in the video editing. If the teacher is not a native speaker, this can allow him to use his imagination, understand accents, feelings, movements and reactions. Do the same at the beginning, and then they will apply them and find their own suitable style to adapt and adapt to any situation in the athlete's life.

1.3 Language Proficiency

Language proficiency is a measurement of how an individual has mastered a language . Proficiency is measured in terms of receptive and expressive language skills , syntax, vocabulary , semantics and other areas that demonstrate language abilities . There are four domains to language proficiency: Reading ,writing , speaking and listening.

Assessing how learners perceive sounds, understand meaning, form sentences, and communicate with others is difficult and challenging. Some guidelines help to successfully assess language ability.

There are two organizations in the world that provide guidelines for assessing students' functional language skills: the American Council for the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) and the European Commission. Language Reference System (GER): Learning and Teaching Evaluation in 2018 both systems are classified according to different language skills: speaking, writing, listening and reading. The GER scale is divided into situational or more specific tasks. In the United States, the ACTFL guidelines have been used as an important tool for evaluating language teaching and learning for 25 years (ACTFL, 2012).

ACTFL Guidelines:

The ACTFL Guide describes what a person with language ability can do in speaking, writing, listening, and reading in a spontaneous and unpredictable environment in real situations (ACTFL, 2012). The main qualification levels are special, advanced, advanced, and intermediate and novice, and the main levels of advanced,

Intermediate and novice are divided into three sub-levels (ACTFL, 2012; see Figure 1.)

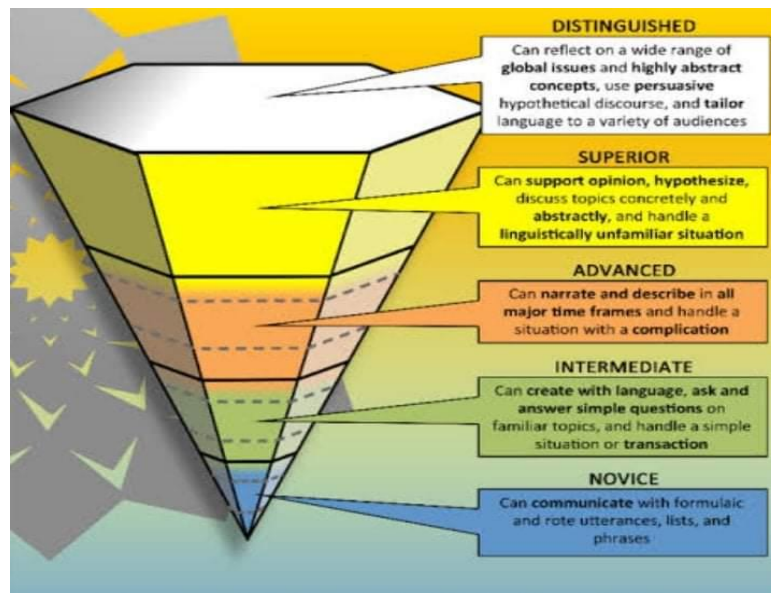


Figure 1: ice cream cone representing ACTFL proficiency

According to the guidelines of ACTFL (2012), students with excellent language skills can speak, read, write and understand language proficiently, accurately, efficiently and effectively. You are educated and fluent in language. They can use representative hypothetical and compelling speeches to conduct appropriate cultural reflections on a wide range of global issues and very abstract concepts. You still have a non-native accent, and sometimes minor errors occur. They can use language in any situation on Senior students can use a variety of languages and interactive strategies to communicate accurately and fluently on a variety of topics (including social and political issues, and even abstract concepts). , Vocabulary and phonetic resources; sometimes they may be wrong, especially in the low-frequency structure and complex high-frequency structure, and will not interfere with the native speakers in the dialogue; they usually understand the artistic characteristics of the language and its literary style, but it may not be possible to fully understand texts that are deeply rooted in cultural references.

