

## **Wilhelm's Strategies and Teaching of English at the Secondary Level in Libya: A Prescriptive Approach Regarding Reading Skills**

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### **Abstract**

Libya is a 3rd world country which faces a lot of challenges in giving required resources and ideal environment for the effective learning and teaching, especially that of English language, although, the Libyan Government has taken lot of efforts for effective teaching, reading and learning. The most important skill for learning a language is by reading, which has focused the attention for teachers, researchers, pedagogues, teacher training and foreign language professionals in the recent times. Reading is very important in learning and mastering any foreign language. Skills are the stepping stone for effective English competence among the students. In Libya, the learner faces many difficulties to learn and master the foreign language like English, especially reading comprehension skill. Libyan students have negative attitudes in learning English language since they face many difficulties in comprehension skills. In such cases, the teaching method and material adopted by the teacher is very important for the students. The teachers using various motivational methods and different learning strategies play a crucial role in coaching reading skills among the students.

This paper aims to study and to identify:

1. The problems that teachers face while teaching reading skills to the students at the secondary school level in Libya, with respect to their teaching reading skills
2. The recent developments in teaching reading skills at the secondary school level
3. To understand how the knowledge and effective utilization of reading strategies be demonstrated.
4. To suggest recommendations to improve the present condition of teaching reading skills.

## Introduction

Teaching of English in Libya dates back to 1940s after the end of the World War II under the British administration in the northern part of Libya. On 19.02.1968, the Minister of Education made a decision to form a committee for revising the Libyan educational system. It aimed at making English the language of instruction of scientific courses in the secondary school and university. The first English language series used in Libya was *Basic Way to English* by KC Ogden. In the 1960's, a new English language curriculum and course books were needed to change and improve the whole process of teaching that foreign language in Libya. The series, written by Mustafa Gusbi was entitled, *English for Libya*. For the secondary stage, Gusbi, in combination with another writer Roland John, wrote one more series entitled *Further English for Libya* in which they adopted the English culture as a vehicle for teaching the English language. In the school year 1998/1999 a new series of *English for Libya*, published by Garnet Education was in use in both preparatory and secondary stages. After the air-raid against the Gaddafi regime led by the United States of America and the United Kingdom in mid of April 1986, and as a consequence, the Minister of Education made the decision No. 195/1986 to stop teaching foreign languages in Libya. The decision badly affected the future of education in Libya. English language teaching was resumed again in the Libyan educational system in the year 1993/1994. In 2005/2006 a new English text-book was introduced to 3rd primary class. English was taught in the 3rd class for only one year. It was stopped but introduced to 5th and 6th classes in the year 2006/2007. Historically, there was some kind of training led by the universities and with the cooperation of the UNESCO. Teachers were regularly sent abroad for training. Since stopping the teaching of English in 1986, many problems are encountering the process:

1. Shortage of qualified teachers,
2. Shortage of teaching aids for the language,
3. No language laboratories at schools, and

4. Absence of programmed language training for the teachers,
5. Absence of computer training that makes the teachers able to use the computer and Internet in the language laboratories.

Libya is in 3<sup>rd</sup> world country which faces lot of challenges in giving required resources and ideal environment for the effective learning and teaching, though the Libyan Government has taken lot of efforts for effective teaching, reading and learning. The most important skill for learning a language is by reading, which has focused the attention for teachers, researchers, pedagogues, teacher training and foreign language professionals in the recent times. Reading is very important in learning and mastering any foreign language (Pathan and Dersi, 2013). Skills are the stepping stone for effective English competence among the students. In Libya, the learner faces many difficulties to learn and master the foreign language like English, especially reading comprehension skill. The Libyan students have negative attitudes in learning English language since they face many difficulties in reading comprehension skill. In such case, the teaching method and material adopted by the teacher is very important for the students in Libya. The teachers using various motivational methods and different learning strategies play a crucial role in coaching reading skills among the students.

Libya's population is around 7.5 million, who speaks Berber and Arabic. In Libya learning and teaching of English has undergone several stages (Elabbar, 2014). Learning English were made compulsory during 1970-1980s in all Libyan schools. However, it was completely cancelled in 1986 due to political forces influenced the educational system. Some of the teachers changed the specialty to teach some other subjects like geography, mathematics, history in secondary school levels. After some point in time a new textbooks of English language's integrated cultural aspects was introduced that required new teaching methods. The annual report of Libyan Ministry mentioned. The scholarships strengthened to cover all learners and the teachers to improve the opportunities for learning, reading and teaching English.

