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Factors Affecting Attention Span and Focus among
Preparatory School Students Learning English as a Foreign
Language in Janzour, Tripoli

*A Research Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of
Bachelor of Education in English Language*

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Dedication

We dedicate this research project to our beloved families for their endless love, encouragement, and unwavering support throughout our academic journey. Their patience, sacrifices, and belief in our abilities have been a constant source of motivation and strength in overcoming challenges.

We also extend our sincere dedication to our teachers and instructors, whose guidance, knowledge, and inspiration have greatly contributed to our academic and personal development.

Finally, we dedicate this work to all students who experience difficulties in maintaining attention and focus in the classroom, with the hope that this study may contribute to enhancing their learning experience and academic achievement.

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List of Abbreviations

Abbreviation	Full Form
EFL	English as a Foreign Language
TBLT	Task-Based Language Teaching

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Abstract

This study investigated the factors affecting the attention span and focus of preparatory school EFL students in selected schools in Janzour, Tripoli. A convergent mixed-methods presented by design was employed to obtain a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon. Quantitative data were collected through a structured questionnaire administered to 57 preparatory school EFL students, while qualitative data were gathered through semi-structured interviews with EFL teachers. The findings revealed that students' attention span and focus were influenced by a combination of internal factors, including motivation, anxiety, fatigue, and lack of interest, and external factors, such as the classroom environment, teaching methods, teacher behaviour, class size, and technology-related distractions. The results also highlighted the importance of supportive teacher behaviour, varied instructional strategies, meaningful classroom activities, and the effective management of technology in promoting students' attention and engagement during English language lessons. These findings provide valuable insights for EFL teachers and educational practitioners seeking to enhance classroom concentration and create more interactive and effective learning environments for preparatory school students.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

Attention span and focus are considered essential components of the learning process, particularly in foreign language classrooms where students are expected to engage actively in listening, speaking, reading, and writing activities. In English as a Foreign Language (EFL) contexts, students' ability to maintain concentration during classroom instruction significantly influences their comprehension, participation, and academic performance. However, many preparatory school students experience difficulties in sustaining attention during English lessons due to a variety of psychological, environmental, and instructional factors. These challenges may negatively affect students' motivation, classroom interaction, and overall language learning outcomes.

Recently, educational researchers and teachers have shown increasing concern regarding the decline in students' attention span in classroom settings. As a result, several issues have been identified as contributing to reduced concentration among learners, including anxiety, fatigue, lack of motivation, ineffective teaching methods, overcrowded classrooms, and technology-related distractions. In EFL classrooms specifically, maintaining students' attention is particularly important because language learning requires continuous engagement, practice, and interaction. Therefore, understanding the factors that influence students' attention and focus can help teachers adopt more effective instructional strategies and create supportive learning environments that enhance students' engagement and academic achievement.

Within the Libyan educational context, limited research has examined the factors affecting attention span and focus among preparatory school EFL students, particularly in schools located in Janzour, Tripoli. Therefore, this study makes a major contribution to research on the possible internal and external factors that may influence students' concentration during English language lessons from both students' and teachers' perspectives using a convergent mixed-methods design. It is expected that the current investigation will provide valuable insights for EFL teachers, curriculum designers, and

educational institutions in developing practical strategies to improve students' attention, participation, and learning experiences in English classrooms.

1.2 Background of the Study

As has been stated, attention span and focus are important factors in the EFL classroom because they directly affect students' ability to learn the language. In English language lessons, students need to concentrate in order to understand explanations, follow classroom activities, participate in discussions, and complete learning tasks. However, many EFL learners experience some kind of difficulties in maintaining attention during lessons, especially when lessons are long, repetitive, or lack variety.

Indeed, students' loss of focus may be caused by several internal factors, such as low motivation, anxiety, fatigue, boredom, and lack of interest. These factors might reduce students' ability to concentrate and hinder their effective participation in the classroom. Conversely, external factors, including classroom environment, teaching methods, teacher behavior, class size, noise, and the use of mobile phones, may also distract students and affect their learning.

In the context of preparatory schools in Janzour, Tripoli, many students encounter difficulties in maintaining attention during English language lessons. The study emerges from the theoretical assumption that attention is a fundamental prerequisite for effective language learning and meaningful classroom engagement. These difficulties may negatively affect students' classroom participation, comprehension, and overall schooling performance. Therefore, this study focuses on the selected preparatory schools in Janzour to investigate the factors influencing their attention span and focus. A clearer understanding of these factors can assist teachers in adopting more effective instructional strategies to enhance students' attention, engagement, and learning outcomes.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

Despite the importance of attention in EFL learning, many preparatory school students in Janzour appear to face difficulties in maintaining focus during English lessons. Students may lose attention because of internal factors such as low motivation, fatigue, anxiety,

and boredom, as well as external classroom-related factors such as teaching methods, classroom environment, class size, noise, and mobile phone use.

As aforementioned, such difficulties may negatively affect students' participation, comprehension, and classroom performance. However, limited research has examined the combined internal, external, and instructional factors that influence attention span among preparatory school EFL students in this local context. Therefore, the present study attempts to fill this gap by investigating the factors affecting attention span and focus among preparatory school EFL students in selected schools in Janzour, Tripoli.

1.4 Research Questions

With regard to the research problem outlined above, this study seeks to provide empirical answers to the following research questions:

1. What internal factors influence preparatory school EFL students' attention span and focus?
2. What external, classroom-related factors affect students' attention and concentration in EFL classes?
3. What instructional strategies can EFL teachers employ to enhance students' attention and engagement?

1.5 Objectives of the Study

The main objective of this study is to examine the factors affecting attention span and focus among preparatory school EFL students in selected schools in Janzour, Tripoli. However, this broad objective is further broken down into the following specific objectives:

1. Identifying the internal factors influencing students' attention span, such as low motivation, anxiety, fatigue, boredom, and lack of interest.
2. Examining external, classroom-related factors that affect students' focus, including teaching methods, classroom environment, class size, noise, and the use of technology.

3. Investigating the impact of limited attention span on students' classroom participation and learning outcomes.

1.6 Significance of the Study

This study is significant because it is expected to contribute to a better understanding of the factors that influence preparatory school EFL students' attention span and concentration during English language lessons. By identifying internal, external, and instructional factors that affect students' focus, the study may help EFL teachers adopt more effective teaching strategies and classroom practices that enhance students' engagement and participation in the learning process.

Furthermore, the study may benefit preparatory school students by highlighting the classroom conditions and instructional approaches that support sustained attention and active involvement in English lessons. The findings may also provide useful insights for curriculum developers, educators, and school administrators who seek to improve the quality of EFL teaching and learning environments. Besides, this study may serve as a valuable reference for future researchers interested in investigating attention span, classroom engagement, and related issues within EFL contexts.

1.7 Scope of the Study

This study is limited to preparatory school EFL students in selected schools in Janzour, Tripoli. It focuses on examining the internal and external classroom-related factors that affect students' attention span and focus during English language lessons, as well as the instructional strategies that may enhance students' engagement and concentration.

The study employed a mixed-methods approach in which quantitative data were collected through questionnaires administered to 57 students, while qualitative data were gathered through interviews with five EFL teachers. Therefore, the findings of the study are limited to the selected participants and the specific educational context in which the research was conducted.

1.8 Definition of Key Terms

Attention Span: Refers to the length of time during which a student is able to maintain concentration on a classroom activity or learning task without becoming distracted.

Focus: Refers to the student's ability to direct and maintain attention towards lesson content and assigned learning activities.

EFL (English as a Foreign Language): Refers to the learning of English in contexts where English is not used as the primary language of daily communication.

Internal Factors: Refers to personal, emotional, or psychological factors that may influence students' attention and concentration, such as motivation, anxiety, fatigue, boredom, and lack of interest.

External Factors: Refers to classroom-related or environmental factors that may affect students' focus and engagement, including teaching methods, classroom environment, noise, class size, and mobile phone use.

Distraction: Refers to any internal or external stimulus that interrupts or reduces students' attention during English language lessons.

Preparatory School Students: Refers to students studying at the preparatory education level prior to secondary education.

1.9 Research Design and Data Analysis

This study adopted a mixed-methods research design that combines both quantitative and qualitative approaches to achieve a comprehensive understanding of the research problem. Quantitative data were collected through a questionnaire distributed to 57 preparatory school EFL students, whereas qualitative data were obtained through semi-structured interviews with five EFL teachers.

Questionnaire data were quantitatively analyzed using Microsoft Excel. Descriptive statistical methods, including frequency distributions, percentages, and mean scores, were

applied to summarize the respondents' data. Meanwhile, the qualitative interview data were analyzed thematically by identifying recurring ideas and organizing them into major themes related to internal factors, external classroom-related factors, limited attention and classroom participation, and strategies for improving students' focus and engagement.

In conclusion, attention span and focus play an essential role in the effectiveness of EFL learning. Many preparatory school students experience difficulties in maintaining concentration during English lessons due to a variety of internal and external factors. Such difficulties may negatively influence students' classroom participation, comprehension, and overall learning outcomes.

Accordingly, this chapter introduced the background and context of the study by highlighting the importance of attention span and focus in EFL learning. It discussed the research problem concerning preparatory school students' difficulties in maintaining attention during English lessons and explained how various internal and external factors may affect students' concentration, participation, and learning outcomes.

The chapter also presented the aims and research questions of the study, together with its significance, scope, and key terms. In addition, it outlined the mixed-methods research design adopted in the study, including the procedures for data collection and analysis through questionnaires and teacher interviews. Overall, this chapter provided the foundation for the study and established the basis for the review of related literature and theoretical background presented in the following chapter.

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CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter reviews the theoretical and empirical literature related to attention span and focus in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms. Attention is considered a fundamental component of successful language learning because learners must concentrate on teacher explanations, classroom interaction, language input, and instructional activities in order to develop linguistic competence and communicative ability. Researchers in educational psychology and second language acquisition emphasize that attention is closely associated with comprehension, memory, participation, and academic achievement (Ellis, 2015; Ortega, 2019). When students experience difficulties in maintaining attention, their classroom engagement and language learning outcomes may be negatively affected.

The chapter examines the major factors influencing students' concentration and engagement in EFL lessons. These factors are categorized into internal factors, including anxiety, motivation, fatigue, boredom, and lack of interest, and external factors, such as classroom environment, teaching methods, teacher behaviour, class size, noise, and technology-related distractions. The chapter also discusses the effects of limited attention on classroom participation and language learning performance, reviews previous empirical studies related to the topic, and presents the theoretical framework guiding the present study.

