



Libyan EFL Teachers' Beliefs about Teachers' and Students' Roles, Relationships, and Classroom Talk within Learner- Centred and Teacher- Centred Paradigms

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Abstract

This quantitative study investigates Libyan secondary- school EFL teachers' beliefs about teachers' and students' roles, teacher-student relationships, and classroom talk within teacher- centred and learner- centred paradigms. Data were collected through a 12- item Likert- scale questionnaire administered to 100 teachers and analysed using descriptive statistics and paired- samples t- tests. Findings show strong support for learner- centred ideas such as facilitation, democratic relationships and increased student talk, alongside persistent attachment to teacher authority, textbook control and teacher- dominated discourse. The results indicate a hybrid belief system in which teachers selectively combine elements of both paradigms, reflecting a transitional stage in Libyan educational reform. The study argues that effective implementation of learner- centred pedagogy requires sustained, belief- focused professional development, flexible curricula and assessment reform aligned with communicative, participatory classroom practices.

Keywords: learner- centred pedagogy; teacher beliefs; classroom discourse; Libyan EFL teachers; educational reform

الملخص:

تستقصي هذه الدراسة الكمية معتقدات معلمي اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية في المدارس الثانوية الليبية حول أدوار المعلمين والمتعلمين، وعلاقات المعلم-الطالب، وحديث الصف في إطار النماذج المعلم- المركز والمتعلم- المركز. جمعت البيانات من خلال استبيان مكون من 12 عبارة على مقياس ليكرت طبق على 100 معلم، وحللت باستخدام الإحصاءات الوصفية واختبارات "ت" للعينات المترابطة. تُظهر النتائج دعماً قوياً للأفكار المتعلّم- المركز مثل التيسير، والعلاقات الديموقراطية، وزيادة حديث الطلبة، إلى جانب استمرار التعلّق بسلطة المعلم، وسيطرة الكتاب المدرسي، وحديث الصف الذي يهيمن عليه المعلم. تشير النتائج إلى منظومة معتقدات هجينة يدمج فيها المعلّمون عناصر من كلا النموذجين، بما يعكس مرحلة انتقالية في إصلاح التعليم الليبي. وتجادل الدراسة بأن التطبيق الفعال للبيداغوجيا المتعلّم- المركز يتطلب تتميمية مهنية مستمرة ترکز على المعتقدات، ومناهج مرنّة، وإصلاحاً في التقويم يكون منسجماً مع ممارسات صفية تواصيلية ومشاركة.

الكلمات المفتاحية: البيداغوجيا المتعلّم- المركز؛ معتقدات المعلّمين؛ حديث الصف؛ معلّمو اللغة الإنجليزية في ليبيا؛ إصلاح التعليم.

Introduction

The investigation of teachers' beliefs has become one of the focal points in educational research **recently**, especially English as a Foreign Language (EFL). Teachers' beliefs have significant impact on the teachers' perception towards learning, positioning of power with the students, and instructional choice they make, thus impacting the learning environment (Borg, 2015). In the EFL contexts therefore, the classroom is the pivotal ground for language exposure, interaction, and target language communicative exercise; hence the conceptualisation of the role of teachers and students, interlocution distribution and tenor of teacher-student relations in classrooms is directly related to students' engagement in target language.

Global pedagogical discourse has **witnessed** a shift from typical teacher-centred pedagogical approaches to more learner-centred pedagogies emphasising autonomy, collaboration, communication and active participation. Learner-centred paradigms make the case for locating students as active agents who engage in meaning making, problem solving and self-directed learning (Weimer, 2013; O'Neill & McMahon, 2015). In contrast, teacher-centred approaches maintain the concept of a knowledge-transmission model in which the teacher has authority, controls classroom activities, and dominates classroom discourse (Kember, 2016). These different epistemological orientations define different patterns of classroom interaction, especially in an EFL context, where communicative competence is a prime importance.

Within the Libyan educational setting, the system has historically had a teacher centred orientation that makes teachers the sole holders of knowledge while students are only receivers. Nonetheless, recent curricular reforms, particularly the introduction of communicative and learner-centred language programmes from early 2000 onwards, have promoted a move to facilitate the role of teacher (Orafi & Borg, 2009; Phillips et al., 2008). Yet empirical evidence shows that many Libyan teachers still resort to traditional practices, thus holding a disconnect between aspirations on the field of policy and things in class (Akle, 2005; Elabbar, 2016). This inconsistency raises important questions about how teachers think of their own roles in the classroom, the role of students and the nature of interaction in the classroom.

Teachers' beliefs about teacher- student roles, interpersonal relationship and classroom talk patterns form a strong framework for interpreting pedagogical behaviour. Such beliefs may enable or hinder the use of learner- centred approaches, especially when teachers have ambivalent and or contradictory beliefs around autonomy, authority and distribution of discourse (Pajares, 2018; Farrell & Ives, 2015). Consequently, an investigation into these beliefs in the Libyan EFL context is necessary to ascertain whether the pedagogical change of moving towards learner centred pedagogy is actually being put into practice or if it has still been mostly a theory.

This study examines the beliefs of teachers of EFL in Libya regarding the roles of teachers and students, teacher- student relations, and patterns of classroom discourse in the context of both learner- centred and teacher- centred paradigms. By analysing teachers' beliefs in terms of these dimensions, the study aims at determining the degree of similarity between Libyan EFL educators' pedagogical orientations and those of teachers and educators in contemporary times, as well as assessing the readiness of Libyan EFL educators for learner-

centred reform. The resulting insights add to our knowledge of the complexities that lie in the pedagogical change in Libya and provide worthwhile insights for policymakers, teacher educators and curriculum developers who are determined to increase the quality of English language teaching.