After 40 years Libya become independent in 1951. During 1951 to 1969 under the monarchy, Libyans were given formal assurance to have right to education and brought

remarkable changes in educational systems (Orafi, 2008). Teaching English language to secondary schools plays a major part in the Libyan educational systems. If a new word is taught by the English teacher, most of the students wrote the Arabic equivalent of that particular English word to memorize the meaning. New English curriculum was introduced by Libya in the year 2000 into secondary schools to improve English language teaching status. Libyan Government has introduced English language curriculum in 1999-2000 for secondary schools.

After 1990s more than 1000 private secondary schools and primary schools were established in Libya (Rhema and Miliszewska, 2010). The English teachers had 4 years of training at secondary schools levels as their teacher education. Electronic systems were introduced in 2008 Libya for submitting secondary education exams. Libya faces the shortage of native teachers and the non-Libyans teachers like Egyptians and Palestinians are teaching in secondary schools which are around 65 percentage (Hawana, 1981). In 2012 October, Educational First English Proficiency Index indicated that Libya is the one of the world's lowest rank in English Proficiency (Ura, 2013).

In 1954 more than 81.1 per cent of the Libyan populations were illiterate. During Libyan independence in 1951 more than 100,000 students got education. Around 40 per cent students attended schools in 1954 (Otman and Karlberg, 2007). However, there were only 200 teachers worked with proper teacher training and totally only 800 teachers were there. English was part of education in Libya till mid 1980s, and then the political interference in educational system reduced it. Libyan Government made a fundamental and disastrous mistake by not recognizing the international importance of English. Educational quality was set back for 2 generation in Libya by replacing the Malay language in replacement of English. As a result, standard of English competence has declined. After that Libyan Government reintroduced English to all the schools as the medium of instruction.

Period	Kindergarten & elementary		Preparatory & secondary	
	Schools	Students	Schools	Students
1950–1951	194	32115	4	300
1951–1952	202	36949	4	402
1952–1953	228	42500	5	558
1953–1954	266	48278	7	712
1954–1955	319	57001	11	957
1955–1956	382	65831	18	3755
1956–1957	425	78724	28	4293
1957–1958	446	91632	43	5682
1958–1959	487	99388	61	6639
1959–1960	559	113694	75	9186
1960–1961	632	130077	95	12320

Source: Kubbah, 1964.

This table shows number of schools and students studied in Libya from 1950 – 1961. The study also encounters that, as of the year 2009, the literacy rate at Libya among adults was 88.9 per cent and among younger generation was 99.9 per cent. The secondary schools' gross enrollment ratios regional average for Libya was 68 per cent.

According to Mohsen (2014) with analysis of English language training and teaching in Libya it is evident that, the quality of English education is not up to the standards and that it is mainly due to the lack of professionalism and knowledge among the teachers of the foreign language in effectively teaching the language to the learners. Further, there is no specific or enhanced method or model followed in the country, for training the teachers in making them well equipped in the language.

### Problem Statement

With specific reference to Libya, it can be observed that the poor resources, facilities and study material will have critical impacts on the teaching and learning methods adopted for the English language. In addition, the lack of collaboration and poor motivation among teachers is

also observed to have created a negative impact on their teaching ability. Moreover, the Libyan culture and their beliefs seem to have impacts on the teachers who find difficult to apply new methods, different ideas and methodologies in the secondary level schools. As claimed by Orafi (2008) the English teachers in Libya also have no consistent syllabus and the educational institutions in the country lack in usage of educational media. It can thus be stated that, the communicative approach for learning English language has not reached Libya. It is also observed to be emphasized by Hawana (1981) that, the English teachers' caliber is not good in Libyan schools, since their academic qualification is not more than a bachelor's degree and the training level for teaching foreign language like English is very little. All these reasons and influences from the teachers' side result in students not being enough motivated to learn a foreign language like that of English. Hence, the current study attempts to develop a training course in teaching reading skills for the teachers of English language at the secondary level education in Libya. Moreover the study will specifically adopt the Wilhelm's Strategies.

### **Literature Review**

The study conducted by Elabbar (2014) analyzed the knowledge of teaching the Libyan English among the foreign language school teachers and discussed a professional development model for the Libyan school teachers. It was claimed that, the teachers are the sources of information, ideas, practices and knowledge to their learners. Among the Libyan school teachers, English language plays the role of a foreign language and the teachers are observed to teach the language to their learners only in the context of a hard culture. The teachers are looked to be constrained as they are limited with the liberty to decide on things. The Libyan school teachers tend to face extra constraints and issues with respect to teaching the English language as a foreign language as they cannot make use of a lot of aids or techniques to teach the language like how the other subject teachers use. The reasons commonly are, the learners are taught a language that is not native to them and sometimes, the teachers may also be a native English speaker. Such limitations are claimed to arise from their cultural settings like, impacts of teachers' gender and age; impact of Libyan community on learning; time management within classrooms; and the background knowledge and learning styles. Finally, the study concluded that, if the teachers are

provided support by exploring the details of impacts on their teaching practices in language classrooms, then it is likely to suggest an approach or a model of Continuing Professional Development, to work in these constraints.