2.2 Attention Span and Focus in EFL Classrooms

Attention span refers to the length of time learners are able to maintain concentration on a specific task before becoming distracted (Posner & Rothbart, 2007). In EFL classrooms, attention is particularly important because language learning requires learners to process multiple forms of input simultaneously, including listening, speaking, reading, writing, vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation. As a consequence, focus enables learners to

follow classroom instructions, understand explanations, participate in communicative activities, and respond effectively to learning tasks.

Within second language acquisition, attention is widely regarded as a necessary condition for learning. Schmidt's (1990) Noticing Hypothesis, for instance, argues that learners must consciously notice language input before acquisition can occur. Similarly, Ellis (2015) emphasized that attention plays a crucial role in enabling learners to process linguistic forms and meanings effectively. In classroom settings, students who maintain attention are generally more capable of completing tasks, interacting with peers, and engaging actively in classroom discussions. Conversely, students who lose focus may become passive, disengaged, or distracted by unrelated activities, which can reduce their academic performance and participation.

Attention in EFL classrooms is not only a cognitive process but also a behavioral one. Learners' attention is often reflected through observable classroom behaviors such as listening carefully, responding to questions, maintaining eye contact, taking notes, and participating in classroom interaction. In contrast, inattentive learners may talk to classmates, use mobile phones, avoid participation, or fail to complete classroom tasks. Consequently, attention is strongly associated with classroom engagement and effective learning outcomes (Mercer & Dornyei, 2020).

Recent empirical studies indicate that attention and distraction in EFL classrooms are influenced by multiple interconnected factors. Lin and Hung (2025), for example, investigated distraction among EFL college students and found that technology use, multitasking, environmental conditions, teaching methods, course content, motivation, and psychological variables significantly influenced students' concentration. Although their study focused on university learners, its findings remain relevant to preparatory school contexts because they demonstrate that attention difficulties emerge from a combination of cognitive, emotional, instructional, and environmental influences.

Similarly, research conducted by Shernoff et al. (2017) demonstrated that students' engagement and attention increase when classroom activities are interactive, meaningful, and appropriately challenging. This suggests that maintaining students' attention in EFL

classrooms requires not only learner motivation but also supportive instructional practices and stimulating classroom environments. For analytical purposes, these factors are commonly classified into two major categories: internal factors, which originate from the learner's psychological and emotional state, and external factors, which arise from certain pedagogical issues such as classroom and environmental conditions influencing the learning process.

2.2.1 Internal Factors Affecting Attention

Internal factors refer to personal, emotional, cognitive, and psychological conditions originating within the learner that influence the ability to maintain concentration during English lessons. In EFL classrooms, students may lose attention not only because of external classroom conditions but also because of their emotional responses, attitudes, and mental states toward learning English. Major internal factors include foreign language anxiety, motivation, fatigue, boredom, lack of interest, low self-confidence, and emotional stress.

One of the most influential internal factors affecting attention in EFL learning is foreign language anxiety. Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope (1986) defined foreign language anxiety as a set of feelings related to tension, nervousness, fear, and apprehension experienced in language learning situations. Learners who experience anxiety may become excessively concerned about making mistakes, speaking in front of classmates, or receiving negative evaluation from teachers and peers. Consequently, their attention may shift away from learning tasks toward feelings of fear and self-consciousness.

Contemporary research continues to support the negative relationship between anxiety and language learning performance. Teimouri, Goetze, and Plonsky (2019), through a large-scale meta-analysis, found that foreign language anxiety is significantly associated with lower language achievement and reduced classroom engagement. Similarly, Dewaele and Li (2020) emphasized that emotionally supportive classroom environments can reduce anxiety and enhance learners' willingness to communicate and participate in classroom interaction. In preparatory school contexts, anxious learners may avoid

answering questions, hesitate to participate in speaking tasks, and experience difficulty maintaining focus during lessons.

Motivation is another major internal factor influencing students' attention span and engagement. Dornyei (2001) argued that motivation is one of the most important determinants of success in second language learning because it encourages learners to invest effort, sustain participation, and persist in learning activities. Motivated learners are generally more attentive, enthusiastic, and willing to participate in classroom tasks. In contrast, students with low motivation may become passive, distracted, or uninterested during English lessons.

Recent studies have further highlighted the relationship between motivation and learner engagement. Lena and Nikolov (2025) reviewed empirical studies concerning young EFL learners' motivation and found that task engagement is strongly influenced by teacher support, classroom atmosphere, task design, and the relevance of learning activities. These findings are particularly important for preparatory school students, who often require age-appropriate, meaningful, and interactive activities in order to sustain concentration and participation.

Boredom and lack of interest are closely related to low motivation and limited engagement. Pekrun et al. (2010) explained that boredom negatively affects learners' attention, participation, and academic performance. In EFL classrooms, lessons that rely heavily on memorization, repetition, or long teacher-centered explanations may lead students to disengage from classroom activities. Bored learners may talk to classmates, become distracted by external stimuli, or use mobile phones during lessons instead of focusing on learning tasks.

Fatigue also plays a significant role in reducing students' attention and concentration. Students may experience tiredness due to long school hours, insufficient sleep, excessive homework, or mental exhaustion. Fatigue reduces learners' cognitive processing ability, memory retention, and responsiveness during lessons (Owens, 2014). Even when instruction is clear and organized, tired students may struggle to maintain concentration

for extended periods. Therefore, lesson timing, classroom pacing, and activity variation are important considerations for maintaining students' attention.

In addition, low self-confidence and emotional stress may negatively affect students' concentration and classroom participation. Learners who doubt their language abilities may avoid participation because they fear criticism or embarrassment. According to Mercer and Gregersen (2020), emotionally supportive classroom environments can strengthen learners' confidence, resilience, and engagement in language learning activities.

Overall, internal factors exert a substantial influence on students' attention and focus in EFL classrooms. Anxiety may reduce confidence and participation, low motivation may weaken engagement, boredom may lead to distraction, and fatigue may decrease learners' mental alertness. Consequently, improving students' attention requires supportive, motivating, and psychologically safe learning environments in addition to effective instructional practices.

2.2.2 External Factors Influencing Attention

External factors refer to classroom-related and environmental conditions that influence students' ability to focus during English lessons. These factors include classroom environment, seating arrangement, class size, teaching methods, teacher behavior, classroom management, instructional materials, and technology-related distractions. Unlike internal factors, external factors originate from the learning environment and can often be controlled or improved through effective educational practices.

The classroom environment is considered one of the most important external influences on students' attention. A noisy, crowded, or poorly organized classroom may reduce learners' ability to concentrate effectively. Students who sit far from the teacher or cannot clearly see instructional materials may experience reduced engagement and participation. In addition, large class sizes may limit teachers' ability to monitor students' attention, manage classroom interaction, and provide individualized support. Blatchford, Bassett,

and Brown (2011) found that overcrowded classrooms negatively affect students' concentration, participation, and teacher-student interaction.

Teaching methods also strongly influence students' classroom attention and engagement. Traditional teacher-centered instruction that depends primarily on explanation and repetition may reduce learners' interest and participation. In contrast, interactive teaching strategies, collaborative learning, communicative activities, and task-based instruction can increase students' engagement and sustain attention (Richards, 2017). Lin and Hung (2025) identified teaching methods and course design as important factors influencing distraction among EFL learners, suggesting that classroom attention is closely linked to the way lessons are organized and delivered.

Teacher behaviour represents another important external factor affecting students' focus. Positive teacher behaviours, such as encouragement, clear explanations, constructive feedback, eye contact, humor, and varied voice tone, can create supportive learning environments that promote attention and participation. Conversely, negative or monotonous teaching behaviour may increase students' anxiety and reduce classroom engagement. Attia and Algazi (2025) emphasized that teachers play a significant role in identifying students' anxiety and applying classroom strategies that reduce emotional barriers and support learner engagement.

Technology-related distractions have become increasingly important in contemporary classrooms. Mobile phones, social media, and digital multitasking may reduce students' attention when used for non-educational purposes during lessons. Junco and Cotten (2012) found that multitasking with digital devices negatively affects academic concentration and classroom performance. Nevertheless, technology can also enhance engagement when integrated effectively into instructional practices. Educational videos, interactive quizzes, language-learning applications, and digital games may increase students' motivation and participation when used appropriately.

Classroom management and activity design also influence students' attention span. Lessons that include varied tasks, group work, discussions, and interactive activities are more likely to maintain students' concentration than lessons dominated by passive

listening. According to Mercer and Dornyei (2020), learner engagement increases when students feel actively involved in meaningful classroom interaction and collaborative learning experiences.

Overall, external factors significantly influence students' attention and focus in EFL classrooms. Classroom noise, overcrowding, ineffective teaching methods, poor classroom management, and uncontrolled technology use may reduce concentration and participation. In contrast, supportive teacher behaviour, organized classroom environments, interactive teaching strategies, and purposeful use of technology can contribute positively to students' attention and engagement during English lessons.

2.3 The Effect of Limited Attention on Classroom Participation

Limited attention can significantly influence students' classroom participation because effective participation requires sustained concentration, comprehension, and active engagement with classroom activities. In EFL classrooms, participation is particularly important since language learning depends heavily on interaction, communication, and continuous practice of language skills. When students fail to maintain attention during lessons, they may miss important explanations, misunderstand instructions, or become unable to follow classroom tasks effectively. Consequently, their participation and overall learning performance may decline.

One major consequence of limited attention is reduced oral participation. Students who become distracted during lessons may avoid answering questions because they have not fully understood the teacher's explanation or have missed essential parts of the discussion. They may also remain silent during speaking activities, pair work, or group discussions. Such behavior limits opportunities for meaningful language use and communicative practice, both of which are essential for developing speaking proficiency and communicative competence in EFL contexts. Therefore, limited attention affects not only learners' concentration but also their confidence, interaction, and willingness to communicate.

Research has shown that learner engagement and participation are closely connected to motivation and classroom task design. Lena and Nikolov (2025) found that young EFL learners' engagement is strongly influenced by teacher support, classroom atmosphere, meaningful activities, and appropriate task design. Their findings suggest that students are more likely to maintain attention and participate actively when classroom activities are interesting, interactive, and suitable for their age and proficiency level. In relation to the present study, preparatory school students may lose concentration and participate less when tasks are repetitive, excessively long, or unclear. Conversely, meaningful and student-centered activities can enhance both attention and classroom involvement.