Advanced learners can fully master a language through various skills, and their accuracy will be affected by their interest and subject. This level is divided into high, medium, and low. The

higher your level, the more abstract and complex subjects you can study. Get along with them, they can use more complex grammatical structures and vocabulary and can easily and confidently solve various communication tasks such as work, study, family and leisure, as well as topics related to current affairs. , Public and private interests or personal importance.

Beginners can successfully handle simple communication tasks through basic and very predictable daily problems that directly affect them. They use short words and phrases that they have learned and remembered. They can also rely on their previous knowledge and skills. Hyperverbal. Similarly, the beginner's high, middle, and low sub-stages depend on the number of speakers who can complete sentences for successful communication. They are often misunderstood because they cannot use words correctly. Low-level beginners have no real functional skills, and their language is likely to be incomprehensible; however, you can exchange very simple information, such as a name, and at least copy or decrypt it word or phrase.

CEFR guidelines:

The other hand, CEFR Leadership has three levels of learning (called "users" in its structure): basic users, independent users, and competent users. Each level has two sub-levels: A1 and A2. In the basic user B1 And B2 under independent user conditions and C1 and C2 under qualified use conditions. Therefore, the frame starts with A1 as the lowest level and passes C2 as the highest level. The scale consists of two main parts: general reference level and descriptive scale. General reference level .

There are subsections showing global scale, self-assessment grid and quality aspects .There are four different categories of spoken and descriptive scales, which will be explained later.

Globally, this is a more general descriptive scale. Competent users can understand everything they hear or read, summarize information from various oral and written sources, and express them-

selves spontaneously, fluently and accurately thoughts. Independent users can understand basic ideas and complex texts, understand concrete and abstract topics, but may not be able to understand detailed information. Basic users can understand the communication and description of sentences related to very basic personal and family information, shopping, local geography and employment, and simple and daily tasks. When talking to others, if the interlocutor speaks slowly and clearly, understands and is willing to help others.

Regarding the qualitative aspects of spoken language, students at each level describe it from five dimensions: volume, accuracy, fluency, interactivity, and consistency. C2 and C1 users have shown great flexibility in reformulating ideas into different language forms, emphasizing distinguishing concepts and disambiguation. ; However, when talking about complex conceptual topics, C1 may lose its natural fluency. B2 and B1 users have sufficient language skills to provide clear descriptions and opinions on the most common topics without fancy word searches or spelling errors. Yes it is even if it involves family affairs and interests, you can talk in a loop. Both A2 and A1 users are beginners and can communicate with others in simple everyday situations by using simple sentence templates with memorized phrases and multi-phrases. You can use simple connectors (such as and, but, that, and because) to link groups of words, but you will still make fundamental mistakes. A1 There are many pauses, repetitions, corrections and errors when users speak.

Four categories can be distinguished on a clear scale: communication activities, communication strategies, text work, and communication language skills. I cannot describe every situation in detail here; however, C2 users generally have no difficulty with any form of oral and written communication. Idioms; C1 has excellent ability to understand most speeches and texts, covering a wide range; B2 can also understand a large number of speeches and texts, but can only use standard dialects at a normal speed; B1 is a simple factual text on daily topics , Not an abstract topic; A2 understands short statements when speaking slowly and clearly; yes A1 can listen to well-worded

speeches and texts very slowly and carefully, discuss topics related to their current needs, especially with visual support; the higher their abilities, the stronger their social skills; they fully master native speakers understand the culture and social situation of native speakers and be aware of the differences between native speakers' culture.

Chapter two

**Research methodology and
design**

Rationale

Our research is about the focus of language learning and empathy levels on third year students. It seems that using more than one language is an influential factor for empathy development especially for learners who have achieved a high language proficiency .It means that language proficiency could play an important role in the development of empathy.

Starting from this point, we can hypothesize that students who are advanced in language learning will have higher level in empathy than the beginner language learners have and language proficiency may influence empathy development.