Mohamed (2014) conducted a detailed study on teaching English in Libya. It was claimed that, in Libya, teaching the English language as a foreign language has encountered a number of conditions ranging from prosperity to stagnation during the 1960s and 1970s to the 1980s and 1990s. The reason behind stagnation is claimed to be because of the cancellation by Gaddafi's English regime from the curriculums followed in schools, as a result of the political reasons. Further, it is claimed that, after ten years of stagnation, the English language started gaining momentum in businesses and in academic profession, after Libya started restoring political relations with the West. But there is encountered a need for development of the academic profession in terms of English language, by means of integration of the professional experience of the Libyan teachers with the latest methodological and theoretical developments. Thus, the study aimed at sharing the reflective views on teaching the English language in Libya with other English teachers in the country and elsewhere. Thus, the study specially analyzed 5 relevant topics such as development of materials for listening and teaching; teaching the strategies of reading; teaching grammar; professionally developing the teachers and by raising awareness of the students in their learning strategies.

The study by Mohsen (2014) focused on analyzing the teaching of English language as a foreign language in Libya. It was drawn back to 1940s when teaching English language started in Libya. After the revision of Libyan educational system, the English language is claimed to have looked at as a language of instruction for the scientific courses in universities and secondary schools. The study further presents the use and popularity of the English language since the early 1940s up to the current timings, claiming that the Gaddafi regime badly affected the English language education in the country. It's come back during the year 1993 is also presented in the study. The study infers that, some kind of training has been provided to the teachers as a joint attempt by the UNESCO and universities in Libya. At times they were also sent abroad regularly for being trained in English language. But, the in between gap in practice of English language

during the 1986 is encountered to create problems such as, lack of language laboratories in schools; shortage of qualified teachers; lack of teaching aids for English language; lack of programmed language training for English teachers; lack of computer training that would enable them use Internet and computer etc. thus, the study recommends the need to institute language training centers in the country with the cooperation of American or British Council and emphasized that, the Ministry of Education needs to revise the plans related to teaching foreign languages.

The study conducted by Suwaed (2014) about how the Libyan teachers in the university level deal with the challenges they face in teaching the English language at the University Level in the country. It was stated that, in the context of English as a foreign language more researches are conducted with respect to supporting the students to cope up with the issues they face in writing the foreign language and emphasized that, studies relating to enabling or training the teachers to deal with the challenges they face in teaching the language are less investigated. The most common challenges faced by teachers in teaching English to the learners are stated to be low motivation of the students and mixed levels. It was emphasized that, the imbalance requires to be addressed as the way teachers teach the language might have a direct impact on the way the students learn. It was further investigated how the writing teachers in the Alzawia University of Libya deal with challenges they encounter, considering 3 colleges specifically. Thus, the study attempted to identify how the teachers in the university deal with the problems they encounter and identifying the knowledge sources on teaching English writing. The results from the study infer that, the personal development and the personal teaching experience teachers of the teachers form the chief sources of knowledge.

The study conducted by Smith (2006), on the inclusion in English language teacher training and education is observed to synthesize the literature from 3 different fields of education such as, ELT or English language teaching; education for disabled learners and training and education for new teachers. It attempts to widen an understanding how the new teachers of the English language are prepared for their role in classrooms and to suggest changes to the current system, thereby promoting inclusiveness in English language teaching. The study also carried out



a broad survey on the English language teaching professionals of the UK, in order to examine how the initial professional development and training match the requirements for the teachers, as they progress in their careers. The study stated that, EFL (English as a Foreign Language) is a branch of ELT, perceived by its practitioners in general to be strongly inclusive in ethos and to be student centered and hence their attitudes and experiences towards learners with learning differences and disabilities were also analyzed to determine the factors that affect the willingness or ability of the teachers to include learners having additional support needs. In depth interviews were also conducted along with the surveys, with the course designers and the teacher trainers. The findings from the study suggest that that, the teacher training of the English as a Foreign Language focuses towards developing inclusive practices and beliefs, but that due to the lack of a clear focus on the issues of disability, many teachers lack confidence and feel under prepared, when happen to work with the disabled learners.

### **Aims and Objectives**

The aim of the study is to develop a training course in teaching reading skills for the teachers of English language at the secondary level education in Libya, with specific usage of Wilhelm's Strategies.

The objectives of the study are as follows:

1. To identify the problems that teachers face while teaching reading skills to the students at the secondary school level in Libya, with respect to their teaching reading skills.
2. To identify the recent developments in teaching reading skills at the secondary school level.
3. To understand how the knowledge and effective utilization of reading strategies be demonstrated.