Statement of the Problem

Despite persistent educational reforms and curriculum innovations in Libya geared towards the establishment of communicative and learner- centred pedagogy, English language instruction in secondary schools is still characterised by features of traditional and teacher-centred pedagogy. National curriculum documents emphasise student autonomy, active participation and interactive communication, however, many teachers still rely heavily on textbook driven teaching, extended teacher talk and hierarchical teacher/human tests, teacher/student relationships. This gulf between expectations in policy discourse and practices in the classroom throws up some important questions about beliefs underlying teacher instructional decisions. Teachers' beliefs are generally recognised as key mediators of pedagogical change. When educators believe in convictions in line with the principles of learner- centred practices, including student responsibility, collaborative learning, and shared talk in the classroom, they are more likely to use those practices well. On the other hand, teachers following the traditional beliefs prefer structured, teacher-dominated learning environments that limit student engagement. In the Libyan EFL context, where the experiences of teacher training have been based on teacher-centred traditions, the successful adoption of learner-centred approaches is dependent on whether teachers' beliefs support or **resist** the new pedagogical expectations. However, empirical evidence regarding Libyan EFL teachers' beliefs regarding teacher and student roles, teacher-student relationships and classroom talk is scant. Existing research has mainly focused on problems encountered in implementing curriculum, instead of questioning the beliefs systems that dictate teacher behaviour in their classrooms. Without a clear understanding of these beliefs, policymakers, teacher educators and curriculum designers are handicapped in their efforts to help enable meaningful instructional reform or to help close the persistent gap between theory-based curriculum goals and actual classroom practices. Therefore, the issue **addressed in this** study is the lack of proper comprehensive understanding **of** the beliefs **held by** Libyan EFL teachers **regarding** roles, relationships and talk **inside** the classroom **within** a framework that contrasts learner-centred and teacher-centred approaches. Investigating these beliefs is necessary to **assess** the extent of teachers' readiness to implement learner-centred teaching as well as to **identify** the factors related to beliefs that may contribute to pedagogical change.

Research Questions

Q1. To what extent do Libyan EFL teachers' beliefs align with teacher-centered or learner-centered paradigms in terms of role, relationship and classroom discourse?

Research Hypotheses

H1: There are statistically significant differences in the beliefs of Libyan EFL teachers regarding learner-centred versus teacher-centred propositions.

Significance of the Study

The findings offer practical insights for curriculum designers, policymakers, and teacher educators in Libya. Understanding teachers' beliefs can help identify barriers to implementing learner-centred approaches and guide the development of targeted professional development programs. The study also provides useful feedback for improving teacher training, enhancing classroom interaction patterns, and supporting more effective pedagogical practices in Libyan secondary schools. Ultimately, the results may contribute to bridging the gap between curriculum expectations and actual classroom practices.

Research Objectives

The study aims to achieve the following objectives:

1. To examine Libyan EFL teachers' beliefs about teachers' and students' roles within teacher-centred and learner-centred pedagogical paradigms.
2. To explore teachers' beliefs regarding teacher-student relationships in the English language classroom.
3. To identify teachers' beliefs about the distribution of classroom talk between teacher talk and student talk.

Previous Studies

1. Study of Orafi and Borg (2009), entitled: "Intentions and realities in implementing communicative curriculum reform"

The study aimed to investigate the extent to which Libyan secondary-school EFL teachers implemented a newly introduced communicative English curriculum and how far their classroom practices matched the intentions of curriculum designers. The sample consisted of three secondary-school English teachers whose lessons were observed over two weeks while teaching a unit from the new communicative textbook, and who were later interviewed to explore the rationales behind their instructional decisions. The study adopted a qualitative, descriptive design and used classroom observations and semi-structured interviews as the main tools for data collection.

The study yielded the following main results:

- There was a clear mismatch between the communicative aims of the curriculum and the actual classroom practices, which remained largely teacher-centred and textbook-driven.
- Teachers' beliefs, examination pressure, and limited understanding of communicative principles were key factors constraining the implementation of learner-centred pedagogy.

2. Study of Saleh (2002), entitled: "A descriptive study of some classroom behavioural aspects of Ajelat EFL teachers at secondary schools" The study aimed to identify salient classroom behavioural patterns of Libyan EFL teachers in Ajelat secondary schools, with particular focus on teacher talk, use of the textbook, and teacher-student interaction. The sample consisted of a group of secondary-school English teachers in Ajelat whose lessons were systematically observed in their natural classroom settings. The study followed a descriptive design and relied on structured classroom observation as the main tool for data collection.

The study yielded the following main results:

- Classroom interaction was dominated by teacher talk, with students taking mainly passive, respondent roles.

- Lessons were strongly textbook-centred, with little adaptation of activities or opportunities for student-initiated participation.

3. Study of Abukhattala (2015), entitled: “Introducing the communicative approach in Libya: Resistance and conflict”

The study aimed to explore the contextual, cultural, and institutional factors that shape Libyan teachers' responses to the introduction of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) and to identify sources of resistance to communicative pedagogy. The study drew on the author's professional experience, relevant policy documents and prior empirical research, and employed an analytic, descriptive approach rather than a large-scale survey design. It used document analysis and critical reflection as the main tools for examining the process of adopting CLT in Libya.

The study yielded the following main results:

- A range of constraints—such as beliefs about teacher and student roles, examination-driven assessment, limited teacher proficiency, and culturally rooted views of authority—restricted the adoption of CLT.
- The paper argued that successful implementation of communicative, learner-centred approaches requires a culturally sensitive, eclectic pedagogy grounded in local educational values rather than the direct transfer of Western models.

