

EFL Libyan English Teachers' Beliefs about the Nature of Teaching and Learning Approaches: A Survey in Libyan Public Schools in Sirte

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Abstract:

The current study conducted in Libyan public schools in order to spot the lights on the beliefs of EFL Libyan English teachers about the nature of teaching and learning approaches. 30 EFL English teachers were randomly selected from primary, preparatory and secondary schools in Sirte as the research sample. A quantitative method was used to gather the research data by using questionnaire which was adapted from the Teaching and Learning International Study (TALIS) (OECD, 2009). To analysis the research data, The SPSS (Statistical Product and Service Solutions) was used. The research findings revealed that there is nearly no difference in their transmission and constructive beliefs as both beliefs, but they also show that the transitive beliefs are still stronger than the constructive one. Regarding the research hypotheses, the study failed to reject them. Finally, the study concluded that the Libyan education system should encourage regular training programmes for teachers in order to enhance teaching English in Libya which will improve students' learning ability too.

Keywords: Beliefs, direct transmission beliefs; constructivist beliefs; EFL English teachers.

1. Introduction:

The role of teachers in education has extended past the responsibility of transforming information. Therefore, the primary function of the teacher has been change to include teaching a set of skills and facts to his/ her students. Furthermore, the role of teacher shapes a multifaceted sense of purpose in order to encourage their learners' social development. The importance of the teacher's role in education carries a great number of benefits not only to learners but for parents as well.

Researchers thought that teachers are extremely influenced by their beliefs which are closely connected to their values, views of the world and their understanding of their environment where they live and work. For instance, Borg (2001) claimed that a belief is considered an issue which might consciously or unconsciously be held. It is evaluative as truly accepted by the individual, and is coloured with emotive commitment and also serves as a guide to individual's thought and behaviour. Thus, the belief has a great impact on disposing or guiding human's thinking and action. This means that a belief plays an essential role in many aspects of teaching as well as in everyday life as beliefs have the ability to colour individual's memories with the evaluation and judgment as well the ability serve to frame his/her understanding of events. In other words, what teachers pedagogically believe also plays a vital role in their teaching practices Handal & Herrington, 2003 (cited in Khader, 2012).

2. Beliefs of Teachers

However, it is difficult to define the concept of teachers' beliefs. This difficulty might be related to the great conflict among researchers and intellectuals in the different opinions Tatto & Coupland (2003). Haney et al.,

(1996) stated that teacher' beliefs as: the teacher's contentions, and his/her estimation on teaching and learning. However, it is thought that the teachers' beliefs are holistic conception that can be viewed from several dimensions that are related to their beliefs on education and teaching, curricula and the teaching profession which has an impact on the pedagogical objectives and values of teaching (Ghaith, 2004).

On the other hand, Richardson (1996) stated that teacher's beliefs can be constructed from three sources: (a) their own personal experiences of the teacher in general and teaching in particular, (b) the teacher's knowledge of the school courses and finally (c) their teacher's experience as a student. He also suspected that teachers' beliefs affect their classroom practices.

Moreover, Pajares (1992) believed that researchers will not be able to understand teachers' beliefs unless they are able to define clearly what belief is, and how it is different to other similar concepts. He adds that there is a strong relationship between teachers' pedagogical beliefs, their planning for teaching, teaching decisions and classroom practices. Thus, teachers' pedagogical beliefs play the vital role in explaining the knowledge. He thinks that what teachers believe is a strong factor through which we can predict the teaching behaviour. On other words, what teachers believe and value about teaching and learning will really affect their teaching practices as well.

3. Impact of Teachers' experiences on their Beliefs

Freeman & Richards,(1996) thought that for better understanding for language teaching, researchers need to know more about language teachers,(i.e. What they do, how they think, what they know, and how they learn). They need to understand more about how language teachers conceive of what they do: what they know about language teaching, and how they think about their classroom

practice. Thus, teachers' beliefs could not be minimized to their ideas only, but their values, goals and experiences are parts of their beliefs. This means that each part influence by one way or other on making their decisions in their classrooms. So, by the time they spend in their classes, they will expand their experiences and their opinions about teaching consequently (Vera Rodríguez et al., 2018). However, the instructors' experiences have a vital role on their beliefs. Thus, the beliefs could be contradictory and messy ideas might emerge from every teaching experience. So, beliefs might be confronted or reconstructed by every action or decision instructors made in their classroom environments (Díaz Larenas et al., 2013).

