

The Effect of Teaching Strategies on English Language Learning in Libya

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Abstract

This study examines the impact of teaching strategies on English language learning in Libya, focusing on the challenges Libyan teachers face in secondary schools. The research investigates the effectiveness of different teaching methods and explores innovative strategies, including interactive technologies, in the classroom. The primary aim is to assess how these strategies influence student engagement, language proficiency, and overall learning outcomes.

A mixed-method approach was employed, incorporating a quantitative analysis of survey data from ten high school English instructors in Hoon. The results indicate that educators frequently employ supportive techniques, including offering comments and encouraging task completion. The study reveals substantial deficiencies in self-assessment and contemporary evaluation techniques, suggesting a dependence on conventional pedagogical methods. The absence of modern methodologies, such as student reflection and peer assessment, may restrict students' active engagement and impede their linguistic advancement.

This research paper also identifies differences in teaching practices based on teacher demographics, including gender and years of experience. More experienced teachers were found to employ a broader range of strategies, suggesting the need for mentorship and professional development for newer educators. The study emphasizes integrating technology-enhanced tools and reflective assessment techniques to foster a more effective and engaging learning environment. The conclusions drawn from this research paper recommend that targeted professional development programs be implemented to support teachers in adopting more reflective and modern teaching methods. These programs should focus on enhancing teachers' skills in self-assessment techniques, peer evaluation, and technology integration in the classroom. By doing so, English language instruction in Libya can be significantly improved, contributing to better student outcomes and excellent English proficiency.

Overall, the study underscores the need for a dynamic and adaptable approach to teaching English, where traditional methods are supplemented by innovative strategies that actively engage students and equip them with the necessary skills to succeed in a globalized world.

Keywords: Teaching Strategies, English Language Learning

1. Introduction

This study examines the impact of teaching strategies on language learning in Libya and the challenges Libyan teachers face in teaching English as a second or foreign language. Teaching is not merely the profession of delivering information; it involves a constellation of guiding skills aimed at fostering critical thinking among students. Effective teaching should develop both accuracy and fluency in

learners, with a balanced focus on activities that target language skills and those that promote fluency [4]. Over the years, teaching methods have undergone significant changes. The widespread development of information and communication technologies and new educational programs has led to more engaging, motivational, and effective teaching. Multimedia technology, particularly interactive whiteboards, has revolutionized classroom dynamics [6]. Teaching English is vital in Libya's national curriculum, where educators are tasked with helping students grasp complex language concepts.

Approaches that emphasize experiential learning and trial-and-error help learners acquire and retain knowledge more effectively than traditional conditioning methods [17]. However, teaching English as a foreign language in Libya poses unique challenges, primarily because students have restricted opportunities to practice language beyond the classroom. In fields such as health, engineering, and computer science, English is often used in university education, yet learners lack sufficient exposure to English outside academic settings. This situation makes it difficult for teachers to encourage all students to engage with the language, especially those who are hesitant or less proficient.

The teacher is the most critical component of any educational program. Teachers are responsible for implementing educational strategies, and their effectiveness depends on balancing subject knowledge with instructional methods that promote student understanding. The content of what is taught is just as important as how it is taught. There is no single "best" teaching method, but educators should explore various strategies to discover what works best for their students.

One fundamental teaching principle is that instruction should focus on what students cannot learn independently or on knowledge that would take them too long to acquire independently. Therefore, teaching should be viewed as a facilitation of learning—a process that helps students gain essential knowledge more efficiently [17].

Teaching strategies refer to the methods facilitators use to achieve the goals of a lesson. For instance, a short lecture may be appropriate for conveying new information, while a debate might be used to explore attitudes. The selection of teaching strategies varies based on the learning environment, whether in a classroom or a practical setting. Choosing strategies that encourage student independence and self-direction is crucial, ultimately maximizing learning outcomes [22].

2. Statement of Problem

Teaching a second or foreign language is challenging for two primary reasons: First, the nuances of the language can be complicated for learners to grasp. Second, the process of learning these rules can become tedious. However, language learning can be more engaging by exposing students to proper usage in meaningful contexts. The outdated approach of sentence diagramming is no longer practical; instead, students learn more by reading and writing.