4. Study of Braiek and Onaiba (2018), entitled: “The effect of using flipped classroom model on Libyan university students' English learning” The study aimed to examine the effectiveness of the flipped classroom model in improving Libyan university students' English achievement and their attitudes towards learning English through this model. The sample consisted of 31 university students at the Faculty of Arts, Misurata University, who were divided into an experimental group (16 students) taught through the flipped classroom model and a control group (15 students) taught through traditional methods. The study used a quasi-experimental design and employed an EFL achievement test and an attitude questionnaire as the main tools for data collection.

The study yielded the following main results:

- Students in the flipped-classroom group outperformed those in the traditional group in overall English achievement.
- The experimental group reported more positive attitudes towards learning English, greater engagement, and increased participation in classroom activities.

5. Study of Hussein (2018), entitled: “Factors affecting the implementation of communicative language teaching in Libyan secondary schools” The study aimed to investigate how Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) is implemented in Libyan secondary schools, to explore teachers' perceptions and understanding of CLT, and to identify contextual and socio-cultural factors that facilitate or hinder its implementation. The sample consisted of Libyan secondary-school English teachers and students in several schools, selected within an interpretive paradigm. The study adopted a qualitative research design, using classroom observations, semi-structured interviews, and document analysis as the main tools for data collection.

The study yielded the following main results:

- Teachers held generally positive views of CLT in theory, but classroom practice remained largely traditional and teacher-centred due to large class sizes, limited resources, and high-stakes examinations.
- Misalignment between curriculum goals, assessment systems, and local cultural expectations significantly constrained the move towards learner-centred, communicative teaching.

Research Methodology

1. Research Design

The present investigation has employed descriptive quantitative research design which was operationalized by the use of structured questionnaire designed to probe Libyan English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers perception about teacher and student roles, teacher and student relationship and pattern of classroom discourse within the framework of teacher-centred and learner-centred. The reason for selecting this design was its capability to provide measurable data and to allow comparison of the attitudes between teachers using paired constructs (learner centred approach versus teacher centred approach) as well as the ability to perform trend analysis using descriptive and inferential statistics.

2. Participants

The participant cohort was composed of 100 Libyan EFL teachers, randomly sampled from 20 secondary schools in the Western region of Libya. Their teaching experience ranged from two to more than twenty years, thus representing a heterogeneous instructional background. All participants were familiar with the communicative, learner-centred English curriculum that had been operational in Libya since 2000. However, their predominant pedagogical orientation remained teacher-centred. This makes their beliefs particularly relevant to discussions concerning the relationship between educational reforms and traditional teaching practices.

3. Instrument

The key instrument of data collection was a self-designed questionnaire prepared specifically for this study. The instrument consisted of twelve statements, categorised as follows:

- **Teacher role** (Items 1–4)
- **Student role** (Items 5–8)
- **Teacher–student relationship** (Items 9–10)
- **Classroom talk** (Items 11–12)

Responses were collected using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = Strongly Disagree (SD), 2 = Disagree (D), 3 = Uncertain (U), 4 = Agree (A), and 5 = Strongly Agree (SA). Odd-numbered items reflected principles of learner-centred pedagogy, while even-numbered items reflected teacher-centred principles. Items were formulated as independent indicators rather than antonyms. Both the Arabic and English versions were provided according to teachers' linguistic preferences.

4. Validity of the Instrument

Content validity was established through a pilot test conducted with twenty EFL teachers prior to the main data collection. Feedback from the pilot participants confirmed that the items were

clear, relevant, and representative of both teacher-centred and learner-centred constructs. The pilot group agreed that the items required no substantive revisions. The inclusion of an “Uncertain” option further enhanced validity by preventing forced responses in cases of ambiguity or limited understanding.

5. Reliability of the Instrument

The original published version of the questionnaire did not report numerical reliability coefficients. For academic completeness, it is recommended that Cronbach's alpha values be calculated for the learner-centred items, the teacher-centred items, and for the overall scale. These values may be computed and reported in a later stage if required.

6. Data Collection Procedures

Formal permission to conduct the study was obtained from the Education Supervision Office of the region on **29 November 2008**. The procedures were as follows:

1. A meeting was held with the headteachers of all participating schools.
2. Each school appointed a teacher responsible for the distribution and collection of the questionnaires.
3. Both Arabic and English versions of the questionnaire were made available depending on teachers' preferences.
4. Teachers were allowed to take the questionnaires home to complete them in a comfortable environment.
5. Multiple follow-up telephone contacts were made to ensure a high response rate.

The final response rate was 100%, consisting of 76 Arabic and 24 English questionnaires, reflecting strong inter-scholastic cooperation and positive researcher–school relations.

7. Data Analysis

Quantitative data were analysed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). This package is widely used in social research (Cohen et al., 2007; Larson-Hall, 2010).

7.1 Descriptive Statistics

- Frequency distributions
- Percentages
- Mean scores
- Standard deviations

The frequency distributions, percentages, mean scores and standard deviations were calculated based on the number of teachers who responded to each item.

7.2 Inferential Statistics

A Paired-Samples t-Test was used to determine whether statistically significant differences existed between teachers' views about the principles and practices of the learner-centred approach (LCA) and the teacher-centred approach (TCA). The paired conceptual statements were compared as follows:

(1 vs. 2, 3 vs. 4, 5 vs. 6, 7 vs. 8, 9 vs. 10, 11 vs. 12).

The Paired-Samples t-Test was appropriate due to the interrelated nature of the measures, as the same participants evaluated both types of statements.

8. Ethical Considerations

Study participants were fully informed about the purpose of the study and assured that their responses would be kept private. Participation was voluntary, and respondents were free to complete the questionnaire in the language of their choice.