In addition, Mansour (2008) argued that teacher experiences could be divided into two categories: (1) formal and (2) informal. A formal experience refers to the formal education through which teachers have passed, either at school or at university level. The informal experience is what teachers' every-day life acquires that may adjust, support, challenge, or change their beliefs and knowledge as well. Those types go with Zeichner, 1980 (cited in Gilakjani & Sabouri, 2017) who stated that both informal and formal experiences might be as a result of socialization influences. In other words, what teachers teach at their schools have a great impact on their beliefs than what they have been taught at university.

According to Gilakjani & Sabouri (2017), teachers acquired their beliefs from many years of learning experiences throughout what they had been taught at university and what they say and do in their classes. Thus, their beliefs affect their awareness, attitudes, and methods of teaching. In addition, teachers' beliefs also impact their teaching behaviour, learner development, guide their decision-making and interactions with their learners. So, having knowledge about teachers' beliefs help them form their planning, curricular decisions, and identify

what should be taught in the classroom. In other words, teachers' beliefs might have a great effect on choosing active teaching methods which might lead to acceptable amount of advance in learners' language capabilities.

Regarding the Libyan context, English language teachers may not be aware of the influence of their existing beliefs on their teaching environment. This means that they need to attend teaching training and education programs where teachers are given opportunities to reflect upon their own classroom practices, and where their existing beliefs could be uncovered and confronted. According to Kumaravadivelu 2001 (cited in Orafi, et al.,2021)) when teacher educators use the teachers' values, beliefs, and knowledge as integral part of the learning process, then the whole process of teacher education becomes reflective rewarding.

4. Direct Transmission and Constructive Approaches

According to Trigwell et al., (2012) teaching approaches can be categorised into three types: teacher-centred approach (in which the teacher is the centre in giving instructions), learner-teacher interaction and learner-centred approach. In the first type, the instructor control in the content, the time and the condition of his/ her teaching environment. Regarding to the second approach, both teachers and students are involved in teaching process. Thus, students cannot be passive recipients. Otherwise, they are active participants as that are independent individuals who just need to be guided physically, psychologically, emotionally, and intellectually by their teachers. In the third type, learners should not be considered as passive recipients. They have to give the opportunity to develop their thinking and reasoning processes of learning.

On the other hand, a constructivist beliefs view students not as passive recipients, but they have to be active participants in the process of acquiring

knowledge. Thus, the instructor's role is to emphasise facilitating student inquiry, giving students the chance to develop their solutions to problems on their own and allowing them to play an active role in instructional activities. Therefore, the development of thinking and reasoning processes is stressed in this kind of teaching more than the acquisition of specific knowledge (Staub and Stern, 2002 cited in OECD, 2009). Thus, in these classes teacher enables his/her students to systematically develop their meaning regarding prior learning, past experiences, and values. Students learn by participating in their learning environment as they regularly have a chance to communicate in constructivist environment. In this type of teaching, the role of teacher is to sign learning settings to enable his/her students to draw innovative ideas, make inferences, and draw conclusions by improving their ability of solving problems (Gopnik & Wellman, 2012). In this kind where the focus is on student is called learner-centred approach.

5. Previous Studies

Alshibany (2017) conducted her study on Libyan Teachers' Beliefs about Teaching English as a Foreign Language. She used a case study research to gather her data. Her study was about teaching methodology, curriculum and professional development used by EFL Libyan teachers at preparatory and secondary Schools. She concluded that Libyan teachers are widely used traditional pedagogical practices while they were teaching. She added that although some her patricians had had a pre service background in teaching methodically, they still adopted a traditional role one in their classes. She stated that the main factors influenced on them were a lack of alignment between the Libyan assessment system and the principles of the English curriculum; an inconsistency between the official inspection regime and the principles of the

current curriculum; and finally inadequacy in initial training and in any subsequent continued professional development.