Similarly, Zhong, Ismail, and Lin (2025) investigated EFL students' engagement in project-based speaking activities and reported that project-based learning positively supports students' behavioural, emotional, and cognitive engagement. Their study demonstrated that learner-centered instructional approaches encourage active participation because students become directly involved in solving problems, collaborating with classmates, and using English in authentic communicative situations. These findings indicate that attention-related problems may be reduced when learners are assigned meaningful and interactive roles rather than remaining passive recipients of information.

Limited attention may also negatively affect students' ability to follow instructions and complete classroom tasks successfully. Students who fail to focus while the teacher explains classroom activities may become confused about task requirements, which can result in mistakes, incomplete work, or excessive dependence on classmates for assistance. Over time, repeated difficulties in task completion may reduce learners' confidence and decrease their willingness to participate in future classroom activities.

Anxiety also represents an important factor connecting limited attention with weak classroom participation. Attia and Algazi (2025) reported that foreign language anxiety remains a major challenge in EFL classrooms because it negatively affects learners' confidence, participation, and engagement.

Students experiencing anxiety may lose concentration because they are preoccupied with fear of making mistakes or being negatively evaluated by others. As a result, they may avoid answering questions, participating in discussions, or engaging in communicative tasks. This supports the view that internal psychological factors can simultaneously influence both attention and classroom participation.

Overall, limited attention affects classroom participation in several ways. It may reduce learners' ability to understand instructions, engage in discussions, complete classroom tasks, and use English actively during lessons. The reviewed literature indicates that meaningful activities, supportive teacher behavior, project-based learning, and anxiety-reduction strategies can improve students' attention and participation simultaneously. Therefore, EFL teachers should employ instructional approaches that maintain students' concentration and encourage active involvement in the learning process.

2.4 Instructional Strategies for Improving Focus

Instructional strategies play a crucial role in improving students' attention and reducing classroom distraction in EFL learning environments. Effective instructional practices can enhance learners' concentration, engagement, and participation by creating meaningful and interactive learning experiences. Strategies such as varied classroom activities, short tasks, pair and group work, educational games, visual aids, real-life examples, positive feedback, and clear classroom management procedures can help students remain mentally engaged throughout the lesson.

One of the most effective approaches for improving students' focus and participation is Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT). Task-based learning emphasizes the use of meaningful communicative tasks that require learners to use English for authentic purposes, such as solving problems, expressing opinions, conducting discussions, or preparing presentations. Ellis (2003) argued that TBLT encourages learners to use language meaningfully rather than merely memorizing grammatical forms. More recent research by Mudinillah, Rahmi, and Taro (2024) demonstrated that task-based learning positively influences students' motivation, classroom engagement, speaking proficiency, and willingness to participate. These findings are particularly relevant to preparatory

school learners because interactive and communicative activities may help students sustain attention and reduce boredom during English lessons.

Creating a supportive and low-anxiety classroom atmosphere is another important strategy for improving students' focus. Learners are more likely to maintain concentration and participate actively when they feel safe, respected, and encouraged within the classroom environment. Teachers can reduce anxiety by providing constructive feedback, encouraging participation, and allowing students to make mistakes without fear of embarrassment or criticism. Attia and Algazi (2025) emphasized the important role of teachers in reducing foreign language anxiety and promoting positive classroom interaction in EFL settings.

Additionally, instructional activities should be designed according to students' age, language proficiency, and cognitive abilities. Preparatory school students may lose concentration when tasks are excessively difficult, overly simple, or too lengthy. Consequently, teachers should employ short, clear, and varied activities that maintain learners' interest and allow smooth transitions between tasks. Activities such as role-play, picture description, matching exercises, group competitions, and short communicative tasks can increase students' engagement and sustain their attention during lessons.

Technology can also serve as an effective instructional tool when used appropriately and purposefully. Multimedia resources such as educational videos, audio recordings, interactive quizzes, and digital language-learning applications can increase students' motivation and classroom engagement. However, uncontrolled use of mobile phones and digital devices may lead to distraction and multitasking behaviors that negatively affect concentration. Therefore, technology should be integrated into classroom instruction through clear guidelines and well-defined educational objectives.

Furthermore, effective classroom management contributes significantly to maintaining students' focus. Clear instructions, organized lesson structure, smooth transitions between activities, and active monitoring of student behavior can reduce off-task behavior and improve classroom attention. According to Mercer and Dornyei (2020), students are more

engaged when they perceive classroom activities as meaningful, collaborative, and emotionally supportive.

In summary, instructional strategies play an essential role in enhancing students' attention and engagement in EFL classrooms. Interactive teaching methods, task-based learning, supportive classroom environments, age-appropriate activities, purposeful technology integration, and effective classroom management can all contribute to improving students' concentration and participation during English lessons.

2.5 Previous Studies

The reviewed literature demonstrates that attention span and focus in EFL classrooms are influenced by a combination of internal, external, and instructional factors. Internal factors include anxiety, motivation, boredom, fatigue, lack of confidence, and lack of interest, whereas external factors involve classroom environment, noise, class size, teaching methods, teacher behavior, and technology-related distractions. Instructional factors include task design, classroom interaction, teacher support, feedback, and the use of learner-centered activities. For analytical purposes, these factors are commonly categorized into two broad dimensions: internal factors related to learners' psychological and emotional conditions, and external factors associated with the classroom and instructional environment.

Previous empirical studies indicate that attention and classroom engagement in EFL contexts are multidimensional and cannot be explained by a single variable. Lin and Hung (2025), for example, found that distraction among EFL learners is associated with technology use, multitasking, classroom environment, teaching methods, and psychological variables. Their findings suggest that students' concentration is influenced simultaneously by cognitive, emotional, and environmental factors.

Similarly, Attia and Algazi (2025) emphasized the negative influence of foreign language anxiety on learners' confidence, participation, and classroom engagement. Their study highlighted the important role of teachers in reducing anxiety and creating supportive learning environments that encourage students' active participation. In addition, Lena and

Nikolov (2025) reported that young EFL learners' motivation and engagement are strongly affected by teacher support, meaningful activities, and effective task design. Their findings indicate that appropriately designed classroom tasks can improve learners' attention and willingness to participate in classroom interaction.

Research on instructional practices has also shown that learner-centered approaches contribute positively to students' attention and engagement. Mudinillah, Rahmi, and Taro (2024) found that task-based language teaching enhances learners' motivation, engagement, speaking proficiency, and classroom participation. Likewise, Zhong, Ismail, and Lin (2025) demonstrated that project-based learning increases students' behavioral, emotional, and cognitive engagement by encouraging collaboration, problem-solving, and active language use.

Despite the growing body of research on attention and engagement in EFL classrooms, most previous studies have focused primarily on university students or educational contexts outside Libya. Limited research has investigated attention span and focus among preparatory school EFL students within the Libyan educational environment, particularly in Janzour, Tripoli. Therefore, the present study seeks to address this gap by examining the combined influence of internal factors, external classroom-related factors, and instructional strategies on students' attention span and focus in a local preparatory school context. In doing so, the study contributes to the existing literature by providing insights into attention-related challenges faced by preparatory school learners in Libyan EFL classrooms.

2.6 Theoretical Framework

This study is guided by the Theory of Selective Attention and Krashen's Affective Filter Hypothesis, both of which provide important explanations for students' attention and engagement in EFL learning contexts.

The Theory of Selective Attention explains that individuals have limited cognitive capacity and therefore must focus on relevant information while filtering out irrelevant or distracting stimuli. This concept was first proposed by Broadbent (1958), who suggested

that attention operates as a filter that allows only selected information to be processed. This view was later refined by Treisman (1964), who argued that unattended information is not fully blocked but only weakened. Further developments by Posner and Rothbart (2007) emphasized attention as a flexible system involving control processes that regulate the allocation of cognitive resources. In classroom environments, learners continuously receive large amounts of sensory and linguistic input, but only information that receives focused attention is likely to be processed effectively. In EFL classrooms, students are expected to concentrate on teacher explanations, classroom interaction, instructional materials, and language-learning tasks while minimizing distraction from unrelated environmental or psychological stimuli. When students experience excessive distraction or divided attention, their ability to process language input and participate effectively in classroom activities may decline.

Similarly, Krashen's Affective Filter Hypothesis (1985) provides an important theoretical foundation for the present study. According to Krashen (*ibid*), emotional variables such as anxiety, low motivation, low self-confidence, and negative attitudes can function as an "affective filter" that blocks or reduces language acquisition. When the affective filter is high, learners are less likely to process and internalize language input effectively, even when it is presented in a clear and meaningful form. Even when learners are exposed to meaningful language input, high levels of anxiety or low motivation may prevent effective processing and learning. Conversely, learners who feel motivated, confident, and emotionally secure are more likely to engage actively with classroom tasks and benefit from instructional input.

The integration of these two theoretical perspectives is particularly relevant to the present study because they explain students' attention from both cognitive and emotional dimensions. Selective attention theory explains how learners allocate cognitive resources to classroom tasks and manage distractions, whereas the Affective Filter Hypothesis explains how emotional and motivational factors influence learners' concentration and participation. Together, these theories support the study's investigation of internal factors, external classroom-related factors, and instructional strategies affecting preparatory school students' attention span and focus in EFL classrooms. They also provide a

theoretical basis for understanding the relationship between classroom distractions, emotional conditions, learner engagement, and effective language learning.

2.7 Conclusion

This chapter reviewed the theoretical and empirical literature related to attention span and focus in EFL classrooms. The review demonstrated that students' attention is influenced by a variety of internal factors, including anxiety, motivation, boredom, fatigue, lack of confidence, and lack of interest. It also showed that external factors such as classroom environment, class size, noise, teacher behavior, teaching methods, and technology use can significantly influence students' concentration and classroom engagement.

The chapter further discussed the effects of limited attention on classroom participation and learning outcomes. Limited attention may reduce learners' ability to follow instructions, answer questions, participate in discussions, complete classroom tasks, and use English effectively during communicative activities. The reviewed studies also emphasized the importance of teacher support, meaningful task design, learner-centered instruction, and interactive classroom activities in improving students' attention and participation.