Julie (2011) notes that learning English words may be relatively easy due to the simplicity of the alphabet the language's grammar can be exceedingly complex with exceptions to nearly every rule. Explaining these nuances requires significant effort and many examples. Additionally, learners' motivation is often low because teachers do not integrate information communication technology (ICT) into their lessons, a crucial factor in language learning. Wei (2005) pointed out that the role of teachers has evolved beyond that of mere instructors; they are now facilitators of learning. Teachers must inspire students' creativity and critical thinking in a computer-assisted language learning (CALL) environment. Teachers must adapt to modern teaching environments equipped with technological and pedagogical knowledge.

In Libya, English is introduced as a second or foreign language starting in the fifth year of primary school. However, English is not prioritized in the curriculum as in many other developing countries. As a result, many Libyan students struggle with English when they move to preparatory and secondary education. They lack a strong foundation in the language and are often discouraged by the difficulty of learning a new language, which they fear they will never master.

Libyan English textbooks aim to give equal attention to all four language skills—listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Despite well-planned curricula and administrative support, the actual teaching process often falls short regarding skill development. The researcher observed that the focus in Libyan schools is primarily on reading and writing, with less attention paid to speaking and listening. This is partly due to the absence of language labs, as students are not required to take listening or speaking exams. Additionally, many Libyan teachers lack the training to implement effective teaching strategies.

A related issue is the limited use of educational technology in Libyan schools. Many teachers have never used technology-based learning strategies as learners or trainees. They lack experience with high-tech tools like Interactive Whiteboards (IWBs). This technological gap presents a significant challenge as English language teachers struggle to integrate such tools into their lessons. Furthermore, both students and teachers often lack basic computer skills, which hinder the use of multimedia programs designed to improve language skills.

Several factors affect Libyan students' performance in learning English. Many students complain about the teaching methods used in Libyan schools. For instance, in speaking classes, some teachers do not encourage students to practice speaking, resulting in diminished self-assurance and apprehension around errors. As a result, students struggle to express themselves adequately because they lack the necessary vocabulary. Another issue is that many students are shy or nervous about speaking English in front of others, partially owing to a deficiency in confidence regarding their linguistic competencies. Teachers also face challenges in motivating students. Sometimes, teachers rely on written instructions rather than directly engaging with students. Assignments are often completed in isolation, with little opportunity for revision or feedback. Additionally, many Libyan teachers use the student's native language (Arabic) when explaining lessons, which limits students' exposure to English. Instead of encouraging pair or group work, these teachers focus on rote learning.

3. Research Questions

The study aims to address the following research questions:

1. What role do teaching strategies play in learning and teaching English in Libya?
2. What teaching strategies are commonly used by Libyan teachers when teaching English?
3. What difficulties do Libyan teachers face when teaching English?

4. Literature Review Introduction

This chapter reviews the importance of teaching methods in language learning and the challenges teachers face in their teaching programs. It also discusses potential solutions to help educators overcome these obstacles and continue their professional development.

5. Significance of Language Learning Strategies in Language Acquisition and Instruction

Given the information language learners must process in the classroom, they employ various language learning strategies to complete tasks and handle new inputs. These strategies offer valuable insights

into how learners approach the challenges they encounter during the language learning process. In other words, language learning strategies, although sometimes unobservable or unconsciously used, provide teachers with clues about how students assess situations, plan, and select appropriate techniques to understand, learn, or retain new information presented in the classroom.

According to Fedderholdt (1997), learners who can use a wide range of language learning strategies effectively can improve their language skills more successfully. For example, metacognitive techniques improve time management, self-monitoring, and self-evaluation, whereas cognitive strategies entail employing existing knowledge to address novel challenges. Socioaffective tactics encompass soliciting native speakers for pronunciation corrections or engaging with peers to address specific language challenges. By developing metacognitive, cognitive, and socio-affective skills, learners can achieve independence and autonomy, allowing them to take control of their learning process.