According to the study of Orafi and Borg (2009) about the congruence between the principles of ELT curriculum being implemented in Libyan secondary schools, and teachers' existing beliefs and Libyan English classroom practices, EFL Libyan teachers' classes were teacher-centred and also Arabic was the main language during their classroom interaction. They added that those practices were on contrary with what had been embedded in the Libyan English curriculum. In addition, Orafi, et al., 2021 claimed that EFL Libyan teachers are interested in focusing on particular method or approach to teach English language. This might be as a cause of what they believe is the best for their students or what they feel more similar to what they were taught before (i.e. taught at schools or colleges).

Furthermore, Orafi (2013) stated that in Libyan context students only act as listeners where the instructors were nearly the only ones who talk in their English classes and free dialogue was rarely used. He criticised those classes in which learners lost classroom participation as they only come to school to act as listeners to their teachers and their instructors do everything in the classroom.

To sum up, although several researches were done on teachers' beliefs, the current study intended on spot the light on what EFL Libyan English teachers' beliefs on the nature of teaching and learning approaches. In addition, the researcher attempted to find out whether their beliefs related to their teaching experiences and the group aged they taught.

6. Research Hypothesis

Study aimed to investigate the beliefs in the nature teaching and learning of EFL English among the Libyan English teachers. Thus, the current study intended to find out answers to the following research hypothesis:

1. There is statically significant correlation between direct transmission and constructivist beliefs among EFL Libyan English teachers.
2. There is statically significant correlation between EFL Libyan English teachers' beliefs about the nature of teaching approaches and their students' age group.
3. There is statically significant correlation between EFL Libyan English teachers' beliefs about the nature of teaching approaches and their years of teaching experience.

7. Data Collection Instrument and Analysis

The study applied the quantitative research method. The study was conducted in public primary, preparatory and secondary public schools in order to find out whether the beliefs' of teachers are correlated to their teaching experiences and the level they taught. Around 30 teachers from different schools in Sirte have been selected as a research sample. The data collected in the study by questionnaire.. In the current study, the researcher adapted the research items from the Teaching and Learning International Study (TALIS) study (OECD, 2009). Thus, the study used the beliefs in the nature of teaching and learning with its both sides (i.e. direct transmission and constructivist beliefs). In addition, the questionnaire consists of 8 items on teachers' beliefs about the nature of teaching and learning. The beliefs were measured by applying the four-point Likert scales ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. The questionnaire divided into two sections. The first section includes information about the duration of teaching experience and the age group of teaching. The second part is about teachers' beliefs of teaching and learning approaches.

For analysing the data, the SPSS (Statistical Product and Service Solutions) version 20 was employed. To find out the background characteristics, descriptive and frequency analysis was used to explore the background characteristics of the participants. Furthermore, descriptive analysis was performed to compute the means and standard deviations for each item in order to answer the first question (i.e. what do Libyan teachers believe about the nature of teaching and learning of English?) In order to answer the other three questions, Spearman's rank order correlation was used to measure the correlation between the research variables as the data were not normally distributed.

To sum up, the present study attempted to investigate the beliefs in the nature teaching and learning approaches among EFL English Libyan English teachers. Thus, the current study intended to answer the following research questions:

- 1.What do Libyan teachers believe about the nature of teaching and learning of English?
- 2.Is there any the correlation between direct transmission and constructivist beliefs among EFL Libyan English teachers?
- 3.Is there statically significant correlation between EFL Libyan English teachers' beliefs about the nature of teaching approaches and their students' age group?
- 4.Is there statically significant correlation between EFL Libyan English teachers' beliefs about the nature of teaching approaches and their years of teaching experience?

8. Findings

The current section of the study, the researcher shows the research findings. Firstly, the background information of the research participants presented. Then, the analyses of the research questions were illustrated.