Method:

In this research, we adopted the mixed method approach for the collection of both quantitative and qualitative data.

Cresswell (2002) defines the mixed method as” The combination or the integration of quantitative and qualitative research and data in research study”.

The reason from this choice is to answer confirmatory and exploratory questions at the same time.

The Population

Sample is only a portion of population parameters which are associated with population and statistics.

With samples, we use our target population according to our purpose and the practicalities of our research; it is a large, demographically mixed and geographically dispersed. 131 was the number of the target population according to call hand sample 1988, in order to perform statistical power analysis, 5 pictures need to be taken into consideration significant sea level criterion, effect size, desired power, estimated variance and sample size

In order to determine our sample size, we referred to Cohen's guidelines and our size is 90 participants. Only 60 students participated in this survey.

It seems that the majority of the participants (93.3%) used Arabic as their first language while they acquired both French and English as second language (table 1.1). Just to remind you that (13.3%) are males and (86.7%) are females. (Table 2.1)

Table 1: First and second language acquisition .

First language	Number of the Participants	Second language	Number of the participants
Arabic	56	Arabic	0
French	3	French	32
English	1	English	28

Table 2 : Gender of the participants

Gender	Number of the par- ticipants	Gender	Number of the par- ticipants
Females	52	Males	8

Materials

Survey or questionnaire tools are the most popular data collection tools.

First, questionnaire is defined by Griffiee (2012.p 67) as a “data collection instrument that asks respondents for demographic information, opinion or questions of facts ‘’ . Its instruments are the most famous ones because they have many advantages. Collect data from a large population in a limited time and at a low cost, convenient for the interviewee, anonymous, interviewers are not biased, and standardization issues are some of them. . They provide numerical data that can be statistically analyzed. They allow us to collect data in an objective way .Therefore participants can answer freely. In this context Cresswell points out that questionnaire don’t require the respondent’s name, class thus they can respond anonymously, this might reduce teacher’s influence that would be present

However, the negatives of the questionnaire are poor data quality due to incomplete and inaccurate questions, writing problems, and poor development process. The problem is critical and can be avoided. The previously approved questionnaire is very useful, can save time and resources in the development process, and verify its reliability and effectiveness , but there may be situations where a new questionnaire is needed. Whenever a new scale or questionnaire needs to be developed, following a structured approach helps us develop quality tools. There are many methods for large-scale development, all of which include robustness and verification steps in between. The questionnaire is interpreted as a tool that uses the scores of aggregated items (called a scale) to measure one or more types of consumption. "The questionnaire can be identified on the continuum of unstructured structure. The structured questionnaire is "similar in format, usually questions or stimulus words, with structured answer categories that require the respondent or evaluator to evaluate or describe." Social science research with a Positivist paradigm began in the 19th century. As early as 1838, the London Statistical Society used questionnaires for the first time. Berthold Sigis-

mund proposed the first questionnaire design guide in 1856, which gave a clear overview of the questionnaire methods. Science , Provides quantitative recognition of sensory events, which provides a wide range of applications or questionnaires in research similar to Guttman Scale, Thurston Scale and Liker Scale The modified version of modified Language Questionnaire (Appendix A) had short-answer questions, including some extra questions such as age, gender and highest educational level The questions asked which language the participants used in different interlocutors; for example, which language do you speak at home? which language do you use in college ? which language do you prefer to use at home and college ? The survey also asked participants to rate their language skills such as listening, speaking, reading and writing on a scale from poor, average to good . The ones higher scale considered advanced speakers, while the ones lower than the half are considered low-level speakers.

For empathy survey, we used the interview and Empathy Quotient (EQ) which was developed by Bacon-Cohen & Wheelwright (2003) and was considered the most reliable empathy test according to Lawrence, Shaw, Baker, Baron-Cohen , David (2004) , Baron-Cohen and Wheelwright (2004).