In addition, the chapter linked previous empirical studies to the present research and identified the existing gap in the literature concerning preparatory school EFL learners in the Libyan context. Finally, the chapter presented the theoretical framework guiding the study, namely selective attention theory and Krashen's Affective Filter Hypothesis, which together explain the cognitive and emotional dimensions of students' attention and engagement in EFL classrooms. Overall, the reviewed literature supports the need for further investigation into the factors affecting preparatory school students' attention span and focus in Janzour, Tripoli.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the methodology adopted in the present study. It outlines the research design, population and sample, sampling technique, data collection instruments, data collection procedures, ethical considerations, and methods of data analysis. The purpose of this chapter is to provide a clear and systematic explanation of how the study was conducted.

The study investigates the factors affecting attention span and focus among preparatory school EFL students in selected schools in Janzour, Tripoli. In order to obtain a comprehensive understanding of the issue, both quantitative and qualitative data were collected. Quantitative data were gathered through a student questionnaire, while qualitative data were obtained through semi-structured interviews with EFL teachers

3.2 Research Design

This study adopted a convergent mixed-methods descriptive research design. This design was considered appropriate because it allows the researcher to collect and analyze quantitative and qualitative data separately but concurrently, and then merge the results to provide a comprehensive understanding of the research problem. The convergent mixed-methods design is particularly useful when both numerical trends and detailed explanations are needed to explore a phenomenon in depth.

In this study, the quantitative component involved a structured questionnaire administered to preparatory school EFL students in Arabic language. importantly, the questionnaire was reviewed by teaching members from the Department of English and experienced EFL teachers in schools. This instrument was used to collect numerical data related to students' attention span, levels of distraction, classroom environment, teaching methods, and other factors affecting focus. The data were analyzed using descriptive

statistical techniques, including frequencies, percentages, and mean scores, to identify patterns in students' responses.

The qualitative component consisted of semi-structured interviews with EFL teachers. These interviews aimed to obtain detailed insights into teachers' perceptions of students' attention difficulties, the causes of distraction, and possible strategies for improving focus and engagement in English lessons. The qualitative data were analyzed thematically to identify recurring ideas and patterns.

In the convergent mixed-methods design, both datasets (i.e., quantitative and qualitative) are given equal importance and are later compared and integrated during interpretation to determine areas of convergence or divergence between students' and teachers' perspectives. This integration strengthens the validity of the findings by providing a more complete and triangulated understanding of the issue under investigation.

No variables were manipulated in this study, as it followed a non-experimental descriptive approach. The study focused on describing and interpreting existing classroom conditions based on students' questionnaire responses and teachers' interview data without any form of intervention.

3.3 Population and Sample Selection

The target population of this study comprised preparatory school students who study English as a Foreign Language (EFL) in Jazour, Tripoli. This population was selected due to the importance of attention and concentration at the preparatory level, where learners are required to comprehend instructional input, follow classroom directions, and actively participate in various language learning activities.

The sample of the study consisted of 57 preparatory school EFL students selected from schools in Jazour. These participants completed the structured questionnaire during their regular English classes, providing quantitative data on factors affecting their attention span and classroom focus. In addition, qualitative data were obtained through semi-

structured interviews with five EFL teachers, who provided professional insights into students' attention-related challenges and classroom behaviour.

The selected sample was considered appropriate for the purposes of the study, as it enabled data collection from two complementary sources. The students provided direct perspectives on their own attention and learning experiences, while the teachers contributed contextual and classroom-based interpretations that helped to enrich and triangulate the findings.

Table (3.1) Participants of the Study

Participants	Number	Description
Students	57	Preparatory school EFL students in selected schools in Janzour
EFL teachers	5	Teachers interviewed to support and explain the questionnaire findings

3.4 Sampling Technique

A convenience sampling technique was employed in this study because it enabled the researcher to access participants who were readily available and willing to participate in the study. Accordingly, the participants were selected based on their availability and accessibility during regular English language classes. This approach is commonly used in educational research when access to participants is limited by time and institutional constraints (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2018).

This technique was appropriate for the present study, which was conducted in selected preparatory schools in Janzour, Tripoli. Although convenience sampling does not allow for broad generalization of findings to the entire population, it is often considered suitable for exploratory and descriptive studies where practical accessibility is a key consideration (Mertens, 2020). It enabled the researcher to collect relevant data efficiently from participants who were available and willing to participate.

3.5 Data Collection Instruments

This study used two main instruments for data collection: a student questionnaire and teacher interviews. The use of multiple instruments is consistent with mixed-methods research, which involves collecting both quantitative and qualitative data to provide a more comprehensive understanding of a research problem (Creswell, 2018).

3.5.1 Student Questionnaire

The questionnaire was used to collect quantitative data from preparatory school EFL students. It was written in the Arabic language and focused on attention span, classroom focus, causes of distraction, teaching practices, classroom activities, and strategies for improving attention during English lessons. The questionnaire consisted of 15 items (Appendix A). However, 7 items were selected for detailed analysis in Chapter Four because they were most directly aligned with the research questions and study objectives.

A five-point Likert scale was used, which is widely recommended for measuring attitudes and perceptions in educational research (Dornyei, 2007). The scale is presented below:

Table (3.2) Likert Scale Scoring

Response Option	Score
Strongly Agree	5
Agree	4
Neutral	3
Disagree	2
Strongly Disagree	1

Consequently, the Likert Scale was used because it allowed students to express their opinions clearly and made the responses suitable for quantitative analysis using Microsoft Excel. Importantly, certain questionnaire items were negative statements to reduce response bias, particularly acquiescence bias (i.e., the tendency of respondents to agree

with statements regardless of their content). Therefore, negative items were reverse-scored during analysis, when necessary, because disagreement with negative statements indicated better attention or focus.

3.5.2 Teacher Interviews

Semi-structured interviews (i.e., a set of predetermined open-ended questions but flexible to add follow-up questions based on the participant's responses) were conducted with five EFL teachers to collect qualitative data. Semi-structured interviews are widely used in qualitative research because they allow flexibility while maintaining focus on key research issues (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2018). The interviews, therefore, aimed to explore teachers' perspectives on students' attention, causes of distraction, and strategies for improving focus and engagement in EFL classrooms (Appendix B).

The interview data were recorded in written form, organized systematically, and analyzed thematically. Thematic analysis is commonly used in qualitative educational research to identify patterns and meaning across data sets (Mertens, 2020). The analysis produced four main themes: internal factors, external classroom-related factors, effects of limited attention on participation, and instructional strategies for improving focus.

3.6 Validity of the Instruments

The research instruments were developed in alignment with the study's objectives and research questions. The highest degree of care was taken to ensure the questionnaire items' clarity, simplicity, and appropriateness for preparatory school learners.

To ensure content validity, the instruments were reviewed by the supervisor. Content validity refers to the extent to which an instrument adequately represents the construct being measured (Creswell, 2018). Based on the supervisor's feedback, modifications were made to improve clarity, relevance, and suitability before data collection.

3.7 Reliability of the Questionnaire

Reliability refers to the consistency and stability of a research instrument (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2018). In this study, reliability was addressed by ensuring that

questionnaire items were clearly written, logically structured, and aligned with the research objectives.

Although statistical reliability tests such as Cronbach's Alpha were not conducted due to the limited scope of the study, reliability was enhanced through careful item construction and expert review. According to Dornyei (2007), clarity of items and alignment with constructs are essential in ensuring acceptable reliability in questionnaire-based research.

3.8 Data Collection Procedures

Data collection was conducted during regular English language classes. Permission was first obtained from the school administration and English teachers, in line with ethical research procedures (Appendix C).

Participants were informed about the purpose of the study, and voluntary participation was ensured. They were also assured of anonymity and confidentiality, which are key ethical principles in educational research (Mertens, 2020). The questionnaire was distributed and completed under researcher supervision. A total of 57 completed questionnaires were collected.

Following the questionnaire, semi-structured interviews were conducted with five EFL teachers. The interviews were documented and later analyzed to complement the quantitative findings, consistent with the integration principle of mixed-methods research (Creswell, 2018).

3.9 Ethical Considerations

Ethical principles were strictly observed throughout the study. Permission was obtained from school authorities prior to data collection. Participants were informed about the aim of the study and assured that participation was voluntary.

Confidentiality and anonymity were maintained by not collecting any personal identifiers. This aligns with ethical guidelines in educational research, which emphasize protecting participants' privacy and ensuring informed consent (Mertens, 2020). Teacher

participants were also informed about the purpose of the study, and their responses were used solely for academic purposes.

3.10 Data Analysis

Data analysis involved both quantitative and qualitative procedures. The quantitative data obtained from the questionnaire were analyzed using Microsoft Excel. From the 15 items, 7 items were selected for analysis based on their relevance to the research questions.

Descriptive statistics, including frequencies, percentages, and mean scores, were used to analyze the data. According to Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2018), descriptive statistics are appropriate for summarizing and presenting survey data in educational research.

The qualitative data from teacher interviews were analyzed using thematic analysis. Thematic analysis is widely used in qualitative research for identifying patterns and interpreting meaning across data sets (Mertens, 2020). The analysis resulted in four main themes: internal factors, external classroom-related factors, limited attention and participation, and strategies for improving focus.

Finally, the qualitative findings were used to complement and explain the quantitative results, consistent with the integration approach of convergent mixed-methods design.

3.11 Conclusion

This chapter presented the methodology used in the study. It included the research design, population and sample, sampling technique, data collection instruments, validity, reliability, data collection procedures, ethical considerations, and data analysis methods.

A convergent mixed-methods descriptive design was adopted to integrate quantitative and qualitative data. Data were collected through a questionnaire and teacher interviews, analyzed using descriptive statistics and thematic analysis, respectively.

The next chapter presents and discusses the findings of the study in relation to the research questions and literature review.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents and discusses the findings of the study in relation to its aims, research problem, and research questions. Basically, the study was designed to investigate the factors affecting preparatory school EFL students' attention span and classroom engagement, with particular emphasis on internal learner-related factors, external classroom-related factors, and their impact on participation and learning outcomes.

Indeed, the analysis is based on data collected through two main instruments: a questionnaire administered to 57 preparatory school EFL students, and semi-structured interviews conducted with five EFL teachers. The questionnaire data are presented and analyzed according to seven selected items that are directly aligned with the study's research questions. These items focus on students' attention levels, internal psychological and cognitive factors, external classroom conditions, and elements influencing classroom participation.

Furthermore, the findings presented in this chapter are interpreted from the lens of the study's research objectives and questions, as well as in comparison with the relevant literature reviewed in Chapter Two, in order to identify and clarify the existing knowledge gap addressed by this study. To put it more precisely, such a discussion is intended to highlight consistencies, contradictions, and new insights that emerge from the current study in relation to previous research.