8.1. Background Information of the Respondents

Table 8.1 below represents the information about the respondents according to their teaching experiences. The table illustrates that 30% of teachers had an experience of around 3-8 years as well as 30 % of them were with an experience of about 9-14 years. Moreover, the table presents 20% of respondents were with an experience of more than 15 years in teaching field while around 16.7 % and 3.3 % of them were experienced with 1-2 years and one year in teaching consequently.

Table 8.1 Background of the Respondents according to their Teaching Experiences by Frequency Results (N=30)

Variable		Frequency	Percentage %
Teaching Experience	This is my first year	1	3.3%
	1-2 years	5	16.7%
	3-8 years	9	30%
	9-14 years	9	30%
	more than 15	6	20%
	Total	30	100%

Furthermore, table 8.2 illustrates information about the age group of teaching the respondents teach. The table shows that around 47 % of participants were teaching secondary level students whereas approximately 27% teach students at primary level as well as those who teach students at preparatory one.

Table 8.2 Background of the Respondents according Age group of teaching by Frequency Results (N=30)

Variable		Frequency	Percentage%
Age group of teaching	Primary	8	26.7
	Preparatory	8	26.7
	Secondary	14	46.7
	Total	30	100.0

8.2 English teachers' Beliefs about the Nature of Teaching and Learning.

Table 8.3 shows that the results of EFL Libyan English teachers' beliefs about the Nature of teaching and learning. The results have been divided into two types of teaching and learning process (i.e. direct transmission beliefs about teaching & constructivist beliefs about teaching). Firstly, the researcher interpreted the results the direct transmission beliefs of English teachers about their beliefs about the nature of teaching and learning. The table shows that around 93.4 % of teachers believe that the teaching process should be built around problems with clear, correct answers and around ideas that a great number of students can quickly grasp. Around 93 % of instructors agree or strongly agree that the process of teaching should demonstrate the correct way to solve a problem. Approximately 90 % of them agree or strongly agree with item 4 "A quiet classroom is generally needed for effective learning" while above 86 % of teachers believe that their students learn depends on how much background knowledge they have. However, about teachers' beliefs of constructive teaching, about 95 % of teachers believe that thinking and reasoning processes are more significant than specific curriculum content. Around 90 % of teachers agree or strongly agree with item 5 "My role as a teacher is to facilitate students' own inquiry". Furthermore, 83 % of them agree or strongly agree that students should be given the opportunity to think in finding solution for practical problems before teacher shows them how the problem is solved whereas 70 % of teachers believe that thinking and reasoning processes are more important than specific curriculum content. Furthermore, around 57% of instructors believe that students learn best by finding solutions to problems on their own.

Table 8.3: The Percentage of EFL Libyan English teachers' Beliefs about the Nature of Teaching and Learning (N=30)

No	Items	Strongly Disagree %	Disagree %	Agree %	Strongly Agree %
1	Effective/good teachers demonstrate the correct way to solve a problem.	0 %	6.7 %	53.3 %	40 %
2	Instruction should be built around problems with clear, correct answers, and around ideas that most students can grasp quickly.	0 %	6.7 %	46.7 %	46.7 %
3	How much students learn depends on how much background knowledge they have; that is why teaching facts is so necessary.	0 %	13.3%	43.3 %	43.3 %
4	A quiet classroom is generally needed for effective learning.	3.3 %	6.7 %	36.7 %	53.3 %
5	My role as a teacher is to facilitate students' own inquiry	0 %	10%	66.7 %	23.3 %
6	Students learn best by finding solutions to problems on their own.	0 %	13.3 %	63.8 %	23.3 %
7	Students should be allowed to think of solutions to practical problems themselves before the teacher shows them how they are solved.	0%	16.7%	43.3%	40%
8	Thinking and reasoning processes are more important than specific curriculum content.	3.3%	26.7%	56.7%	13.3%
Total Mean: 3.358					
Std. Deviation: 0.306					

8.3 Correlation between Direct Transmission and Constructivist Beliefs among EFL Libyan English teachers

Table 8.4 shows that the scores of direct transmission and constructivist beliefs among EFL Libyan English teachers about the nature of teaching and learning are not normally distributed in population as $\rho < 0.05$ ($\rho = 0.001$). In this case, the best test could be used to find correlation between research variable is non-parametric test (i.e. Searman's rank order correlation) as the data are not normally distributed.