In the past, several tests had been used by psychologists even though empathy was not easy to be measured. However, each earlier test had significant weaknesses and was used more for clinical purposes to identify psychological disorders. The EQ has been known as a popular self-report questionnaire of empathy (Batchelder, Brosnan & Ashwin,)

EQ is a 40-question questionnaire (only 10 questions are selected) (Appendix B), using the Likert 4-point scales (Lawrence et al., 2004): strongly agree, slightly agree, strongly disagree. Slightly disagree. For each question, moderate empathy (male) gets 1 point, strong empathy (female) gets 2 points, and non-empathy (male) gets random points (Baron-Cohen & Wheelwright, 2004). The questionnaire asks. Does the participants help people who are in need and if they find

it difficult to know why people are getting angry quicklyAll 40 questions were not included in this study because it took too long for participants to complete the two surveys.

On the other hand, the interview ,according to Cohen et al.(2017,p 3channels 49) is a flexible tool for collection, enabling multi-sensory to be used verbal, nonverbal , spoken and heard .This instrument allows the interviewer to notice the body language of his interviewees , in addition to the spoken words .

The reason behind selecting this semi structured interview is that during the interview other questions can be added to those already prepared.

Data collection/ procedure

In order to collect the data efficiently and promptly, we used Google form. We created a platform in the system, entering the Language questionnaire .The participants accessed the questionnaire by the link on the social network (third year Facebook group). They answered the questions according to their time .Then, we followed the data collection, we reviewed and removed the inappropriate survey answers.

Also another 9 questions about empathy were selected for the interview for much stronger results

Results

We conducted a questionnaire that encompasses two parts of language inquiry. First, language learning part in which we started by indicating the participants gender and their language proficiency level. Second, the empathy interview which included also two parts one of them is empathy quotient (selecting only 10 questions according to the participants collaboration and timing).

Differences between students were noticed and there was no linkage between empathy and language proficiency. So, we can say the results did not support our hypothesis.

Appendix A

First part indicated the participants gender. 86.7% (52 students) are females whereas 13.3% (8 students) are males. The first language they grasped was Arabic 93.3% (56 students). 5% (3 students) chose French whereas English was the choice of only one student. For the second language French, 53.3% (32) participants acquired it while the rest selected English 46.7% (28). Most of the participants 66.7% (40) had a high level in English while 30% (18) had an average level finishing by 3.3% (2) participants who had poor level.

In order to show the level of the third year students, we asked them to choose the way they used to improve their language skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing). For the listening skills, three main options were given: ask questions, repeat what the speaker says and listening while the teacher is speaking. adding an option bar for those who had extra answers. 10% (6 students), chose the first option, 35% (21 students) chose the second and the last one was the choice of 46.7% (28 students) while 8.3% (5 students) wanted to express themselves by saying that they listen to music, audio books, native speakers and anything in English, watching series and movies (especially before sleeping).

For speaking skills, 36% (22 students) said listening and repeating. Recording the voice is the choice of 10% (6)Memorizing other quotes, songs, poems, then repeating them aloud had the highest percentage which is 45% (27) . The rest 8.3% (5) said that they focused on pronunciations while listening to a speaker , repeating after listening and also talking to their friends.

For the reading skill, half of the percentage 50% of students said that they read aloud, just 41.7% (25students) read and summarize. The rest 8.3% (5students) had different answers: write about certain themes , read the writings of natives , make differences between skimming and scanning , read novels and short stories. Last but not least, in writing skills, more than half 56.7% (34students) read as much as they can, 25% (15 students)Wrote their own diary regularly whereas 13.3% (8students) preferred to get someone to read what they wrote and 5% (3students) offered multiple answers such as: using English dialects and summarize what they read .

After answering the questions about the four skills, students are asked about the way they used to improve their pronunciation, 80% (48students) said through videos of people speaking in English, 15% (9students) use dictionaries, rest of them 5% (3students) said they articulate after listening to native speakers, repeating their favourites quotes from movies, and speaking to themselves in front of the mirror .

