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An Investigation into the Limited Implementation of Modern English Language Teaching Methods and Instructional Aids in Libyan Secondary Schools.

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Abstract:

The current study investigates the limited implementation of modern ELT methodologies and teaching aids in Libyan secondary schools. Despite the global evolution of language teaching methods since the 1950s and the technology use in education, Libyan classrooms continue to rely heavily on the Grammar Translation Method (GTM), with limited adoption of communicative approaches or modern teaching aids. Through questionnaires and interviews with Libyan English teachers, this study explores the reasons behind the persistence of traditional methods, the challenges faced by teachers, and the implications for students' language proficiency. The findings reveal that factors such as large class sizes, insufficient class time, lack of resources, and examination-focused curricula hinder the adoption of more effective, student-centered approaches. The paper concludes with recommendations for teacher training, curriculum reform, and the integration of modern teaching aids to enhance English language education in Libya.

Key Words: English Language Teaching (ELT) – Libyan Secondary Schools – Modern Teaching Methods – Grammar Translation Method – Teaching Aids

الملخص باللغة العربية

هذه الدراسة تبحث في محدودية العمل بالطرق الحديثة في تدريس اللغة الإنجليزية والوسائل التعليمية في المدارس الثانوية الليبية. بالرغم مما يشهده العالم من تطور في طرائق تدريس اللغات وخاصة اللغة الإنجليزية منذ خمسينيات القرن الماضي، والتوسع في توظيف التكنولوجيا في العملية التعليمية، إلا أن تدريس اللغة الإنجليزية في ليبيا لازال معتمدا بشكل واسع على طريقة القواعد والترجمة (Grammar Translation Method – GTM) مع محدودية في تطبيق الطرق المعتمدة على التخاطب و التواصل واستخدام الوسائل التعليمية الحديثة، واعتمدت هذه الدراسة على استبيانات

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ومقابلات شخصية أُجريت مع عدد من معلمي اللغة الإنجليزية في ليبيا للوقوف على الأسباب وراء استمرارية العمل بالأساليب التقليدية، والصعوبات التي يواجهها المعلمون، ومدى تأثيرها على التحصيل اللغوي لدى الطلاب. وأظهرت النتائج وجود عدة عوامل، منها كثرة عدد الطلاب في الفصول الدراسية، وضيق الوقت المخصص للحصص، ونقص المصادر والإمكانيات واعتما المناهج الدراسية على الامتحانات بوصفها محورًا رئيسيًا للتقويم، والتي بدولرها تعيق تطبيق أساليب تدريس التي يكون محورها المتعلم، وتختتم هذه الدراسة بتقديم مجموعة من التوصيات التي تشمل تطوير برامج لإعداد المعلمين وتدريبهم، وإصلاح المناهج الدراسية، ودمج الوسائل التعليمية الحديثة في العملية التعليمية؛ بما يسهم في الارتقاء بتعليم اللغة الإنجليزية في ليبيا.

1. Introduction

1.1 Background

Since the 1950s, the field of English language teaching (ELT) has witnessed significant advancements, with the emergence of different methodologies such as the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach, Task-Based Learning (TBL), and the integration of technology in language education. However, in many parts of the world, including Libya, traditional methods like the Grammar Translation Method (GTM) remain prevalent. This study focuses on the limited use of modern ELT methods and teaching aids in Libyan secondary schools, exploring the reasons behind this stagnation and its impact on students' language learning outcomes.

1.2 Research Aims

The primary objectives of this study are:

1. To identify the predominant teaching methods used in Libyan secondary schools for English language instruction.
2. To explore the reasons for the limited adoption of modern teaching methods and aids.
3. To assess the implications of these methods on students' language proficiency and motivation, and provide recommendations for improving English language teaching in Libya.

1.3 Research Questions

1. What teaching methods and aids are currently used in Libyan secondary schools for English language instruction?

تاريخ الاستلام Received 2-9-2026 تاريخ القبول Accepted 2-10-2026 تاريخ النشر published 15-10-2026

2. Why do Libyan teachers continue to rely on traditional methods like GTM? And what are the implications of these methods on students' language learning outcomes?