Discussion of Findings

The present study explored Libyan EFL teachers' beliefs about the role of teachers and students, teacher-student relationships, and classroom talk within the two paradigms (teacher-centred and learner-centred). The findings provide a holistic insight into how teachers conceptualise instructional processes at a time when Libya is still transitioning from traditional approaches to more communicative and learner-centred approaches.

For clarity of interpretation, each major dimension was analysed through its respective table followed by an in-depth discussion.

1. Teachers' Beliefs about the Teacher's Role

Table (1): Teachers' Responses on the Teacher's Role

No.	Statement	SD	D	U	A	SA
1	Teacher's role is to facilitate students' learning.	0%	1%	3%	35%	61%
2	Teacher's role is to transmit knowledge and encourage memorization.	8%	25%	0%	19%	48%
3	Teacher should supplement textbooks with extra materials.	2%	3%	16%	55%	24%
4	Teacher should focus on delivering textbook content.	3%	20%	14%	50%	13%

Figure 1: Teachers' Responses on the Teacher's Role

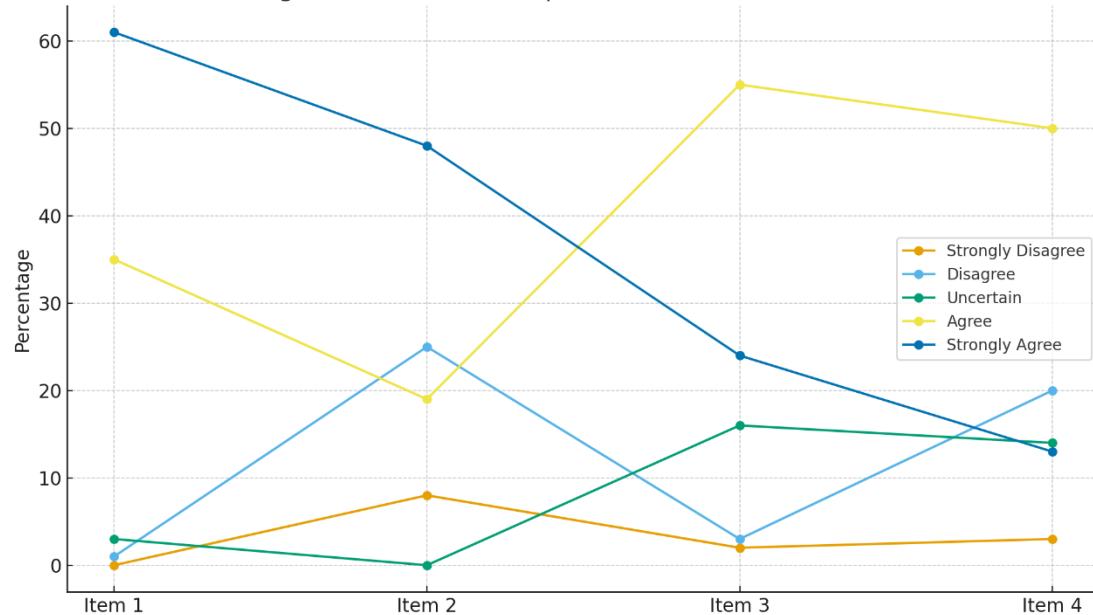


Figure 1: Teachers' Responses on the Teacher's Role

The results show a complex pattern, even if revealing, of what teachers believe about their professional roles. The significantly high concurrence with the teachers saying they should facilitate students learning (96 per cent) shows a strong openness towards the introduction of learner centred pedagogy. Teachers therefore seem to subscribe to the current conception of teaching as collaborative and supportive, rather than as transmission of knowledge in one direction from teacher to student.

Nevertheless, the relatively high consensus (67 per cent) with the statement that the main function of teachers is their capacity for transmitting knowledge indicates that there still is a significant proportion of educators who find themselves identifying primarily as providers of knowledge. This is reflective of strong traditional orientation based on the teacher- centred paradigm. The coexistence of these perspectives suggests that teachers think of effective instruction as involving a synthesis of both paradigms and not the dogmatic devotion to one single model.

The agreement of teachers (79%) with the idea of supplementing textbooks shows they are aware of the need for differentiated learning materials. Although this belief forms to meet the contemporary pedagogical frameworks that emphasise the adaptation of instruction to meet the diverse needs of learners. At the same time, the significant alignment of being focused on

primarily prescribed textbook content (63%) is positive in highlighting a continued reliance on textbook guidance - which could be due to examination- driven systems, curricular expectations or lack of resources.

In effect, teachers have hybrid beliefs, where they acknowledge the importance of facilitation and adaptation but at the same time they retain classic expectations of control and authority with reliance on the use of textbooks.

2. Teachers' Beliefs about the Student's Role

Table (2): Teachers' Responses on the Student's Role

No.	Statement	SD	D	U	A	SA
5	Students can undertake responsibility for their own learning.	0%	18%	28%	30%	24%
6	Students need someone to guide and direct their learning.	6%	25%	12%	48%	9%
7	Students should be involved in selecting content, tasks, and activities.	1%	28%	9%	41%	21%
8	Content and tasks should be selected by textbook designers or teachers.	11%	28%	6%	34%	21%