Table 3 : Reading and writing ability

	Reading ability in any foreign language you know	Writing ability in any foreign language you know
Poor	0%	3.3% (2)
Average	31.7% (19)	45% (27)
Good	68.3% (41)	51.7% (31)

After showing students' abilities (writing, Reading, speaking, listening skills) and the way they improve their language proficiency . We come across their background and the atmosphere they live in. We asked them two main questions in order to find their impact on language learning.. The first question is : Which language do you usually speak at home?. 34 % which (most of the participants) said that it is Arabic .They justified their answer by saying that their parents are Arabic and they always speak this language. Followed by English 20% . Students use English because it is the language of the world , they need it when they travel, it gives them the freedom to express themselves and understand other people (thoughts , feelings...). 6% of participant said that their parents speak Chaoui . they inherit it.

The second question is: Which language did/do your parents speak at home? 80% said it is Arabic because it is our native language,the language of our society. , 20%. said it is Chaoui because their grandparents always speak it and so do their parents . So, They acquired it without paying attention or having the will to learn it .

We can say that the results of our questionnaire concerning language learning and language proficiency showed that students have an average level of proficiency and proved to have abilities in learning foreign languages . Nevertheless, Females showed more proficient level than male did .

Appendix B

Empathy quotient:

S. Baron –Cohen and S. Wheelwright, (2004) Empathy Quotient with scoring

Number 1 refers to male answers more than half of the sample size (60%)

Number 2 refers to female answers_ less than half (40%).

Table 4 : Empathy quotient scores

		Strongly agree	Slightly agree	Strongly disagree	Slightly disagree
1	I can easily tell if someone else wants to be enter a conversation	1 2			
2	I find it difficult to explain to others things that I understand easily , when they don't understand it the first time	2		1	
3	I really enjoy caring for other people		2		1
4	I find it hard to know what to do in a social situation				1 2
5	People often tell me that I went too far in driving my point home in a discussion	1 2			
6	It doesn't bother me too much if I am late meeting a friend	1	2		
7	Friendship and relationships are just too difficult , so I tend not to bother with them	1 2			
8	I often find it difficult to judge if something is rude or polite				1 2
9	In a conversation, I tend to focus on my own thoughts rather than on what my listener might be thinking	1 2			
10	When I was a child , I enjoyed cutting up worms to see what would happens	1 2			

The interview took place at Abbas Laghrour University . The same sample was selected to be interviewed . EQ was conducted as a first part of an interview by choosing specific questions according to the time of the participants also . , another 10 questions about empathy were selected for the interview to get much stronger *results* . As the table shows 80% of the female answered strongly and slightly agree while only 20% of them slightly disagree to some questions . 60% of males also selected strongly and slightly agree while 30% went for slightly disagree. The rest we mean 10% of the participants selected strongly disagree .

Second part of the interview

Was a “9 question interview “, also only 60 participants were present to answer our questions, the questions fulfill psychological part of the students . How they answer, how their reactions will be and how can we find the level of empathy in the interview.

The nine questions are: **Tell me about yourself?** (a self-introduction). Most of the answers of this question were very brief and precise

The answers of males were basic , they were stating their names, age, study status while the females were more expressive and outgoing . They talked about their personality, attitudes.....

what things or who are the people you are inspired by ? The participants weren't very cooperative while answering this question, because most of their answers were: I just go with the flow; I'm not a very social person to be inspired by people or even things.

How is your relationship with your colleagues? Participants' answers were alike. Really they have good relationships with their colleagues. **Which factors that help you to be successful in your studies ?**. The factors the participants mentioned are their intelligence (half of them said this) and the hard work to finish their studies . **Are you ambitious person?** This question showed that there are students (half of the participants) who don't have the will to work hard or to be creative.