3. How can modern teaching methods and aids be effectively integrated into Libyan classrooms?

2. Literature Review

2.1 Evolution of English Language Teaching Methods

The history of ELT has seen a shift from traditional methods like GTM, which focuses on grammar and translation, to more communicative approaches such as CLT, which emphasizes fluency and real-life communication. Despite the global trend towards communicative methods, many countries, including Libya, continue to use traditional methods due to various contextual factors.

2.2 Grammar Translation Method (GTM)

Grammar Translation Method, used for ages to teach languages, which is simply depends more on translating texts and rules of the language. Despite the criticism because of less focus on communicative skills, many language teachers find it the most suitable method to use. Richards and Rodgers (1986) “Since the1950s a number of ambitious attempts have been made at testing the comparative effectiveness of methods” (p.165). In recent decades many language teaching methods have been implemented such as: Grammar Translation Method, the Direct Method, the Audio-lingual Method and in the last two decades the Communicative Approach. Many studies have been done on those methods and how effective they are. Those studies showed a noticeable diversity between those methods. According toThuleen (1996) while reviewing the use of GTM in the last two centuries and describes it as one of the most traditional methods of language teaching. Earlier in the last centuryWringe (1989) considered GTM as if it was no longer used globally; but the current studies showed the wide use of this method. Specifically, in the Libyan context, GTM is still the dominant method to be used in English language classroom. The heavy focus on structural grammar rules and translation negatively influences the students' communicative competence, which as a result leads them to be unable to communicate effectively in real-life situation. Furthermore, Abdullah, S. A. (2025) confirms this persistence which is not necessary to be due to teacher preference, but could be due to other barriers such as examination-focused regulations, large class sizes, and the used curriculum.

تاريخ الاستلام Received 2-9-2026 تاريخ القبول Accepted 2-10-2026 تاريخ النشر published 15-10-2026

2.3 Communicative Language Teaching (CLT)

CLT, which emerged in the 1970s, focuses on developing students' communicative competence through interactive activities, pair work, and group work. Despite its proven effectiveness in enhancing fluency, CLT has not been successfully adopted in Libyan public schools. Recent data by Algwil, K. A. (2023) in his study assumes that while teachers have positive attitudes toward CLT, the broader educational infrastructure pushes back; school inspectors still evaluate teachers using traditional metrics, creating a professional risk for teachers who try to implement communicative tasks. Locally, Elhrari, E. (2024) in her research finds that teachers in the Western Libyan area (including Az-Zawia and Sabratha) hardly can move away from teacher-led syntax checking toward unpredictable, student-led communicative interaction. This friction leaves the core objectives of CLT unfulfilled in the secondary school tier. Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), According to Brown (1994) is shifting language education beyond grammar to include social, cultural, and pragmatic aspects of real-life communication. It prioritizes developing learners' fluency over mere accuracy, preparing them for unrehearsed language use outside the classroom. The goal is to foster lifelong learning, treat learners as cooperative partners, and design classroom practices that tap into intrinsic motivation to help students reach their full potential.

2.4 Impediments to Integrating Modern Instructional Aids .

The use of instructional aids is essential to support student-centered learning. However, Libyan secondary schools suffer from limited resources. Mohummed, H. K &Yaseen, K. I. (2017) point out that the total lack of new technologies forces teachers to overuse whiteboard and traditional instruction. Even when modern tools are available, pedagogical integration is still limited. Elmadwi, H. M., &Ahmed, R. M. (2026) found out that while modern Libyan EFL teachers are fully aware that interactive instructional technology increases student motivation, they are faced with an uninspiring environment. Furthermore, Algwil, K. (2023) emphasizes that the governmental curriculum gives teachers no extra time to adopt new technologies. Consequently, modern teaching tools are still not widely used and traditional used instead.

تاريخ الاستلام Received 2-9-2026 تاريخ القبول Accepted 2-10-2026 تاريخ النشر published 15-10-2026

3. Methodology

3.1 Data Collection Methods

This study employed a mixed-methods approach to data collection, combining questionnaires and interviews to collect data from Libyan teachers of English.

3.2 Participants

A total of 47 teachers completed the questionnaire, and 4other teachers participated in in-depth interviews.