Lessard-Clouston (1997) highlights that language learning strategies significantly contribute to developing students' communicative competence. Language teachers who wish to improve students' communication skills should be well-versed in language learning strategies. According to Oxford (1990), these methods are vital since they furnish the means for active, self-directed learning, essential for cultivating communicative competence. Teachers who help students understand and use effective language learning strategies can significantly enhance their students' language acquisition capabilities.

6. Effective Teaching Strategies

Educators serve as the principal authority figures within the educational environment. Students are often seen as "empty vessels," passively receiving information with the ultimate goal of testing and assessment. In this traditional model, the teacher's role is to pass on knowledge and information to students, while teaching and assessment are separate processes. However, student learning should be continuously measured during instruction, not solely through formal assessments but also through informal methods such as group projects, student portfolios, and class participation. Ramsden (1992) identified five critical elements of classroom excellence:

1. **Interest and Explanation** – Students are more willing to work hard when interested in a subject. Teachers should establish the relevance of the content and craft explanations that enable students to understand and connect new knowledge with what they already know.
2. **Concern and Respect for Students** – Good teaching requires benevolence and humility. Teachers should avoid making subjects seem more challenging and encourage students to master the material while fostering a sense of accomplishment.
3. **Clear Goals and Intellectual Challenge** – Effective teachers set high standards and articulate clear goals. Students should understand what they will learn and what is expected of them.
4. **Independence, Control, and Active Engagement** – Teachers should create learning tasks that give students control over their learning and cater to their levels of understanding. This approach encourages better education and greater enjoyment.
5. **Learning from Students** – Effective teaching is open to change. Teachers must constantly assess the impact of their instruction on student learning and modify their methods based on evidence.

7. Active Learning

Myers and Jones (1993) define active learning as an environment where students are encouraged to talk, listen, read, write, and reflect on course content through problem solving exercises, group activities,

simulations, case studies, role-playing, and other hands-on tasks. These activities require students to implement their learning, fostering enhanced engagement and comprehension.

8. The Teacher's Role in Strategy Training

A language teacher aiming to train students in language learning strategies must first understand their interests, motivations, and learning styles. Teachers can observe students' behavior in class—whether they ask for clarification, cooperate with peers, or interact with proficient language users outside of class. A short questionnaire can help teachers gather information about students' language learning goals and preferences.

Teachers need to provide a variety of strategies to cater to different learning styles. Hall (1997) argues that a teacher's most important role in language instruction is offering various tasks that address students' varied learning styles, motivations, and strategy preferences.

Teachers should also analyze their teaching materials to determine whether language learning strategies are included. If not, they must seek new texts or supplementary resources incorporating these strategies. By reflecting on their teaching methods, lesson plans, and classroom practices, teachers can ensure their students are exposed to diverse strategies that promote effective learning.

9. Instructional Techniques in Teaching

To use any instructional technique effectively, teachers must fully understand the fundamental principles on which it is based. Instruction encompasses various teacher behaviors, from delivering information to engaging in complex student interactions. Researchers agree that the most meaningful learning occurs when significant student-teacher interaction occurs. Strategic teaching and learning involve this dynamic engagement, focusing on interactive, student-centered methods that encourage critical thinking and problem-solving [12].

10. Teaching English Language in Libya

English has become the dominant language of international communication. In Libya, English language teaching has experienced several stages of development. During the 1970s and early 1980s, English was a compulsory subject in schools and universities. However, in 1986, the Gaddafi regime canceled English language instruction, leading to a gap in English proficiency among students and teachers [18]. Many teachers were forced to switch to teaching other subjects, such as history or geography. This disruption in English language education resulted in two distinct generations of teachers: those trained before the cancellation and those trained afterward. Gadour (2006) notes that introducing new English textbooks, which included cultural elements, created additional challenges for teachers who had not been using English for many years.