4. To suggest recommendations to improve the present condition of teaching reading skills.

### **Questions that Need to be Answered**

1. What are the knowledge and cultural constraints that are faced by English educators in terms of the choices and methodologies they use in their teaching?
2. What are the possibilities of ensuring the CLT or the CPD approach among the educators to teach the students to appropriately learn English?

### **Importance of the Work**

The study makes it evident that, in Libya, the English language teaching continues to be a critical issue, especially at the level of secondary education. The country is observed to have poor resources, facilities and study materials, lack of trained teachers, poor methods of teaching and learning and lack of collaboration among the teachers and learners of the English language. Hence the current study attempts to analyze what causes negative impact on the teaching ability of the Libyan teachers, helping the teachers, students as well as the providers of the English language overcome the issues they face in teaching and learning the English language respectively. Even though a number of studies are conducted analyzing the problems faced by the Libyan teachers and students in learning English, the current study focuses at developing a training course to make the teachers of the English language enhance their teaching and reading skills. It will thus assist and motivate the students to learn the foreign language at ease and without any difficulty and thereby increase their quality of education. Moreover, unlike the other existing studies the current study also adopts the Wilhelm's Strategies in order to develop the English language training course. Thus, it can be stated that, since the study identifies the problems faced by the teachers with respect to teaching and reading skills and accordingly

propose an English language training course for the teachers of the English language, it will be a significant contribution for the readers.

## **Research Methodology**

Any exploration will not be ideal and complete without the research methodology. The exploration procedure will be the principle part of any study and it will ensure about the discoveries and the study portrayals. This area will clear a path for the whole research strategy utilized as a part of the study.

### **1. Research model**

Atkinson and Hammersley (2007) characterizes that the exploration model is the fundamental section of the study in which the entire examination will be hung on. The exploration paradigm is majorly taken in two sorts. They are the Positivism and the Interpretivism standards. Positivism is the type that will support numerical information and it will help in finding the relationship studies. In the meantime the Interpretivism systems does not make any numerical estimations, it will make the translation just in the text.

This study will make use of the Interpretivism technique. The study is based on the problems that teachers face in teaching students particularly the English language so the problem found is there is lack of training and skills among the teachers of Libyan schools who teaches English. It also affects the students and with the basic and improper English-teaching they will face problems in future and it will affect their career. Hence the investigator draws the problem and takes the opinion and comments from the victim (teachers) to know the depth of the problem. Thus the investigator can gain more witnesses and therefore interview method is used to obtain the detailed answers and open-ended questions will tend to derive answers from the respondent point of view. Therefore, Interpretivism method is the apt one for the current study.

### **2. Research approach**

The exploration methodology is the examination's strategy development in which the specialist will make the examination. There are two sorts so of the methodologies that are generally

utilized (VanderStoep and Johnston 2009). This study makes use of the qualitative approach. Interpretivism method will be complete only when the study approach is qualitative and also the study evaluates the answers by using txt analysis method. Hence, qualitative research approach is used here.

### **3. Research design**

Research design is similar to a clear picture of the study matter and the way that must be used for the procedure research and a definitive arrangement (Weiten 2010). The study will make utilization of the descriptive exploration outlines. This type of research design will support in both subjective and quantitative information techniques.

### **4. Sampling design**

Srinagesh (2006) characterizes that the sampling outline is not anything besides rather the course or process in which the data will be accumulated from an immense target participants.

This study will make use of the convenient sampling method. Teachers from various schools of Libya will be selected based on their willingness and availability.

### **5. Data collection method**

Research information assemblage is the gathering of measurements and data with the subtle elements that are crucial for the exploration (Merriam 2009). This study utilizes both the primary and secondary kind of information gathering sorts.

The information that is gained straightforwardly from the study's members is called to as primary information (Kirsch 1992). In the current study, the open-ended questionnaires will be used for the primary data collection.

As indicated by Loewy & Guffey (2009), Secondary information is the information that was accessible in some figure or structure and it is not directly involved or used in the current study.

### **6. Data analysis and interpretation of results**

Clark and Creswell (2011) indicate that the data evaluation is the transformation of the collected information in a readable or understandable manner. This study will make utilization of the text investigation for the assessment of the gathered information.

### **7. Validation techniques**

The study includes the validation measures like the transferability, dependability, conformability and the credibility.

### **8. Ethical considerations**

Ethics speaks to the guidelines and regulations of the examination that must be attested by the scientist. The study is carried out completely in ethical manner.

### **Conclusion**

This paper makes it clear that the research is qualitative. The qualitative data was collected from 20 teachers of Libyan schools who face problems in teaching English to students. In this study, the research design adapted is descriptive research and the technique of sampling involved is convenient sampling. This section also explains on the information investigation and understanding procedures utilized for the examination has portrayed about moral contemplation and impediments connected with the exploration.

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