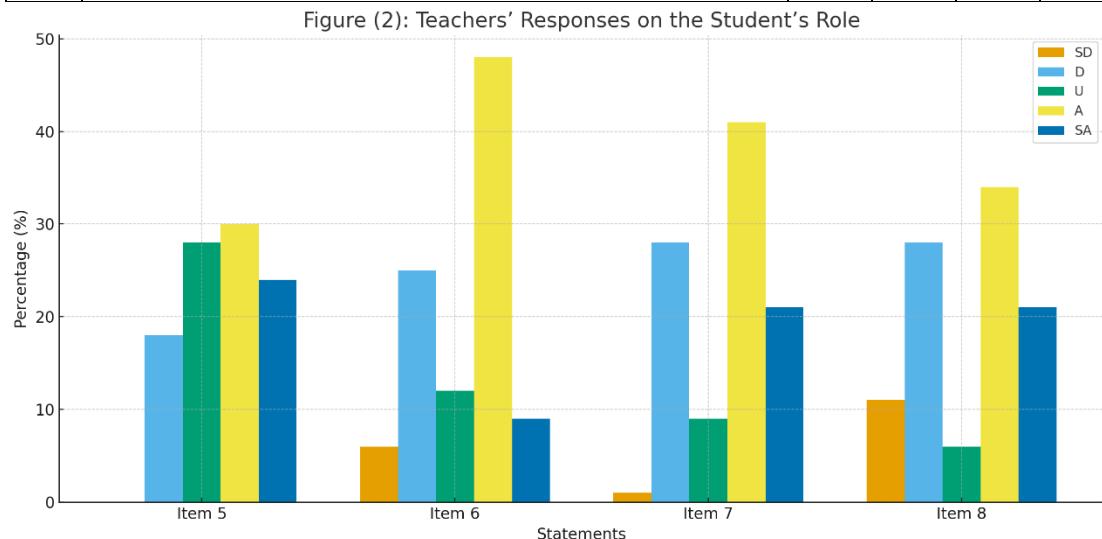


Figure (2): Teachers' Responses on the Student's Role

The results for student role show great contradictions, Of the teachers, on the one hand, support the concept of student autonomy, with the majority agreeing that learners can take responsibility for their own learning, thus showing conceptual acceptance of learner- centred teaching principles.

On the other hand, a good number of teachers also strongly agree that students need the teacher's guidance and direction, This belief reflects an underlying assumption that students may not be fully prepared to take control of their own learning, which may be a result of cultural expectations, previous teaching experiences and/or worries about the level of proficiency of students.

A similar contradiction in beliefs is evident in teachers in regards to who selects learning content and tasks, While the majority (63encercentage) believes that students should be

supported in the process of choosing content and activities, the same percentage (55encercentage) believes that teachers or textbook designers should still hold this responsibility; this indicates the uncertainty that there should be about how much decision-making could be realistically shared with learners in the Libyan context.

These findings combined suggest that there is a major gap between, on the one hand, teachers recognizing the importance of active student participation, on the other hand, their continuing strong belief in teacher authority and control, thus maintaining the larger pattern of teachers holding mixed or transitional beliefs situated in between traditional and more modern pedagogy.

3. Teachers' Beliefs about Teacher–Student Relationships

Table (3): Teachers' Responses on Teacher–Student Relationships

No.	Statement	SD	D	U	A	SA
9	Teachers should build democratic relationships with students.	0%	19%	1%	12%	68%
10	A formal relationship provides a good learning model.	6%	20%	5%	19%	50%

Figure (3): Teachers' Responses on Teacher–Student Relationships

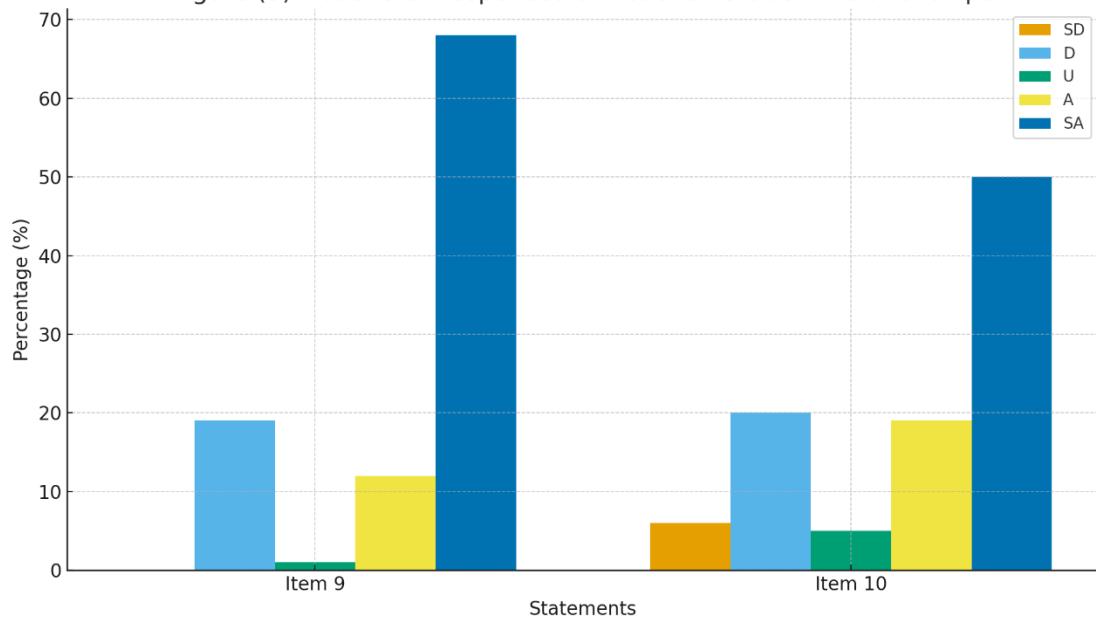


Figure (3): Teachers' Responses on Teacher–Student Relationships

Teachers overwhelmingly supported the importance of teaching democratic teacher- student relationships with 86 percent of teachers indicating they agree or strongly agree that nurturing these relationships is important. This endorsement reflects an appreciation for current classroom dynamics that is grounded on trust, rapport and mutual respect. Such relational constructs are regarded as fundamental to learner centred pedagogy and are recognised widely as being key to creating active participation and positive learning environments.