11. Grammar-Translation Method and Communicative Language Teaching in Libya

Historically, the grammar-translation method was the dominant approach to teaching English in Libya. This method emphasized memorizing vocabulary and grammar rules, often to the detriment of communicative competence and English lessons were conducted mainly in Arabic, with little emphasis on practical language use. Recently, Libya has shifted toward communicative language teaching (CLT), which focuses on developing learners' ability to use English in social and cultural contexts. However, Libyan students still face challenges in developing communicative competence

due to a lack of supportive learning environments outside the classroom [1].

12. Libyan Teachers' Attitudes toward Integrating Technology in Teaching English

Emhamed (2011) investigated the attitudes of Libyan English language teachers toward integrating educational technology in teaching English at secondary schools in Sebha. The study revealed that while most teachers had positive attitudes toward using technology, they faced difficulties such as time constraints and limited administrative support. Teachers must continuously incorporate technology to improve the effectiveness of the language learning process. Abukhattala (2014) found similar challenges, with teachers citing a lack of financial resources and inadequate training in modern technology.

13. Teaching Word-Learning Strategies

Developing robust vocabularies is crucial for language learners. Teachers can help students unlock the meaning of unknown words by using context clues, breaking down word parts, and teaching students how to use dictionaries effectively. Graves (2006) presents a paradigm for effective vocabulary programs that encompasses delivering rich linguistic experiences, instructing on specific terms, teaching strategies for word acquisition, and promoting word awareness.

14. Language Teaching Strategies and Techniques

Thomson (2012) illustrates that teaching a second language requires patience and hard work. Teachers must first identify the difficulties faced by their students, and once these challenges are understood, the task of teaching becomes more accessible. Some strategies that can support successful language teaching include:

- Read Aloud/Think Aloud: Making Thinking Visible.
- Comprehension Questions.
- Shared Reading and Guided Reading.
- Story Grammar.
- Writing Activities.
- Building Word Knowledge.
- Teaching Words Conceptually.
- Using Classroom Visual Aids.

15. Methodology Introduction

This study aims to understand the challenges that may affect Libyan teachers in teaching a second or foreign language, specifically English. This section seeks to examine classroom environments and present the study's findings. This part focuses on the various phases of the research, including the methods, tools, data collection procedures, and data analysis process.

16. Research Design

A research design is a structured framework that delineates the methodologies and procedures for data collection and analysis to resolve research questions and address the research problem. This study is designed to investigate the relationship between teaching approaches and the difficulties faced by Libyan teachers in teaching a second or foreign language. The primary focus of this research is on Libyan students at the secondary school level.

17. The Sample

The researcher must delineate and characterize the attributes of the population participating in the study. The population denotes the complete set of individuals, occurrences, or entities the researcher aims to examine. A sample is extracted from this population. This section will comprehensively account for the sampling methodology and sample size. Sampling methods may utilize either probability or non-probability methodologies. In non-probability sampling, sample participants are selected without associated probabilities, resulting in conclusions that cannot be reliably extended to the broader population. Non-probability sampling approaches encompass convenience sampling and purposive sampling. Probability sampling methods, including simple random sampling, systematic sampling, stratified random sampling, and cluster sampling, must be employed to guarantee equitable representation and generalizability to the larger population. The sample size should adequately represent the general population [23].

This study's population was Libyan secondary school teachers who teach English. It was generally assumed that a sample was based on an agreed percentage of the population from which it was drawn. Questionnaires were administered to approximately 10 Libyan secondary school teachers.

18. Procedure

The respondents were approached in their respective classrooms, where information about the study's purpose was provided. After obtaining their consent, the research questionnaire was distributed to the Libyan teachers, who were asked to complete it in one sitting. The teachers selected the response categories that best reflect their difficulties in teaching English.

19. Data Collection

This research utilized a quantitative methodology, employing statistical techniques to examine the data. A questionnaire was the principal tool for data collection from the chosen population. The data was derived from the voluntary questionnaire replies of male and female educators at Mohammed Kamal Mustafa School. A 20-item questionnaire was administered to 10 English educators to establish the reliability and validity of the study instrument. Upon completion of the questionnaire, participants received verbal instructions from the researcher. The researcher designed the questionnaire to be clear and intelligible.