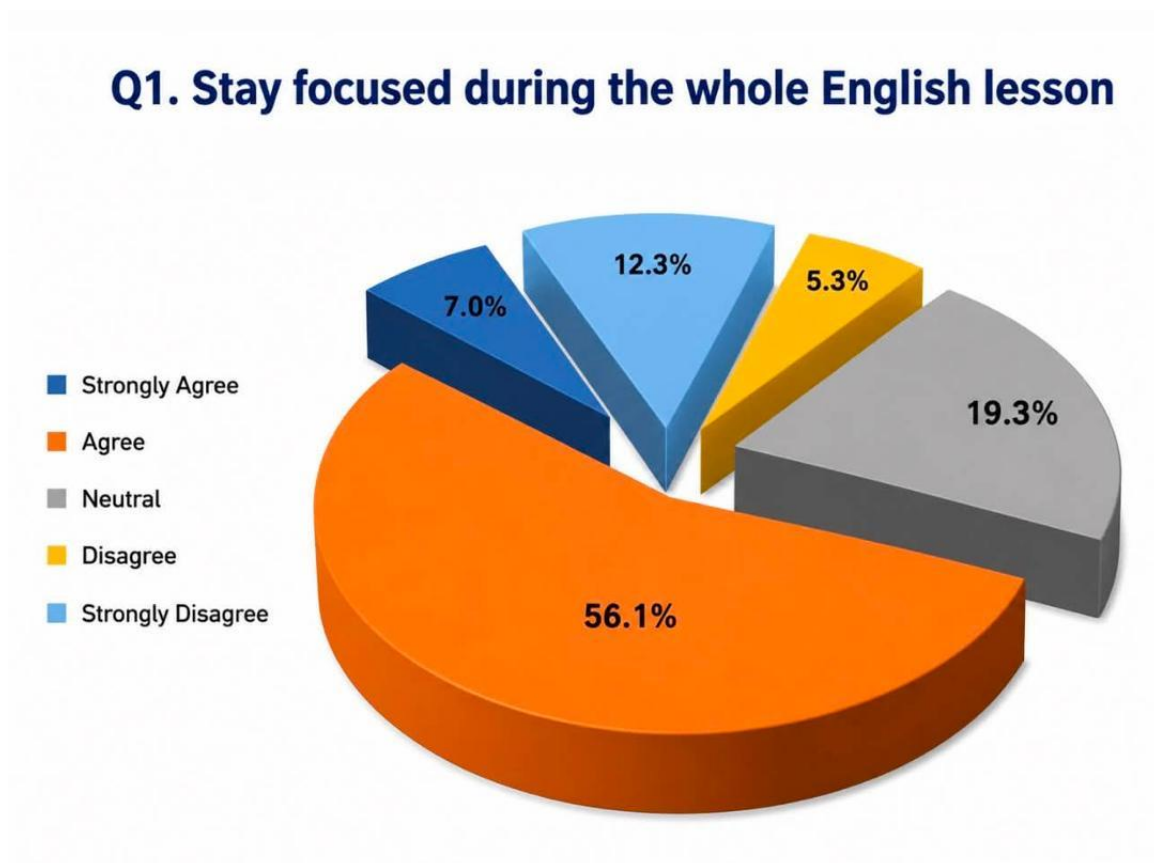
4.2 Statistical Description

This section presents the results of the seven selected questionnaire items ($n = 7$) used in the present study. These items were carefully chosen to align with the study's research

questions and objectives, and they focus on key dimensions related to preparatory school EFL learners' classroom experiences.

In particular, the questionnaire examines students' attention span and concentration levels during English language lessons, as well as the internal factors that may influence these cognitive processes, such as motivation, interest, and emotional state.

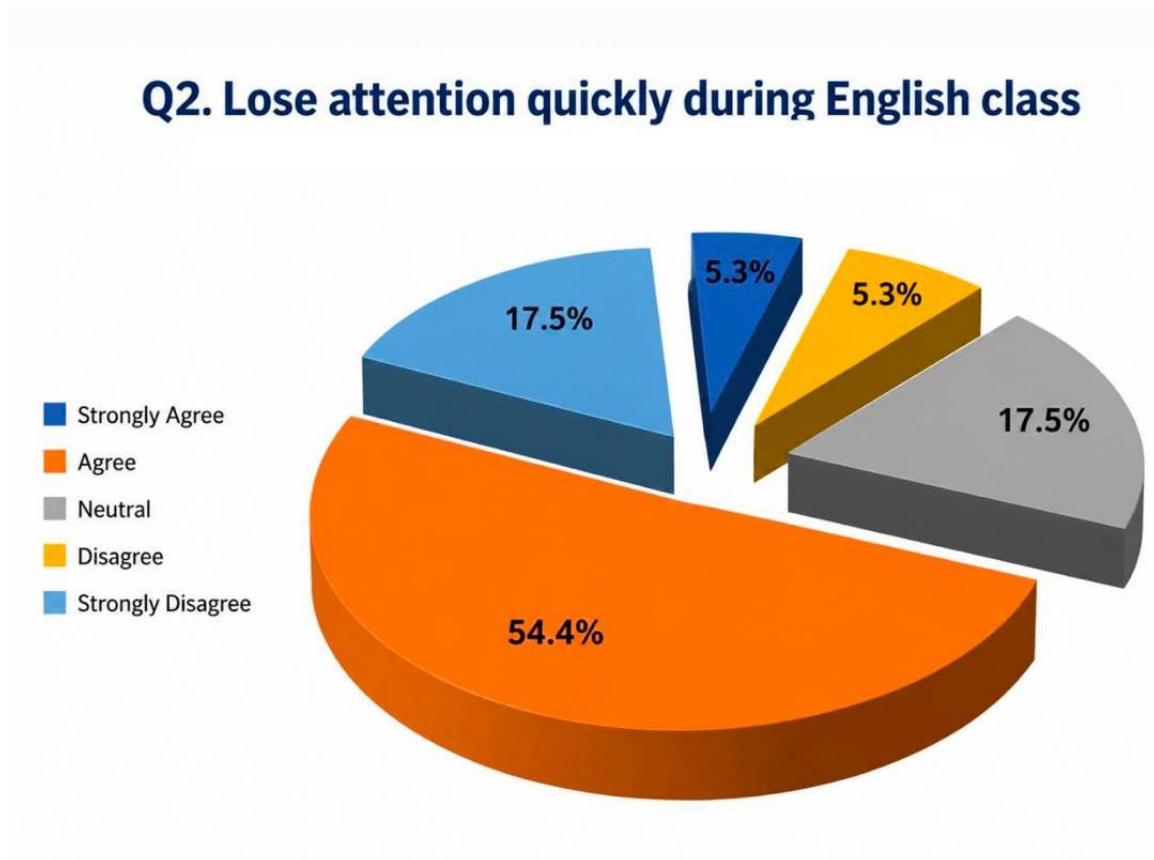
Figure (4.1) Staying focused during the whole English lesson



As illustrated in Figure 4.1, the findings indicate that a considerable proportion of students reported being able to maintain their focus throughout the entire English lesson. The largest percentage of responses fell under *Agree* (56.1%), followed by *Neutral* (19.3%). Additionally, 7.0% of the participants *Strongly Agreed*, whereas 5.3% *Disagreed* and 12.3% *Strongly Disagreed*. These results suggest that, overall, students demonstrated a relatively positive level of sustained attention during English classes.

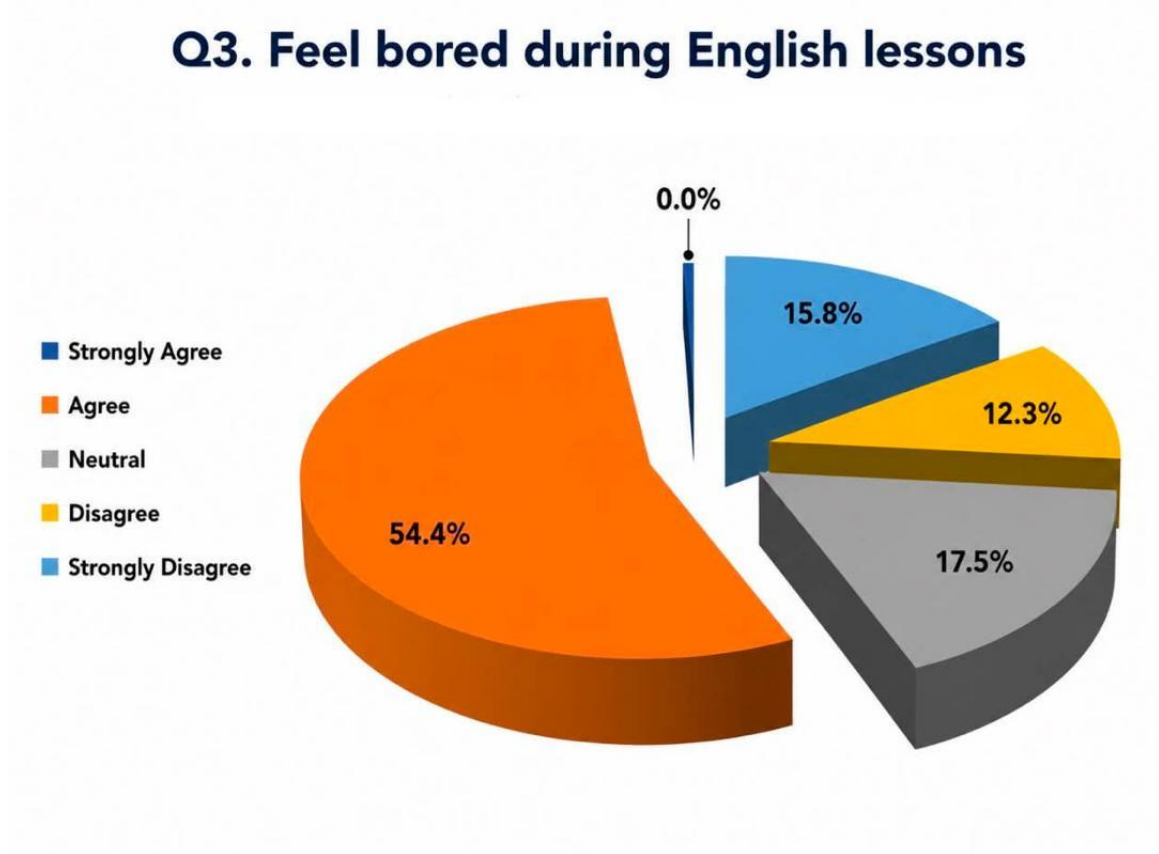
Nevertheless, the responses also reveal that a minority of students experienced challenges in maintaining concentration for the duration of the lesson.