Table 8.4: The distribution of scores of Direct Transmission and Constructivist Beliefs among EFL Libyan English teachers beliefs about the nature of teaching and learning

	Kolmogorov-Smirnov ^a			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	Df	Sig.	Statistic	Df	Sig.
Transitive	.312	30	.000	.857	30	<u>.001</u>
Constructive	.254	30	.000	.909	30	.014
a. Lilliefors Significance Correction						

However, table 8.5 below indicates that there is not statistically significant correlation between direct transmission beliefs' scores and constructivist beliefs' scores among EFL Libyan English teachers as $r_{(28)} = -0.181$, $\rho > 0.05$ ($\rho = -0.337$). Furthermore, the result indicates that the null hypothesis is failed to be rejected.

Table 8.5: Correlation between Direct Transmission and Constructivist Beliefs among EFL Libyan English teachers beliefs about the nature of teaching and learning

			Transitive	Constructive
Spearman's rho	transitive	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	-.181
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.337
		N	30	30
	Constructive	Correlation Coefficient	-.181	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.337	.
		N	30	30

8.4 Correlation between EFL Libyan English Teachers Beliefs and their Age Group of Teaching

Table 8.6 shows that the scores of EFL Libyan English teachers' beliefs and their years of teaching experience among EFL Libyan English teachers about the nature of teaching and learning are not normally distributed in population as $\rho < 0.05$ ($\rho = 0.001$). So, Spearman's rank order correlation was used to find out the correlation between the two variables.

Table 8.6: The distribution of scores of Age group of teaching and Beliefs of Teaching and Learning among EFL Libyan English teachers

	Kolmogorov-Smirnov ^a			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	Df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Beliefs of teaching and learning	.312	30	.000	.857	30	.001
Age group of teaching	.294	30	.000	.763	30	.000

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

However, table 8.7 below indicates that there is not statistically significant correlation between teaching experiences scores and beliefs of teaching and learning scores among EFL Libyan English teachers as $r_{\text{S}}(28) = -0.204, \rho > 0.05$ ($\rho = 0.280$). the findings revealed that the null hypothesis is failed to be rejected. **Table 8.7:**Correlation between Age Group of Teaching and Beliefs of Teaching and Learning among EFL Libyan English teachers beliefs about the nature of teaching and learning

		Beliefs of teaching and learning	Age group of Teaching	
Spearman's rho	Beliefs of teaching and learning	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	-.204
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.280
		N	30	30
	age group of teaching	Correlation Coefficient	-.204	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.280	.
		N	30	30

8.5 Correlation between EFL Libyan English Teachers Beliefs and their Duration of Teaching Experience

8.6 Table 8.8 shows that the scores of EFL Libyan English teachers' beliefs their years of teaching experience are not normally distributed in population as $\rho < 0.05$ ($\rho = 0.014$). To find out the correlation between the two variables, Spearman's rank order correlation test was used.

Table 8.8: The distribution of scores of Teaching Experience and Beliefs of Teaching and Learning among EFL Libyan English teachers beliefs about the nature of teaching and learning

	Kolmogorov-Smirnov ^a			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Teaching Experience	.185	30	.010	.909	30	.014
Beliefs of teaching and learning	.312	30	.000	.857	30	.001
a. Lilliefors Significance Correction						

However, table 8.9 below represents that there is not statistically significant correlation between teaching experiences scores and beliefs of teaching and learning scores among EFL Libyan English teachers as $r(28) = -0.201, \rho > 0.05 (\rho = 0.287)$. In other words, the above table shows that the null hypothesis is failed to be rejected.