Concurrently, teachers also expressed very strong support for having a formal relationship with students. As for the Egyptian and local experience, the formality of the educational culture of Libyan refers to the respect, discipline and the authority of teachers. The data suggest that teachers realize that democratic interaction does not require teachers to march away from formality, but rather to find a balance between a need for openness and professionalism.

The juxtaposition of these beliefs suggests that teachers try and create an environment of friendliness but structure in the classroom - one where student participation is definitely encouraged but boundaries are kept very well delineated, This balance is culturally based definition of learner centred values.

4. Teachers' Beliefs about Classroom Talk

Table (4): Teachers' Responses on Classroom Talk

No.	Statement	SD	D	U	A	SA
11	Students' talk should exceed teacher's talk.	7%	15%	17%	26%	35%
12	Teacher should talk more than students.	20%	35%	9%	24%	12%

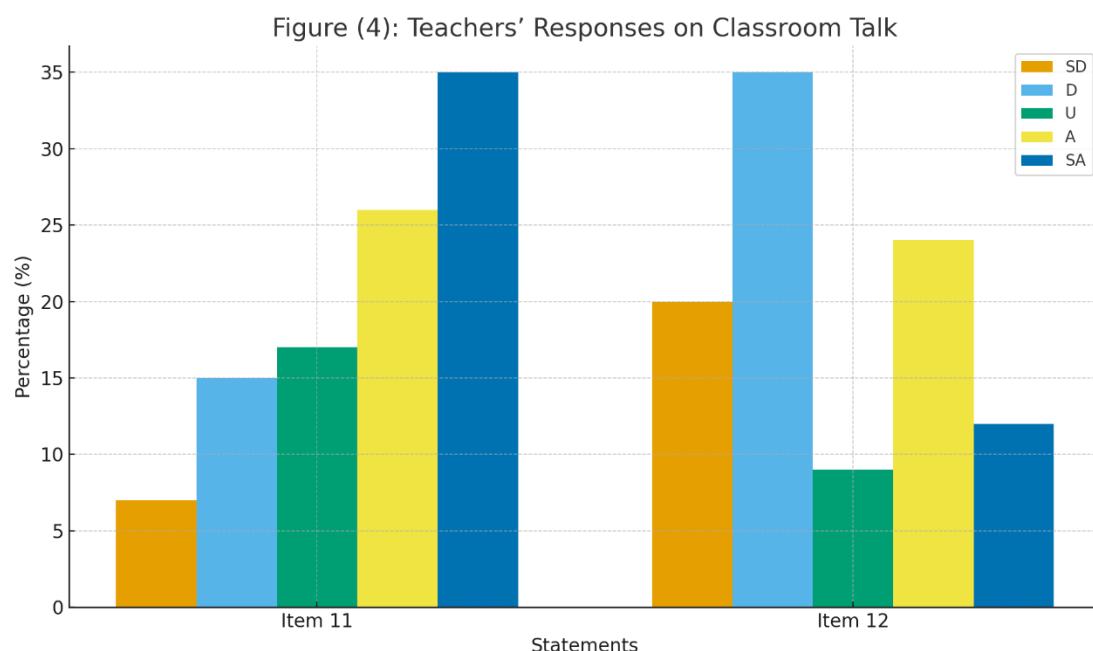


Figure (4): Teachers' Responses on Classroom Talk

The findings relating to classroom discussion suggest that teachers recognise the importance of giving more time to student talk time, which is a keystone of communicative language teaching, Most of the respondents agreed that students should speak more than teachers indicating an understanding of the role of interaction in acquisition of communicative competence.

However, a large percentage of teachers simultaneously supported the idea of teacher talk being dominant in the lesson, This dual position shows an ongoing dependence on teacher- led instruction, which is typical of traditional practices in teaching approaches.

Such ambivalent beliefs may be due to some practical difficulties such as: - large class sizes, - student proficiency, - exam- oriented curricula, - lack of training in the communicative strategies, - cultural expectations which maintain the teacher's classroom power.

As such, although the ideological support for communicative interaction is present among teachers, in practice realities and established pedagogical habits continue to determine and organize classroom discourse.

These findings are consistent with the theoretical perspectives discussed in the literature, Rogers' humanistic view of the teacher as a facilitator and Knowles' assumptions about self-

directed learners offer a clear framework for understanding why many teachers express support for learner- centred principles. They seem to recognize, at least at the conceptual level, the value of promoting student autonomy, involving learners in decision- making, and creating supportive classroom environments. At the same time, the persistence of teacher- centred beliefs reflects the assumptions highlighted by Knowles (1975) about learners as dependent personalities and by traditional views that place the teacher at the centre of the learning process. The coexistence of these beliefs suggests that teachers have not fully moved from one paradigm to another but instead selectively integrate aspects of both.

The results also resonate strongly with **previous empirical studies in the Libyan context**, such as Orafi and Borg (2009) and later work that documented the gap between curriculum intentions and classroom realities. Those studies showed that although official English language curricula in Libya advocate communicative, learner- centred approaches, classroom practices often remain predominantly teacher- centred. The present study adds further nuance by showing that this gap is not only a matter of classroom behaviour but is also deeply rooted in teachers' belief systems. Teachers do not reject learner- centred ideas; rather, they tend to **layer them on top of existing traditional beliefs**, producing a blended orientation that is neither fully communicative nor purely traditional.