Figure (4.2) Losing attention quickly during English class



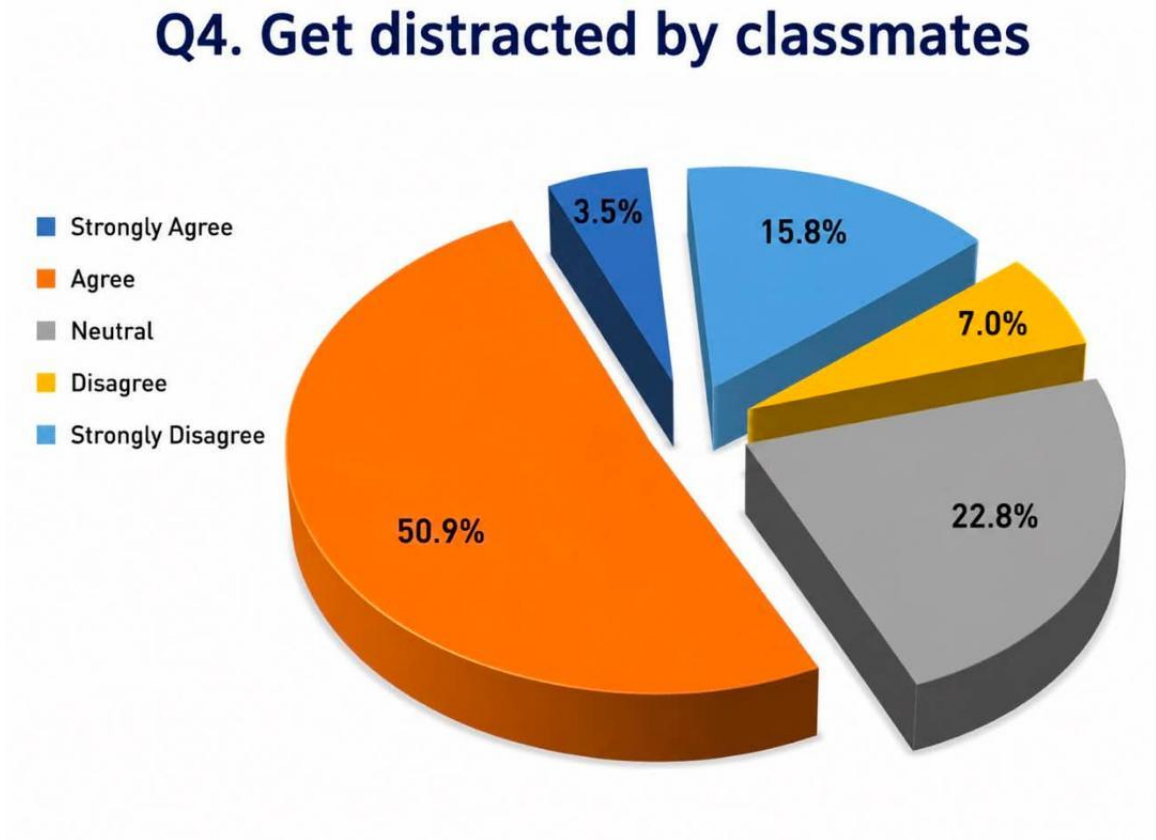
In contrast, the findings, as presented in Figure 4.2, indicate that losing attention quickly during English class was a noticeable concern among the participants. More than half of the students selected *Agree* (54.4%), while 5.3% *Strongly Agreed*. In contrast, both *Neutral* and *Strongly Disagree* responses accounted for 17.5% each, whereas only 5.3% of the students *Disagreed*. These results suggest that many students may initially pay attention at the beginning of the lesson but struggle to sustain their concentration for an extended period. This finding points to the need for more engaging instructional strategies, particularly at the beginning of the lesson and throughout its delivery.

Figure (4.3) Feel bored during English lessons



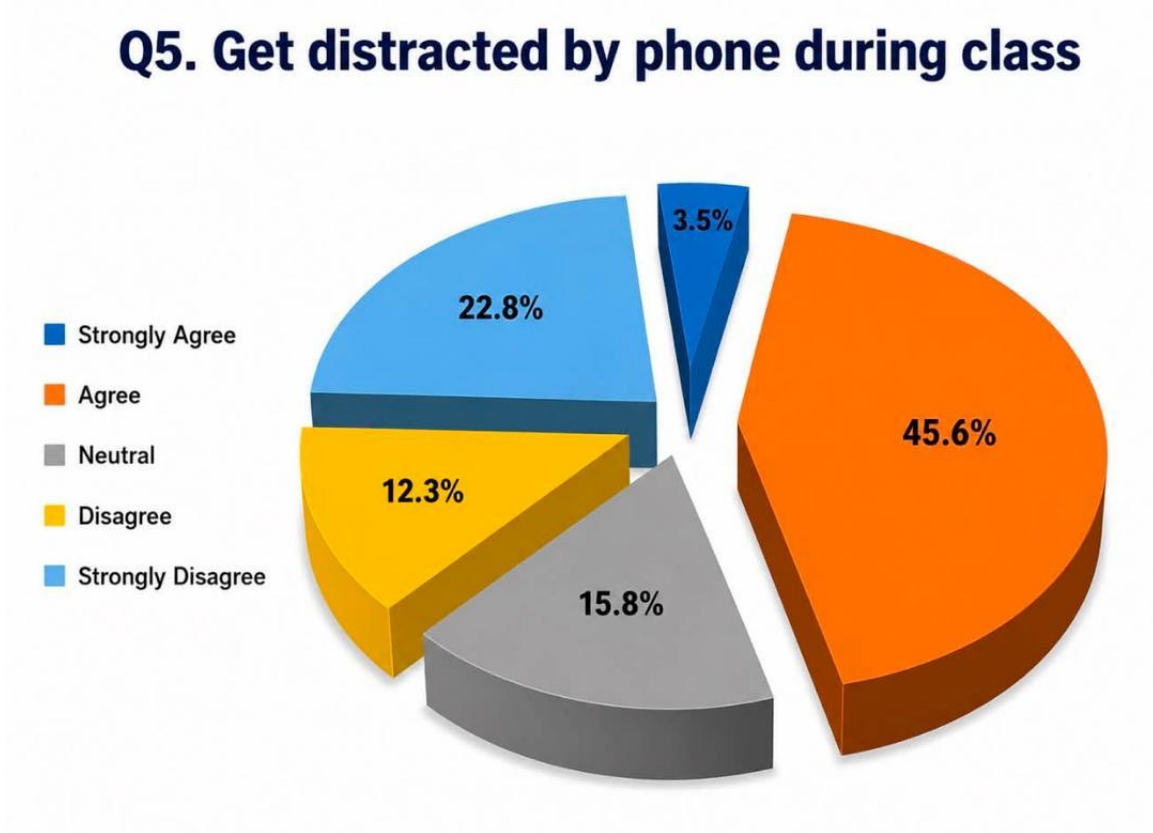
Boredom during English lessons emerged as a common experience among the students, as indicated by the findings presented in Figure 4.3. The highest percentage of responses was *Agree* (54.4%), while none of the participants selected *Strongly Agree*. *Neutral* responses accounted for 17.5%, whereas 12.3% *Disagreed* and 15.8% *Strongly Disagreed*. These findings suggest that, although boredom was not experienced by all students, more than half of the sample reported feeling bored during English classes, which may negatively influence their motivation and level of classroom participation.

Figure (4.4) Getting distracted by my classmates



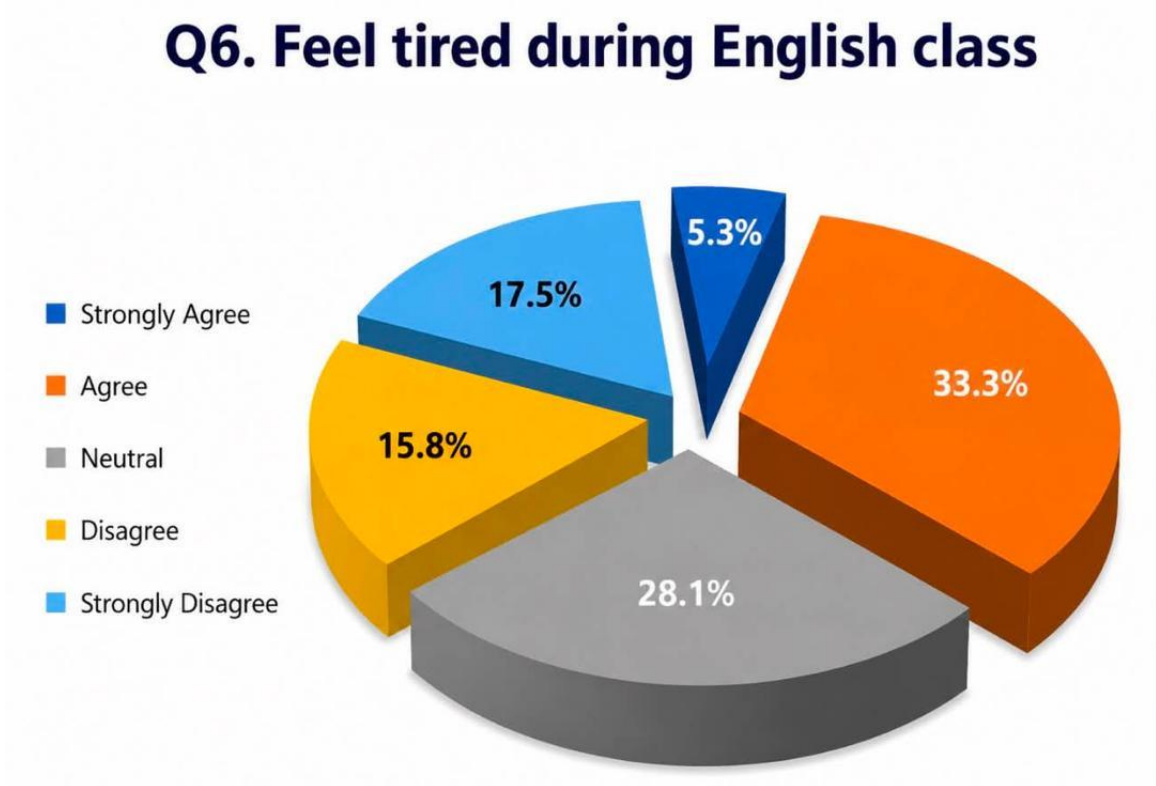
Classmates appeared to be an important source of distraction during English lessons, as reflected in the findings shown in Figure 4.4 Half of the students selected *Agree* (50.9%), while 3.5% *Strongly Agreed* with the statement. *Neutral* responses accounted for 22.8%, whereas lower percentages were recorded for *Disagree* (7.0%) and *Strongly Disagree* (15.8%). These findings suggest that peer interaction and side conversations may influence students' ability to maintain concentration during English classes and highlight the importance of effective classroom management strategies to support student attention and engagement.