20. Data Analysis Method

LeCompte and Schensul (1999) define data analysis as a researcher's process to reduce data to a coherent narrative and interpretation. Data analysis involves reducing large amounts of collected data to make sense of them. Patton (1987) outlines three critical steps during data analysis: data are organized, data are reduced through summarization and categorization, and patterns and themes are identified and linked.

LeCompte and et al (1999) suggest that data analysis should begin as soon as possible after data collection, both while the researcher is still in the field and after fieldwork. They describe "in-the-field" analysis as including inscriptions, descriptions, and transcription. Data analysis may be conducted using both top-down and bottom-up approaches.

Data analysis examines, purifies, transforms, and models data to uncover valuable insights, formulate conclusions, and facilitate decision-making. Data analysis includes various methodologies and strategies employed across multiple disciplines, such as business, science, and social sciences [20].

This study employed data gathered from the questionnaire, which was statistically evaluated using SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) software to ensure accuracy in the results. A variety of analytical techniques were used to ascertain the correlation between the independent variables (teaching strategies) and the dependent variable (English language learning), such as regression analysis, goodness-of-fit testing, descriptive analysis, and Pearson correlation analysis, to ascertain the correlation between the variables. Descriptive analysis was employed to understand the characteristics of the respondents, specifically their gender.

The results of this study were obtained from 10 respondents of Libyan English teachers at a secondary school in Hoon regarding their language preferences and methods or the strategies of teaching English in the classroom. The statistical data indicates that Libyan English teachers utilize effective teaching strategies, such as providing feedback, supporting task completion, and guiding goal-setting. However, there is a need to improve self-assessment and alternative evaluation methods to ensure a more holistic approach to teaching English. Based on the data presented in the statistical charts regarding the questionnaire responses from Libyan English teachers about their use of teaching strategies, here is an analysis of the findings:

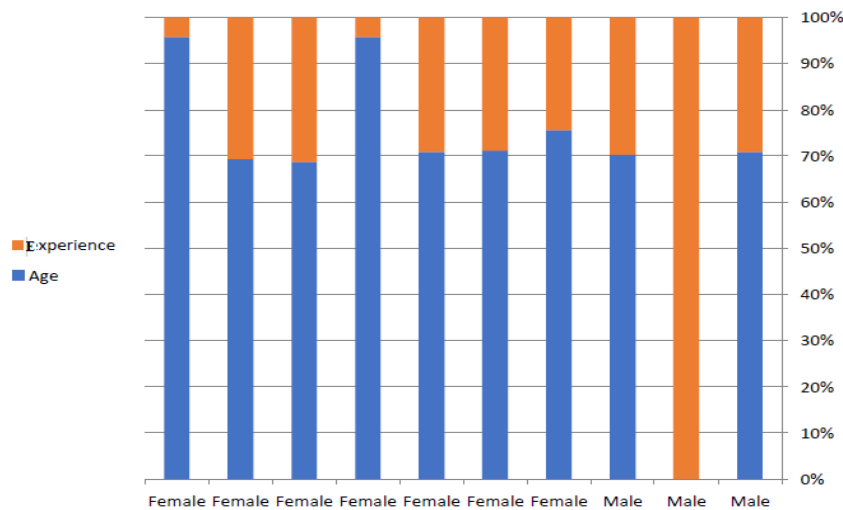


Fig 1: Teachers Demographics

The data reveals a varied demographic among the participants, with a mix of male and female teachers ranging in age and years of teaching experience. This diversity provides a broad perspective on teaching practices and the challenges faced across different experience levels. Most of the teachers have significant teaching experience, which suggests that the feedback reflects well-established practices in English language instruction.

21. Use of Teaching Strategies

The responses show that teachers commonly employ strategies that support student engagement, such as creating a supportive learning environment and providing regular feedback. This indicates that there is a focus on fostering a conducive atmosphere for learning, where students are encouraged to participate and interact actively.