Moreover, the finding that teachers favour democratic teacher–student relationships while still valuing formality mirrors the socio- cultural observations reported in studies discussing Arab and Libyan classrooms, where respect for authority and hierarchical relations remain strong. Authors such as Weimer and Lambert & McCombs, cited in the theoretical section, stress that learner- centred teaching requires a redefinition of power relations in the classroom. The current study suggests that Libyan teachers are willing to humanize and soften these relations but are not yet prepared to abandon formal distance and institutional authority. This supports previous arguments that pedagogical reforms must be culturally sensitive rather than simply transferred from Western contexts without adaptation.

The beliefs about classroom talk also align with the literature on classroom discourse. Research by Chaudron, Cuban, and Cullen has shown that teacher talk tends to dominate in traditional language classrooms, often leading to limited opportunities for student production. In this study, teachers express support for more student talk, which aligns with communicative language teaching principles, yet a considerable minority still believe that the teacher should talk more than students. This tension reflects the well- documented challenge of shifting from IRF- patterned, teacher- led discourse to more open, learner- driven interaction. It also confirms what Cornelius- White & Baugh and other learner- centred advocates have noted: that belief change is gradual and frequently partial.

Taken together, the findings of this study both **converge with and extend previous research**. They converge in confirming that there is a persistent mismatch between learner- centred policy and teacher- centred practice in Libya and similar contexts. They extend prior work by showing in detail how this mismatch is manifested at the level of beliefs about roles, relationships, and classroom talk, and by illustrating that many teachers do not see teacher- centred and learner- centred principles as mutually exclusive. Instead, they adopt an eclectic stance, attempting to combine control with facilitation, formality with democracy, and textbook reliance with adaptation. This suggests that future reforms and professional development efforts should not

assume that teachers are simply “resisting” learner- centred approaches; rather, they are actively trying to **reconcile new pedagogical expectations with long- established cultural and institutional norms.**

Overall Discussion and Relation to Previous Studies

The emergent pattern understood from this study shows that EFL instructors of Libya have a mixed set of beliefs in that they combine characteristics of both the teacher- centred and learner- centred paradigms, On the one side, they express powerful support for learner- centred ideas, such as placing the teacher in a facilitative role, the primacy of democratic relationships between teachers and students, and increased student participation in classroom discourse, Conversely, they continue to support traditional beliefs such as the teacher's role as the primary purveyor of knowledge, the centrality of the textbook and the need for teacher mediated control of instructional content and classroom interaction, This duality highlights the presence of the educators within a major lacuna of transition between competing pedagogical orientations.

The findings are consistent with theoretical views of extant literature, Rogers' humanistic conception of the educator as facilitator, combined with the assumptions of Knowles about self- directed learners, provides a coherent framework for understanding the support for learner centred principles that is widely found, Teachers seem to recognize, at least conceptually, the importance of developing student autonomy, engaging their students in decision making processes and creating classroom environments, Simultaneously, longevity of teacher centred beliefs relates to the description by Knowles (1975) of learners as dependent personalities and of traditional perspectives that place the instructor at the centrepiece of the learning process, The coexistence of these convictions indicates proficiency in educators hasn't completely taken a jump from one record to another but has rather been taking part choosy in parts of the two.

The results resonate very well with previous empirical research having been undertaken in the Libyan context, such as Orafi and Borg (2009) and with further research which has documented the chasm between curricular intentions and classroom realities, Those studies suggested that, despite the advocacy for communication and learner- centred content of the official English language curricula, classroom practices overwhelmingly remain teacher- centred, The present inquiry adds nuance to this discussion by showing that this gap is not simply a question of discrepancies in behaviour and is ingrained in the belief systems of teachers, Educators do not reject the ideas of learner centredness altogether, but instead superimpose it over the traditional ideas that came beforehand, and that way create a blended orientation, neither fully communicative nor fully traditional.

Moreover, that teachers prefer democratic teacher- student relationships while at the same time maintaining valuation of formality is interesting because it resembles socio- cultural understandings that have been documented in the Arab and Libyan classrooms, where respect for authority, and hierarchical relationships remain salient, Scholars such as Weimer, and Lambert & McCombs, highlighted in the theoretical section, state that learner - centred instruction requires the redefinition of power relations in the classroom, The current study shows that Libyan instructors are disposed to humanising and softening such relations, but are not yet ready to give up formal distance and institutional authority, This supports the earlier

arguments about the need to ensure that pedagogical reforms are culturally- sensitive and do not get blindly imported from the Western world without adapting to the local conditions.

Beliefs about classroom talk are consistent with the scholarship on classroom discourse, Research by Chaudron, Cuban and Cullen have established the following: Teacher talk predominates in traditional language classrooms and consequently, opportunities for student production are limited, In line with these results, instructors in this investigation show agreement regarding the idea of more student talk which matches the tenets of communicative language teaching, Nonetheless, a substantive minority of continually rests the conviction that teachers should speak more than students, This tension is an example of the well documented problem of moving from IRF patterned, teacher led talk to more open, learner driven talk, It also validates observations made by Cornelius- White & Baugh and other learner- centred proponents that belief change is incremental and usually partial.

Taken as a whole, the results of this study build on and coalesce with current research, They support the ever- present incongruence between learner- centred policy and teacher- centred practice in the context of Libya and similar contexts, Furthermore, they outline, in detail, how this incongruity displays itself at the level of beliefs related to roles, relationship and classroom dialogue, and illustrate that many educators do not see teacher centred and learner centred principles as mutually exclusive, Instead, they tend to maintain an eclectic approach in which they try to integrate control and facilitation, formality and democracy, and textbook dependence and adaptation, Consequently, any future reform and professional development agenda should avoid assuming that instructors are simply 'resistant' to learner- centred professional approaches, and instead are fighting to place new formulations of pedagogical expectations within deeply rooted cultural and institutional traditions.

Results

The empirical findings of the present study show a number of clear- patterns in the belief systems of the Libyan EFL teachers according to the four main dimensions discussed.