Figure (4.5) Getting distracted by my phone during class



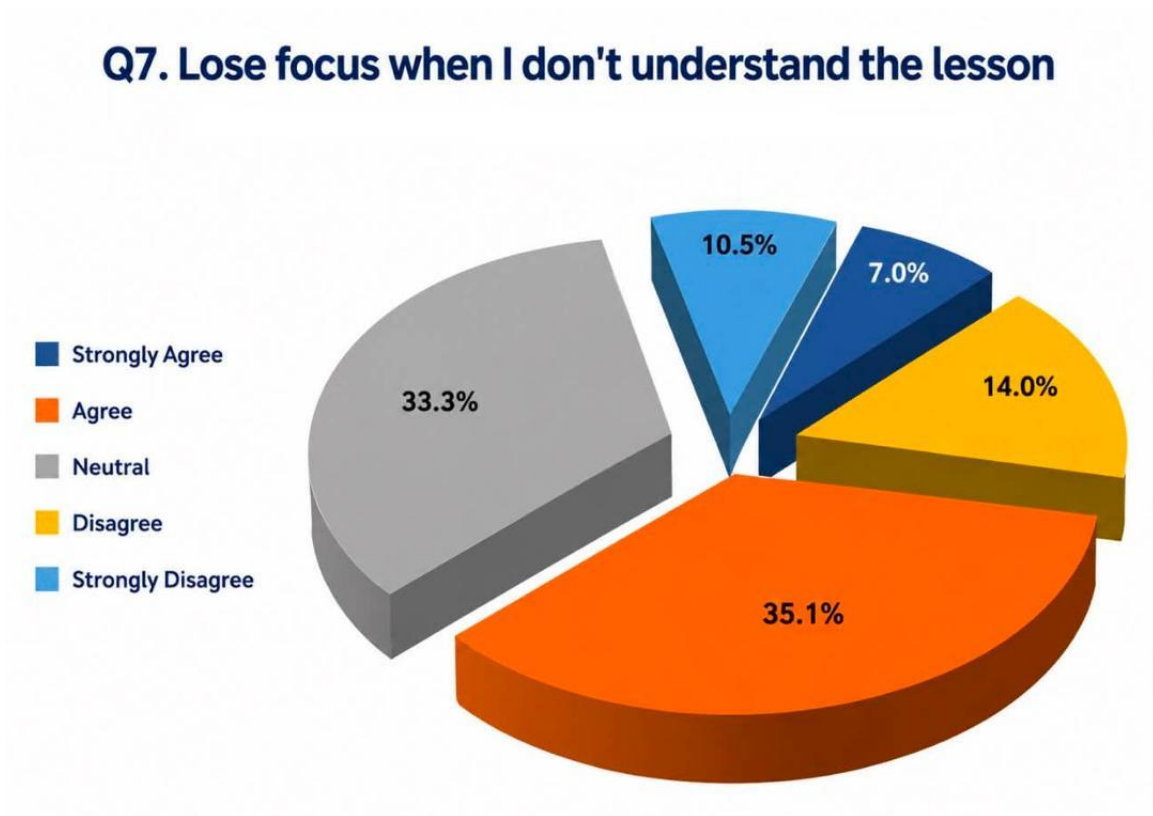
Although preparatory school students are not allowed to use Mobile phones during school time, they (i.e., mobile phones) emerged as another factor influencing students' attention during English lessons, as presented in Figure 5. The highest percentage of responses was *Agree* (45.6%), followed by *Strongly Disagree* (22.8%). *Neutral* responses accounted for 15.8%, whereas 12.3% of the students *Disagreed* and only 3.5% *Strongly Agreed*. These findings suggest that mobile phone use constituted a source of distraction for a considerable proportion of students. However, the relatively high percentage of students who strongly disagreed indicates that mobile phones did not affect all learners equally during classroom instruction.

Figure (4.6) Feeling tired during English class



Tiredness was identified as one of the factors affecting students' attention during English classes, as illustrated in Figure 6. The highest proportion of responses was *Agree* (33.3%), followed by *Neutral* (28.1%). Meanwhile, 17.5% of the students selected *Strongly Disagree*, 15.8% *Disagree*, and 5.3% *Strongly Agree*. These findings indicate that tiredness influenced the attention of a portion of the participants; however, the distribution of responses was relatively balanced compared with other distraction-related factors, suggesting variability in how students experienced fatigue during classroom instruction. Of course, this finding may be explained by factors such as insufficient sleep, academic workload, or physical and mental exhaustion, all of which can diminish alertness, reduce cognitive processing, and make it more difficult for students to sustain attention during English lessons. The relatively high proportion of neutral responses further indicates that the effect of tiredness varied across students, suggesting that fatigue was an important but not universal factor influencing classroom concentration.

Figure (4.7) Losing focus when misunderstanding the lesson



Lack of understanding emerged as a factor that may influence students' ability to maintain focus during English lessons, as presented in Figure 7. The highest percentage of responses was *Agree* (35.1%), followed closely by *Neutral* (33.3%). Additionally, 7.0% of the participants *Strongly Agreed*, whereas 14.0% *Disagreed* and 10.5% *Strongly Disagreed*. These findings suggest that difficulties in understanding lesson content may contribute to reduced concentration among students. Therefore, providing clear explanations and regularly checking students' understanding may play an important role in sustaining attention and supporting classroom engagement.

4.3 Thematic Description

The interview data collected from five EFL teachers were analyzed thematically, resulting in four main themes that emerged from their responses. These themes are internal factors affecting students' attention, external classroom-related factors, the impact of limited attention on classroom participation, and strategies for improving students' focus. Overall, the teachers' views provided rich qualitative insights that helped explain the quantitative findings of the study.

Theme 1: Internal Factors Affecting Attention

The teachers reported that students' loss of attention is strongly influenced by several internal factors, particularly low motivation, fatigue, boredom, and anxiety. They explained that students who lack interest in English or feel mentally tired tend to disengage more easily during the lessons. In addition, anxiety was highlighted as an important factor, as some students fear making mistakes in front of their peers or the teacher. This fear often leads to silence, reduced participation, and gradual loss of focus, since students become more concerned with avoiding errors than engaging with the lesson content.

Theme 2: External Classroom-Related Factors

According to the teachers, a range of external factors also contributes significantly to students' distraction in English classes. These include classroom noise, disruptive behavior from classmates, mobile phone usage, and repetitive or monotonous teaching methods. The teachers emphasized that when lessons lack variety or interactive elements, students tend to lose interest more quickly. Moreover, overcrowded classrooms and frequent interruptions make it difficult for learners to maintain concentration, as they are easily distracted by their surrounding environment rather than the lesson itself.

Theme 3: Limited Attention and Participation

The teachers observed a clear relationship between limited attention and reduced classroom participation. Students who struggle to maintain focus are less likely to engage

in learning activities, such as answering questions or contributing to discussions. In many cases, these students also avoid participating in pair and group work, preferring to rely on their peers instead of actively contributing. This reduced involvement not only affects their individual learning outcomes but also limits their overall communicative development in the English language classroom.

Theme 4: Strategies for Improving Focus

The teachers suggested several practical strategies that can be used to improve students' attention and engagement. These include the use of varied instructional activities, short and manageable tasks, group work, educational games, and visual aids, all of which help make lessons more interactive and less monotonous. They also emphasized the importance of providing positive feedback to encourage participation and build students' confidence. Additionally, establishing clear classroom rules and regularly checking students' understanding were highlighted as essential practices for maintaining focus throughout the lesson and ensuring that learners remain actively involved.

Although the interview's Questions 4 and 5 both address ways of maintaining students' attention, they serve different purposes. Question 4 focuses on teachers' actual classroom practices by asking about the strategies and techniques they currently use to keep students focused during English lessons. For example, a teacher may report using group work, classroom games, questioning techniques, or changing activities regularly during lessons. In contrast, Question 5 explores teachers' professional opinions by asking which activities or teaching methods they believe are the most effective for improving students' attention and engagement, regardless of whether they use them consistently. For instance, a teacher may believe that project-based learning, communicative language teaching, or technology-assisted instruction is the most effective approach, even if limited time or resources prevent its regular implementation. Thus, Question 4 gathers descriptive information about teachers' practices, whereas Question 5 elicits their perceptions and evaluations of effective EFL teaching methods.

To sum up, the findings from both the statistical analysis and the qualitative interview data present a consistent picture regarding factors affecting students' attention in English

classes. The questionnaire results indicate that a considerable proportion of students experience difficulties in maintaining sustained focus, with issues such as boredom, distraction from classmates and mobile phones, tiredness, and lack of understanding emerging as notable contributing factors. Similarly, the interview findings from EFL teachers reinforce these results by highlighting internal factors such as low motivation, anxiety, and fatigue, as well as external classroom conditions including noise, disruptive behavior, and monotonous teaching methods.

4.4 Discussion of the Findings

The questionnaire results revealed that a considerable number of students tend to lose attention quickly during English lessons and experience boredom during classroom instruction. This finding is strongly consistent with Krashen's (1985) Affective Filter Hypothesis, which posits that learners' emotional states such as low motivation, anxiety, and lack of interest can raise an "affective filter," thereby blocking language input from being effectively processed. In this study, students' boredom and reduced attention suggest a high affective filter, which limits their ability to fully engage with and absorb classroom input. Similarly, Dornyei (2001) emphasized that motivation plays a central role in sustaining attention and language learning engagement, while Lena and Nikolov (2025) highlighted that meaningful task design and teacher support are essential for maintaining learner involvement.