Table 8.9: Correlation between Teaching Experience and Beliefs of Teaching and Learning among EFL Libyan English teachers beliefs about the nature of teaching and learning

			Teaching Experience	Beliefs of teaching and learning
Spearman's rho	Teaching Experience	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	-.201
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.287
		N	30	30
	Beliefs of teaching and learning	Correlation Coefficient	-.201	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.287	.
		N	30	30

9. Discussion & Conclusion

The study was conducted in Libyan public schools in Sirte to examine EFL Libyan English teachers' beliefs about the nature of teaching and learning. The research results indicate that there are similarities and differences in their transmission beliefs and direct beliefs. However, the general results revealed that there is nearly no difference in their transmission and constructive beliefs as both beliefs, but they also show that the transitive beliefs are still stronger than the constructive one. This indicates EFL Libyan English teachers prefer using teacher-centred approach during their teaching classes where the role of the teachers is to transmit knowledge to his/ her students in the traditional approach. So, in this way students are passive while receiving information and are supposed to accept any knowledge without asking question (Chan & Elliott, 2004). The results go with what Alshibany (2018) concluded that EFL Libyan teachers still use a traditional role once in the classroom. So, students' role in these classes is to listen, read, and perform prescribed exercise and more priority is given to grammar rules and vocabulary through asking students to memorize them for exams. Abad & Al-Atrash (2019) stated that teachers' practices in Libyan schools most cases did not reflect the principles of the intended curriculum. Although one aim of the curriculum is to help the students communicate effectively and fluently with each other and make talking in English a regular activity (Macfarlane 2000, cited in Orafi, et al., 2021). In other words, classrooms were generally teacher centred and Arabic was the dominant language during classroom interaction. The research study goes with what Orafi (2013) highlighted in his study that students only act as listeners as they only come to the school to listen to what the teachers say. They do not think that they should actively participate in the classroom activities in order to learn English. Orafi goes further that there is a sound of criticism in teaching methods

in Libyan schools as the curriculum supposed to encourage the conducting the learner-centred approach rather than being teacher- centred one. He thought that this might be as a result of the difficulty of adopting new ways of teaching that are not grounded in the broader educational system. Furthermore, Adey & Hewitt (2004) stated that an individual teacher finds it impossible to maintain a new form of teaching while their colleagues around them in the same school still remain untouched by the innovation”.

In addition, the present study revealed that there is not statistically significant correlation between constructive beliefs and direct transitive beliefs of teaching among EFL Libyan English teachers. On the other hand, OECD (2009) stated teachers who adopted constructivist beliefs show support for direct transmission beliefs and the opposite. Thus, this hypothesis does not go with TALIS results in which EFL Libyan teachers supported direct transitive beliefs. For example, a significant positive correlation between the two approaches was found in 19 of 23 TALIS countries whereas in a small number of countries, teachers who showed support for constructivist beliefs tended not to support direct transmission beliefs. Moreover, in Australia statistically significant negative correlations were found. Since there were not studies done to find out whether EFL Libyan teachers' beliefs affected with their duration of experiences or the level they taught, the current study finds out that there is not significant correlation between teachers' age group of teaching and their beliefs of teaching. Finally, the study goes further that there is not statistically significant correlation between teachers' teaching experiences and their beliefs of teaching and learning among EFL Libyan English teachers.

To sum up, further studies could be done in the future on what teachers believe and their instructional practices in their teaching environment. These

studies will show whether there is a correlation between teachers' beliefs about the nature of teaching and learning and their real teaching practice inside classrooms. Abukhattala (2014) argued that Libyan teachers have direct control over students because they are the main source of language knowledge. These values and perceived roles of Libyan teachers might be as an obstacle to adopting a new teaching methodology but if those teachers are embedded into regular summer programmes, their beliefs would be changed totally. Thus, the future education teaching programmes in Libya have to be designed based on the learning skills that students of the current century needs to acquire in order to create learners who are more curious. Thus, in this case, teachers will be successful in their professional missions.

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