1. Teachers' Role

The results show a strong advocacy for the role of the teacher as a facilitator of learning, A significant majority of teachers showed concurrence with learner centred principles thus indicating an awareness of the importance of guidance to the students and facilitation of active participation, Nevertheless, despite this tendency to favor modern pedagogy, many teachers still see themselves primarily as transmitters of knowledge, This phenomenon is linked to the persistence of teacher- centred traditions in which the teacher maintains authority and control over the learning process, Moreover, while the majority of teachers recognized the importance of supplementing the textbook with additional materials - a positive sign of their sensitivity to the varying needs of students - a good amount of teachers still consider the textbook to be the primary instruction guide, This reliance hints that more classical expectations, curricular restrictions and pressure from exams seem to determine teaching practices.

2. Students' Role

The findings also tell us that there are mixed beliefs in terms of what students should or should not do, On the one hand, teachers expressed confidence in the ability of students to take over the learning process, so that they accept the learner's autonomy as a pedagogical target, On the

other hand, a large proportion of teachers continued to believe that students still require strong teacher guidance (reflecting concerns about learners' readiness for independent work or about low levels of proficiency), Similarly, while teachers were supportive of the notion of involving students in the choice of tasks and activities, at the same time teachers agreed that such decisions should be under the control of teachers or textbook designers, This contradicting situation reflects a transitional belief system where teachers accept conceptually participatory learning and have difficulties in its practical application in the Libyan context.

3. Teacher–Student Relationship

Teacher attitudes regarding democratic, positive relationships with students were very positive, Such beliefs are in line with learner centred pedagogy, which places emphasis on rapport, trust and respectful interaction, At the same time, teachers also thought the maintenance of a formal relationship to be very important, This shows the influence of the cultural norms that formality is associated with respect, discipline, and teacher authority, Hence, teachers appear to seek a balance between openness and maintaining appropriate professional distance, an interpretation of learner centred values that is culturally based.

4. Classroom Talk

Most of the teachers felt that students should have more opportunity to speak than teachers during teaching, which is the same idea as communicative language teaching, Nevertheless, a considerable minority still supported teacher- dominated talk suggesting that there still exists a reliance on traditional lecture- based teaching, This division highlights the gap between teachers' conceptual acceptance of communicative principles and the practical challenges they face in implementing them, such as large class sizes and the lack of training and exam- oriented curriculums.

5. Overall Belief Pattern

Taken together, the results suggest that Libyan EFL teachers have hybrid or transitional belief systems that are divided with features of both learner- centred and teacher- centred paradigms, While they are conceptually loyal to facilitation, autonomy, democratic interaction, and communicative participation, they are at the same time holding beliefs that are based on teacher authority, textbook dependence, and structured classroom control, These findings indicate that learner- centred reform in Libya is philosophically accepted but constrained in its implementation by cultural expectations, institutional norms, and practical limitations.

Conclusion

This study investigated the beliefs of a sample of Libyan EFL teachers about the roles of teachers and students, teacher - student relationships and classroom talk in the learner - centred and teacher - centred frameworks, The results show that the teachers hold a mixed belief structure that reflects both contemporary pedagogical principles and long- standing educational traditions, Although many teachers support learner- centred concepts such as facilitation, democratic interaction and greater student participation, simultaneously, there are also beliefs held by the teacher which are associated with traditional models such as strong teacher authority and reliance on prescribed textbooks, This hybrid belief system is expressive of significantly transitional stage in the Libyan education, influenced by continuous curricular reforms but conditioned by cultural and institutional legacies.

Because beliefs play a major role in instructional decision making, such mixed orientations are useful in explaining the low achievement of learner centred pedagogy in practice. Consequently, the study points to the importance of professional development about instructional techniques as well as transformations in teacher beliefs in ways that are culturally sensitive and grounded in classroom realities.

Recommendations

Since beliefs play a major role in instructional decision-making, the researcher suggests a number of strategies that may enhance the pedagogical system in Libyan EFL secondary-school classrooms. Based on the findings, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. Professional Development

- Establish long, continuous training programmes for teachers to develop their pedagogical skills in using learner-centred and communicative methods.
- Design workshops that explicitly address teachers' beliefs—not only teaching techniques—in order to encourage deeper and more sustainable pedagogical change.
- Strengthen teachers' ability to adjust instructional materials in ways that promote manageable interactivity and greater learner autonomy.

2. Curriculum and Textbook Renewal

- Revise textbooks to include more communicative and learner-centred tasks, and to reduce reliance on memorisation and teacher-centred structures.
- Provide flexible curriculum guidelines that allow teachers to adapt content according to learners' diverse needs.
- A good assessment system needs to offer flexibility in curriculum design so that teachers can tailor instructional content to students' varying levels and learning preferences.

3. Classroom Environment

- Introduce strategies inside the classroom that progressively build students' autonomy, such as group work, project-based learning, and student-led discussions.
- Teachers should support democratic teacher–student relationships while maintaining respect for cultural expectations related to formality and discipline.
- Building the relationship and the student's sense of agency should occur through respect for, and constructive use of, cultural norms of formality and discipline (Dewey, 89).

4. Institutional Support

- Reduce teacher workload and class sizes where possible to enable more interactive and communicative teaching.
- Address resource limitations that often hinder the implementation of learner-centred pedagogy, including shortages of materials, technology, and classroom facilities.
- Ensure that school policies actively support pedagogical reform by providing both administrative and material support to teachers.

5. Assessment Reform

- Prioritise performance-based, communicative, and authentic assessment tasks over rote memorisation.
- Align assessment systems with learner-centred approaches so that evaluation practices support, rather than obstruct, communicative and participatory classroom learning.

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