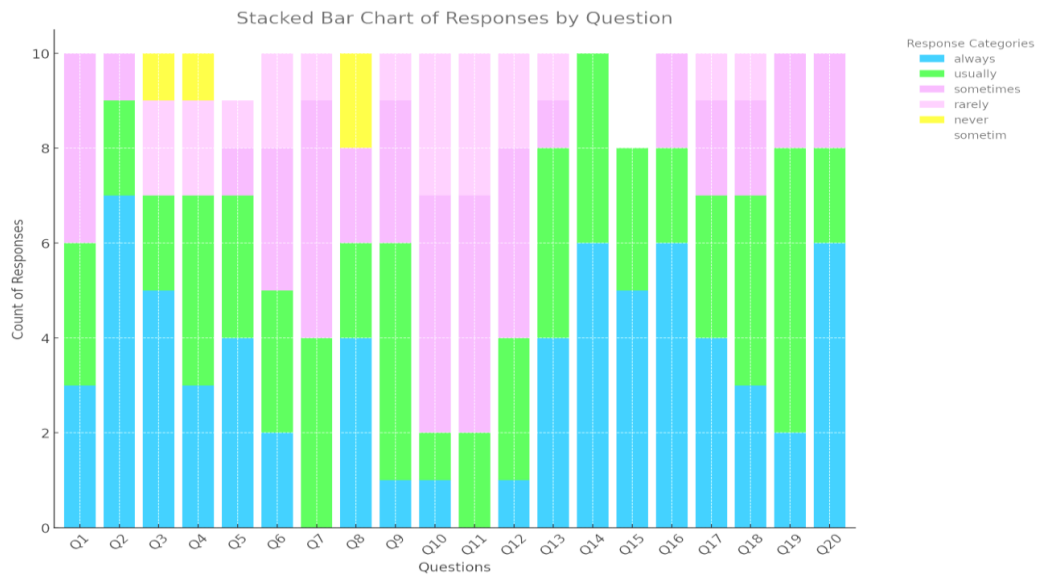


Fig 2: Stacked Bar Chart of Responses by Question

22. Challenges with Self-Assessment and Modern Evaluation Techniques:

The charts suggest that some teachers do not regularly incorporate self-assessment or alternative assessment methods. This may indicate a reliance on traditional teaching strategies rather than modern approaches that involve student reflection and self-evaluation. The limited use of such techniques could be an area for professional development aimed at equipping teachers with skills to integrate more varied assessment methods.

23. Gender Differences in Teaching Practices:

The data could reveal subtle differences in teaching approaches between male and female teachers, which may be influenced by their varying experiences and perspectives on language instruction. However, analyzing these differences would require more detailed statistical comparisons to identify significant trends.

24. Importance of Experience:

There is a trend that teachers with more years of experience tend to utilize a broader range of strategies, possibly due to their familiarity with different teaching approaches and understanding of what works best in their classrooms. This suggests that newer teachers may benefit from mentorship programs to enhance their teaching methods.

25. Recommendations for Improvement:

The findings indicate that while supportive teaching strategies are commonly used, there is a need to incorporate more modern and reflective practices, such as self-assessment techniques, peer evaluations, and technology-enhanced learning tools. Encouraging professional development and training can help teachers adopt these strategies more consistently.

Table 1: The Frequency Data

Question	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Usually	Always	Range	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Provide students opportunities to show what they have learned in class			4	3	3	2	3	5	3.90	0.876
Create an environment where it is helpful for students to complete an assigned task.			1	2	7	2	3	5	4.60	0.699
Guide students to set goals and monitor their learning progress.	1	2		2	5			5	3.80	1.549
Assist students in identifying means of getting personal feedback	1	2		4	3			4	1	1.430
Demonstrate to students how to do self-assessment.		1	2	3	4	3	2	4	1	1.054
Determine how students can learn on their own in class		2	3	3	2	3	2	5	3.50	1.080
Allow students to perform task-based activities more than paper-and-pencil tests.		1	5	4		2	2	4	3.30	0.675
Learn alternative approaches to assess learning outcomes.	2		2	2	4	4	1	5	3.60	1.578
Evaluate students' competence level at the end of an instructional program.		1	3	5	1	3	2	5	3.60	0.843
Determine the degree of accomplishment of a desired learning outcome at the end of a lesson.		3	5	1	1	3	2	5	3.00	0.943
Assess the quality of student learning in a class at the end of an instruction.		3	5	2		2	2	4	2.90	0.738
Make a final decision about the level of learning that students achieve at the end of a lesson or subject.		2	4	3	1	3	2	5	3.30	0.949
Allow students to discover their learning difficulties in class.		1	1	4	4	3	2	5	4.10	0.994
Provide feedback to students to improve their learning process.				4	6	1	4	5	4.60	0.516
Help students to discover their learning difficulties in class.			2	3	5	2	3	5	4.30	0.823
Assist students in determining their learning strengths and weaknesses in class.			2	2	6	2	3	5	4.40	0.843