How do you react when someone asks for your help?. 70% answered that they would gladly try to help whomever in need, while the other 30% stated that they are not that cooperative at all if anyone is in need of them (referring to their colleagues). **How do you react to criticism?** 60% said that they are very open minded and welcoming for any kind of criticism, 40% of answers were totally the opposite, that they don't like when someone criticize them or give them an opinion if they didn't ask for it

How does curiosity impact your outlook ? All of the participants didn't answer this question.

They are not interested in . **Where do you feel most present?** Outside of the house, in nature (outdoors), the gym, the park and college are the answers of 80%, while only 20% feel most present at home and their bedroom

Discussion

The results we obtained from our research showed that third year students didn't have a high level of language proficiency , they showed their willingness to learn foreign languages . Females seemed to show a high degree of empathy than males. Although , there is no relationship between empathy and language Proficiency while learning a language . So , students should be more exposed to activities even the classroom subject's and modules that enhance their empathy towards people and their colleagues. empathy is a compulsory human trait that occupies a significant place in the field of research. To illustrate, the past few decades have been the years of exerting eloquent focus on empathy and its practice in the spirit of diffusing the essence of empathy globally (e.g., Cruz and Patterson, 2005; Marx and Pray, 2011; Stebletsova and Torubarova, 2017; Franzese, 2016). Marx and Pray (2011) reported that empathy has been eloquently discussed in the fields including psychology, moral education, business, law, feminism, and more, "with each perspective adopting different definitions and aspects of the concept". In order to make empathy a reality, researchers have proposed various institutional factors that encourage a person to develop empathy; attempts to teach or teach empathy and the results of these efforts will be recorded later. We firmly believe that when we start to include empathy activities, our students tend to show concern. We chose the first semester to clarify and practice empathy, because students still have a lot of time to show empathy in different stages of academic, professional, and social life. We take this opportunity to satisfy your fresh and empty heart with compassion. The empathy that third year students develop in the classroom is crucial to realize the need to value other people's time. The background of our research continues to exist in students' language acquisition. This usually reduces their patience. Given the universality of this reality, Participants in our study did not want to hear lies against them.

They are usually not characterized by an attitude towards any form of feedback or constructive criticism. Even in a professional or work environment, colleagues do. They are not cognitively caring to accept constructive feedback, which may open up new careers or promotion opportunities.

Language proficiency in all four skills (reading . Listening . Speaking . Writing), showed that the students have an average level in acquiring them. They most likely that is due to their backgrounds, society, habitat and the fact that they can speak two languages (BILINGUALS) . these students grow up speaking their parents' native language in their childhood home while speaking English/ French at school and college

Students grow up in a household in which each parent speaks a different language (Chaoui , Arabic); in this case, they may learn to speak to each parent in that parent's language. In short, they regularly exposed to two languages from an early age will most likely become fluent native speaker of both languages. Students stated that they speak only English, both at home with their bilingual parents and in college. Showing that their level in communicating (pronunciation) is average not that high for them to talk like natives. Their language proficiency and empathy level was tested through a very direct easy and professional questionnaire and interview (that included two parts) for sufficient and well-considered answers. Third year students showed that no matter how good, average, poor their proficiency and their level is in learning languages and in learning generally, the empathy they held among themselves have no correlation. Females and male also showed same results. Therefore as it was mentioned before in showing results of our research: there is no relationship between empathy and language proficiency in language learning

Limitation of the study

This study has a lot of limitations. One of them is that the instruments we used for language assessment and empathy level may not have been sufficient to collect accurate data .

Furthermore , empathy is difficult to be measured because it might not indicate how one actually felt but rather reflect one's knowledge of how other people expect one to feel , it might vary according to an individual 's ability to verbalize his or her thoughts. So, a larger group of participants at different proficiency levels should be included in future studies to attain more specific results that are easier to generalize .

Also, it seems difficult for researchers to analyze the role of empathy in relation to many other variables such as sex, income, parental education among many others .