In addition, the findings indicated that classmates and mobile phones serve as significant sources of distraction. This can also be explained through the Theory of Selective Attention, which suggests that learners are constantly exposed to multiple stimuli in the environment, but only certain stimuli are processed while others are filtered out. In this context, students' attention is often diverted from instructional input toward more salient stimuli such as peer conversations or mobile phone notifications. This aligns with Lin (2025), who found that technological devices, multitasking behaviour, and environmental distractions negatively affect learners' attentional control. It is also supported by Junco (2012) and Sana et al. (2013), who demonstrated that mobile phone use in classroom settings significantly reduces students' ability to maintain focused attention on academic tasks.

Moreover, the results showed that tiredness and lack of understanding negatively affect students' concentration. These findings further support Krashen's (1985) hypothesis, as fatigue and low comprehension can increase the affective filter, making it more difficult for learners to process input effectively. When students do not understand the lesson or feel mentally exhausted, their cognitive and emotional readiness to engage decreases, leading to reduced attention. This is also consistent with Baars et al. (2020), who found that mental fatigue significantly impairs sustained attention, and Sweller's Cognitive Load Theory (Sweller, 1988), which explains that excessive cognitive demands reduce learners' processing capacity and focus. The interview findings similarly confirmed that teachers observe disengagement when students are tired or struggling to understand lesson content.

Finally, the findings demonstrated that lack of understanding directly contributes to loss of attention during English lessons. From the perspective of the Affective Filter Hypothesis, misunderstanding increases frustration and anxiety, which further raises the filter and reduces input intake. At the same time, the Theory of Selective Attention explains that when comprehension fails, students are more likely to shift their attention away from the lesson toward irrelevant stimuli. This highlights the importance of clear instruction, scaffolding, and comprehension checks, as also emphasized by Ellis (2003) and Vygotsky (1978), who stress that structured support and meaningful interaction are essential for sustaining learner engagement and attention in language classrooms.

4.5 Conclusion

This chapter has presented and discussed the findings of the study. The questionnaire results indicated that students' attention and focus in English classes are influenced by several factors, including boredom, classmates' behavior, mobile phone use, tiredness, and lack of understanding. These factors were found to contribute to variations in students' ability to maintain concentration during lessons.

In addition, the interview findings supported the quantitative results by confirming that both internal factors (such as motivation, fatigue, and anxiety) and external factors (such as classroom environment and teaching practices) play a significant role in shaping

students' attention and engagement. The integration of both data sets provided a more comprehensive understanding of the issue under investigation.

Furthermore, the discussion of the findings was linked to relevant theories and previous studies reviewed in Chapter Two, which helped to explain and contextualize the results within existing literature. Overall, the study highlights that students' attention in English lessons is a multifaceted issue that requires attention to psychological, instructional, and environmental factors.

The next chapter presents the conclusion, recommendations, limitations of the study, and suggestions for future research.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Summary of the Findings

This study investigated the factors affecting attention span and focus among preparatory school EFL students in selected schools in Janzour, Tripoli. The study aimed to identify the internal and external factors that influence students' concentration during English lessons and to explore strategies that may improve students' attention and classroom engagement. A mixed-methods descriptive design was used, combining quantitative data collected through questionnaires from 57 students and qualitative data collected through interviews with five EFL teachers.

The findings revealed that many students experience difficulties maintaining attention during English lessons. Internal factors such as boredom, low motivation, tiredness, and lack of understanding were found to reduce students' focus. Likewise, external classroom-related factors, including classmates' behavior, classroom noise, mobile phone use, and monotonous teaching methods, also negatively affected students' concentration. On the whole, the findings indicated that internal and external factors exerted a comparable level of influence on students' concentration during English lessons. The interview findings supported the questionnaire results and confirmed that both psychological and environmental factors influence students' attention and classroom participation.

The findings also showed that limited attention can reduce students' participation in classroom activities. Students who lose focus may avoid answering questions, fail to follow instructions, or become less involved in pair and group work. Furthermore, the study found that supportive teacher behavior, meaningful classroom activities, clear explanations, and varied teaching strategies can improve students' attention and engagement during English lessons.

5.2 Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, it can be concluded that attention span and focus are important factors in successful EFL learning. Preparatory school students in Janzour face several challenges that affect their concentration during English lessons.

These challenges are related to both internal factors, such as boredom, anxiety, and fatigue, and external factors, such as classroom distractions, teaching methods, and technology use.

The study also concludes that students' attention is strongly connected to classroom participation and learning outcomes. When students lose focus, their understanding, participation, and motivation may decrease. Therefore, improving attention requires not only reducing distractions but also creating an engaging, supportive, and interactive learning environment.

In addition, the study highlights the important role of teachers in maintaining students' focus. Teachers who use varied activities, positive feedback, clear explanations, and student-centered methods may help students remain more attentive and motivated during English lessons.

5.3 Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are suggested:

1. EFL teachers should use varied and interactive teaching methods in order to reduce boredom and maintain students' attention during English lessons.
2. Teachers should divide long lessons into shorter activities and include pair work, group work, games, and discussions to increase students' engagement.
3. Teachers should provide clear explanations and regularly check students' understanding to prevent students from losing focus during the lesson.
4. Schools should encourage classroom environments that reduce noise and unnecessary distractions.
5. Mobile phone use during lessons should be controlled through clear classroom rules to reduce distraction.

6. Teachers should provide positive feedback and emotional support in order to reduce students' anxiety and increase confidence and participation.
7. Educational technology should be used carefully and for clear learning purposes, such as videos, quizzes, and interactive activities that support students' engagement.
8. Training workshops should be organized for teachers to help them learn effective classroom management strategies and methods for improving students' attention and participation.

5.4 Limitations of the Study

This study has several limitations. First, the study was limited to 57 preparatory school students and five EFL teachers from selected schools in Janzour, Tripoli. Therefore, the findings cannot be generalized to all preparatory school students in Libya.

Second, the study depended mainly on questionnaires and interviews, which means that the findings were based on participants' opinions and experiences. Some students may not have answered all questionnaire items accurately.

Third, classroom observation was not used in this study. Classroom observation may have provided more direct evidence about students' attention, distraction, and classroom behavior during English lessons.

Finally, the detailed analysis in Chapter Four focused on seven selected questionnaire items related to the research questions. Including more questionnaire items or additional research instruments may have provided deeper and more comprehensive results.

5.5 Suggestions for Future Research

Future studies may investigate attention span and focus among larger samples of preparatory or secondary school students in different regions of Libya. Researchers may also examine the relationship between attention span and academic achievement in English language learning.

In addition, future research may focus on the effectiveness of specific teaching strategies, such as task-based learning, educational games, or technology-assisted learning, in improving students' attention and classroom participation. Classroom observation and

experimental research designs may also provide deeper understanding of students' attention and behavior in EFL classrooms.

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Appendix A

Student Questionnaire

Factors Affecting Attention Span and Focus among EFL Learners

Dear Student,

This questionnaire is designed to investigate students' attention span and focus during English lessons. Your responses will be used for academic research purposes only and will remain confidential. Please tick (✓) the option that best reflects your opinion.

Scale: Strongly Agree | Agree | Neutral | Disagree | Strongly Disagree

No.	Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Attention During English Lessons						
1	I lose attention quickly during English class.					
2	I feel bored during English lessons.					
Causes of Distraction						
3	I get distracted by my classmates.					
4	I get distracted by my phone.					
5	I feel tired during English class.					
6	I lose attention when I do not understand the lesson.					
Teacher's Role						
7	My teacher helps me stay focused.					
8	I pay more attention when the teacher explains clearly.					
9	I lose focus when the teacher talks too much.					

Classroom Activities						
10	I focus more during group activities.					
11	Games help me stay focused.					
12	I participate more when the lesson is interesting.					
Strategies to Improve Attention						
13	Short breaks help me focus better.					
14	Using videos or pictures helps me stay attentive.					

Open-ended Question

What helps you stay focused during English lessons?

استبيان الطلاب

عزيزي الطالب/عزيزتي الطالبة

يهدف هذا الاستبيان إلى التعرف على مدى الانتباه والتركيز لدى الطلاب أثناء دروس اللغة الإنجليزية، والعوامل التي تؤثر فيهما. ستستخدم إجاباتك لأغراض البحث العلمي فقط، وستبقى جميع المعلومات سرية. يرجى وضع علامة (✓) أمام الخيار الذي يعبر عن رأيك.

مقياس الإجابة:

أوافق بشدة | أوافق | محايد | لا أوافق | لا أوافق بشدة

م	العبارة	أوافق بشدة	أوافق	محايد	لا أوافق	لا أوافق بشدة
الانتباه أثناء دروس اللغة الإنجليزية						
1	أفقد تركيزي بسرعة أثناء حصة اللغة الإنجليزية.					

2	أشعر بالملل أثناء دروس اللغة الإنجليزية.				
أسباب التشتت					
3	يتشتت انتباهي بسبب زملائي في الصف.				
4	يتشتت انتباهي بسبب هاتفه المحمول.				
5	أشعر بالتعب أثناء حصة اللغة الإنجليزية.				
6	أفقد تركيزي عندما لا أفهم الدرس.				
دور المعلم					
7	يساعدني معلم اللغة الإنجليزية على البقاء منتبهاً أثناء الدرس.				
8	أنتبه أكثر عندما يشرح المعلم الدرس بوضوح.				
9	أفقد تركيزي عندما يتحدث المعلم كثيراً.				
أنشطة الفصل الدراسي					
10	أكون أكثر تركيزاً أثناء الأنشطة الجماعية.				
11	تساعدني الألعاب التعليمية على الحفاظ على تركيزي.				
12	أشارك أكثر عندما يكون الدرس ممتعاً.				
استراتيجيات تحسين الانتباه					
13	تساعدني فترات الاستراحة القصيرة على تحسين تركيزي.				
14	يساعدني استخدام مقاطع الفيديو أو الصور على البقاء منتبهاً أثناء الدرس.				

سؤال مفتوح

برأيك، ما الذي يساعدك على الحفاظ على انتباهك وتركيزك أثناء دروس اللغة الإنجليزية؟

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Appendix B

Teacher Interview Questions

1. From your experience, what are the main reasons why students lose focus during English lessons? (Focus on internal and external factors such as motivation, fatigue, classroom environment, or mobile

phones.)_____

2. At which stage of the lesson do students usually lose attention (beginning, middle, or end), and why do you think this occurs?

3. Can you describe a real situation where students were distracted in your class? How did you handle it?

4. What strategies or techniques do you use to keep students focused during English lessons? (e.g., group work, games, interaction, changing activities)

5. In your opinion, what activities or teaching methods are most effective in improving students' attention and engagement in EFL classrooms?

Appendix C
School Permission