7. Make suggestions to students about how they develop better learning strategies.		1	2	3	4	3	2	5	4.00	1.054
Perform classroom observation to determine how students' learning can be improved		1	2	4	3	3	2	5	3.90	0.994
Explore effective classroom teaching methods and strategies			2	6	2	2	3	5	4.00	0.667
Create practical teaching approaches and strategies for my class			2	2	6	2	3	5	4.40	0.843

Based on the table 1 summarizing the responses from Libyan English teachers regarding the use of teaching strategies, here is an analysis of the key findings:

- 1. Opportunities for Student Learning:** The teachers frequently provide students with opportunities to demonstrate what they have learned in class, with an average score of 3.90 (on a scale of 1-5), suggesting that such practices are common, though not always consistent. The standard deviation of 0.876 indicates moderate variation in responses.
- 2. Supportive Learning Environment:** Teachers actively create environments conducive to task completion, with a high average score of 4.60 and a low standard deviation (0.699), indicating that most teachers prioritize supportive learning conditions.
- 3. Goal Setting and Monitoring:** The responses show a moderate application of guiding students to set goals and track progress, with an average of 3.80 and a relatively high variability (standard deviation of 1.549), suggesting differing approaches or effectiveness in implementing this strategy.
- 4. Feedback Mechanisms:** Providing feedback appears to be a common practice among the teachers, with high ratings in related items, such as "providing feedback to improve learning" (average 4.60) and "helping students identify learning difficulties" (average 4.30). This indicates a focus on formative assessment practices.
- 5. Use of Self-Assessment and Alternative Evaluation Methods:** Self-assessment strategies are utilized, with an average of 3.00 to 3.60 across various items related to evaluating learning outcomes and quality. However, the higher variability (standard deviations ranging from 0.738 to 1.578) suggests that not all teachers consistently apply these methods.
- 6. Task-Based Activities:** Teachers tend to allow students to engage in task-based activities rather than traditional assessments, with an average of 3.30, reflecting a shift towards more practical learning experiences. However, the variability (standard deviation of 0.675) indicates some inconsistency in its application.
- 7. Learning Strengths and Weaknesses:** Teachers assist students in identifying their learning strengths and weaknesses with an average score of 4.40, reflecting a solid commitment to diagnostic teaching strategies.
- 8. Classroom Observations and Teaching Methods:** Teachers also engage in classroom observations and explore effective teaching methods (averages around 4.00), suggesting an ongoing effort to adapt and improve instructional practices.

26. Conclusion

This study has highlighted the influence of different teaching strategies on English language learning in

Libya, with a particular focus on secondary education. The findings indicate that although many teachers use effective strategies like providing feedback and supporting task completion, there is still a significant reliance on traditional teaching practices. The limited use of self-assessment and modern evaluation methods suggests a need for more comprehensive teacher training programs emphasizing reflective and technology-enhanced teaching. Addressing these gaps can foster a more dynamic learning environment, ultimately improving language proficiency and student outcomes. To achieve meaningful progress, it is vital to promote ongoing professional development that equips educators with the necessary tools and strategies to adapt their teaching methods effectively to students' needs. Future research should continue exploring the barriers to adopting innovative techniques and focus on strategies to overcome them for more effective language education in Libya.

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