Suggestions for future research

Empathy helps to improve student's understanding and emotion. While the key of empathy teaching is teachers , teachers should possess the sense of familiarity , harmony, understanding and responsibility .

Empathy teaching requires teachers to use their true feelings to infect and motivate students , enhance their self confidence, create a good atmosphere for language learning and ensure students learn language in a relaxed and pleasant environment and thus perform the function of empathy .In the second language acquisition process ,the appropriate use of empathy strategy , the elimination of students restraint , tension fear of feeling can give learners strong desire to explore knowledge under an actively learning atmosphere .

So, future studies should focus on teacher's own empathy levels in relation to their effect on students 'achievement in foreign language learning.

Conclusion

Empathy is not an easy feeling that can be nurtured through simple classroom tasks because it requires that one places himself /herself in others' shoes . It is one of the most important factors in living harmony with other people and language is an important way to advance empathy development .

We can say that this study showed a large number of differences among the empathy levels of the students and their achievement in foreign language learning and no correlation was found between the two . So, our hypothesis about the relationship between language proficiency and empathy scores was not confirmed . But , it was a good start for studying empathy and the relationship between empathy and language learning .

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Appendix A

Language History Questionnaire

1- Gender :

Male

female

2- Choice of studying English:

Optional

Imposed

3- Which language did you learn as a first language?

Arabic

French

English

4- What language have you learnt as a second language?

French

English

other language

5- How is your level in English?

Poor

Average

Good

6- What is the easiest way for you to improve your listening skill?

- Ask questions

- Repeat back what the speaker says

- Listening while the teacher is speaking

Other suggestions:

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7- What is the easiest way for you to improve your speaking skill?

- Listen and read

- Record your voice

- Memorize other quotes, songs, poems then repeat them aloud

Other suggestions

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8-What is the easiest way for you to improve your reading skill?

- Read aloud
- Read and summarize what you read

Other suggestions:

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9 - What is the easiest way for you to improve your writing skill?

- Read as much as you can (novels , newspapers,...)
- Write your diary regularly
- Try to get someone to read what you have written

Other suggestions:

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10 - How do you improve your pronunciation?

- Through watching videos of people speaking in English
- Using dictionaries

Other suggestions

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11- Rate your ability for reading in any foreign language that you know?

Poor average good

12- Rate your ability for writing in any foreign language that you know?

Poor average good

13-What language do you usually speak at home? Justify your answer.

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14-Which language did/do your parents speak at home? why?

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15- Among the languages you know, which language is the one that you would prefer to use at home? Justify your answer

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16- Among the languages you know, which language is the one that you would prefer to use at the college ? Justify your answer

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Appendix B

		Strongly agree	Slightly agree	Strongly disagree	Slightly disagree
1	I can easily tell if someone else wants to be enter a conversation				
2	I find it difficult to explain to others things that I understand easily , when they don't understand it the first time				
3	I really enjoy caring for other people				
4	I find it hard to know what to do in a social situation				
5	People often tell me that I went too far in driving my point home in a discussion				
6	It doesn't bother me too much if I am late meeting a friend				
7	Friendship and relationships are just too difficult , so I tend not to bother with them				
8	I often find it difficult to judge if something is rude or polite				
9	In a conversation, I tend to focus on my own thoughts rather than on what my listener might be thinking				
10	When I was a child , I enjoyed cutting up worms to see				

	what would happens				
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Empathy Quotient: S. Baron –Cohen and S. Wheelwright(2004)

Second part of the questionnaire

- 1_ Tell me about yourself (a self-introduction).
- 2_ what things or who are the people you are inspire by?
- 3_ Describe your relationship with your colleagues?
- 4_ Which factors that help you to succeed in your studies?
- 5_ Are you an ambitious person?
- 6_ How do you react when someone asks for your help?
- 7_ How do you react to criticism?
- 8_ How does curiosity impact your outlook?
- 9_ Where do you feel most present?