3.3 Interviews

The interviews were conducted to gain deeper insights into teachers' experiences and perspectives. Questions focused on their teaching methods, challenges, and attitudes towards adopting modern approaches. In terms of making arrangements, the interviews took place according to the convenience of the research participants. Rubin & Rubin (2005) "An interview is part of developing relationship in which issues of mutual interest are explored in depth".

3.4Questionnaire

In order to achieve triangulation and data reliability, a nineteen-item questionnaire was distributed among 47 Libyan teachers of English. Questionnaire participants varied in gender and years of teaching experience. Participants had to tick or circle items on a list. The questionnaire items were purposefully designed to cover all aspects and elements of teaching and learning and complement the data collected through interviews.

3.5 Data Analysis

The questionnaire consisted of 19 items, divided into two parts:

Part 1: Focused on teachers' backgrounds, classroom practices, use of teaching aids, current teaching load, number of classes per week, class size, and group activities.

Part 2: Explored teachers' attitudes towards modern teaching methods and their perceived challenges.

Interviews were designed to delve into teachers' evaluation and opinion of task-based teaching and communicative approach.

Interview data were analyzed qualitatively to complement the questionnaire findings.

تاريخ الاستلام Received 2-9-2026 تاريخ القبول Accepted 2-10-2026 تاريخ النشر published 15-10-2026

4. Findings

The findings revealed that GTM remains the dominant teaching method in Libyan secondary schools. Approximately 90% of the teachers reported using Arabic as the medium of instruction, and 96% stated that they focus heavily on grammar instruction. Only 6% of the teachers reported using audio-visual aids in their classrooms. The lack of resources, such as projectors, computers, and internet access, was cited as a major barrier to the adoption of modern teaching aids.

Teachers identified several challenges of implementing CLT, including:

Large Class Sizes: With an average of 20-30 students per class, teachers found it difficult to organize pair and group work.

Time Constraints: The 45-minute class period was deemed insufficient for communicative activities.

Lack of Training: Many teachers expressed a lack of confidence in using CLT due to insufficient training.

5. Discussion

The reliance on GTM and the lack of communicative practice have significant implications for students' language proficiency. Graduates of Libyan secondary schools often struggle with speaking and listening skills, despite having a strong grasp of grammar and vocabulary. This mismatch between classroom instruction and real-world language use highlights the need for curriculum reform.

This reliance on GTM is attributed to the examination system, which prioritizes grammar and translation over communicative skills. Furthermore, the limited use of modern teaching aids reflects systemic resource constraints. Teachers' lack of confidence in using CLT, due to insufficient training, further perpetuates traditional practices.

5.1 Challenges in Implementing Modern Methods

The implementation of modern ELT methods in Libyan school organization faces several challenges, including:

- Large Class Sizes: Overcrowded classrooms make it difficult to implement interactive activities.
- Limited Resources: Many schools lack access to modern teaching aids such as audio-visual equipment.

تاريخ الاستلام Received 2-9-2026 تاريخ القبول Accepted 2-10-2026 تاريخ النشر published 15-10-2026

- Teacher Training: Many Libyan English teachers are not trained in modern methodologies.
- Examination Pressure: The focus on grammar-based exams discourages teachers from adopting communicative approaches.
- Lack of teacher training programs and in-service teacher updating.
- **6. Conclusion and Recommendations**
- **6.1 Conclusion**
- This study highlights the persistent use of traditional teaching methods in Libyan secondary schools and the challenges faced by teachers in adopting modern approaches. The findings suggest that the current emphasis on grammar and translation, combined with a lack of resources and teacher training, hinders students' ability to develop communicative competence in English.
- **6.2 Recommendations**
- 1. Teacher Training: Provide professional development programs to train teachers in modern ELT methodologies, particularly CLT.
- 2. Curriculum Reform: Revise the English language curriculum to place greater emphasis on communicative skills and real-life language use.
- 3. Resource Allocation: Invest in modern teaching aids, such as audio-visual equipment and internet access, to support interactive learning.
- 4. Class Size Reduction: Reduce class sizes to facilitate more effective implementation of communicative activities.
- 5. Examination Reform: Shift the focus of English language exams from grammar and translation to include speaking and listening components.
- **6.3 Future Research**
- Further research is needed to explore the impact of these recommendations on students' language proficiency and motivation. Additionally, studies should investigate the role of cultural and societal factors in shaping teachers' attitudes towards modern ELT methods.

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