

## Libyan Pupils' Attitudes, Interactions, and Perceptions Towards Teacher's Use of English in a Foreign Language Classroom

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### مواقف وتفاعلات وتصورات التلاميذ الليبيين تجاه استخدام المعلم للغة الإنجليزية في فصل اللغة الأجنبية

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#### الملخص

قد ينظر التلاميذ الليبيون إلى استخدام معلمهم للغة الإنجليزية في الفصل الدراسي بطرق مختلفة، مما قد يسهم في تسهيل أو تعقيد عملية تعلمهم، وهناك فجوة بين كيفية استخدام المعلمين الليبيين للغة الإنجليزية في الفصل وبين كيفية إدراك التلاميذ لهذا الاستخدام. كما أن هناك ندرة في المراجع التي تناولت هذا الموضوع. لذلك، تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى استكشاف مواقف التلاميذ، وتفاعلاتهم، وتصوراتهم تجاه استخدام معلمهم للغة الإنجليزية. تُعد هذه الدراسة كمية، حيث استخدمت الاستبيان كأداة لجمع البيانات، وقد وُزع الاستبيان على 58 تلميذًا من الصف الخامس في مدرسة الغيران المركزية. أظهرت النتائج أن تلاميذ الصف الخامس لديهم مواقف إيجابية تجاه استخدام المعلم للغة الإنجليزية. إن الاستخدام المستمر للغة الإنجليزية من قبل المعلم وتصحيح الأخطاء داخل الفصل شجّعهم وساعدهم على تعلم اللغة الإنجليزية بشكل أفضل. ويوصي الباحث بإعادة تقييم كتب الصف الخامس في مادة اللغة الإنجليزية وتصميمها بما يتناسب مع احتياجات التلاميذ، بما يُعدهم لمواقف الحياة الواقعية.

**الكلمات المفتاحية:** مواقف التلاميذ، التفاعلات، التصورات، استخدام المعلم للغة الإنجليزية، فصل اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية

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### Abstract

Libyan pupils may view their teachers' use of English in the classroom in various ways, which may either facilitate or complicate their learning process. There is a gap on how Libyan teachers use English in the classroom and how pupils perceive it. There is also a dearth in literature in this area. Therefore, this study investigates pupils' attitudes, interactions, and perceptions towards their teacher's use of English. This study is quantitative as it uses a questionnaire to collect data. The questionnaire was distributed to 58 fifth-grade pupils from Al-Ghiran Al-Markazia School. The results showed that the fifth-grade pupils had positive attitudes towards their teacher's use of English. The teacher's constant use of English and correction in the classroom encouraged and helped them to learn English better. The researcher recommends that book designers re-evaluate English fifth-grade textbooks and design them according to pupils' needs, which prepares them for real-life situations.

*Keywords:* Pupils' attitudes, interactions, perceptions, teacher's use of English, EFL classroom

### Introduction

Teachers play a crucial role in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) education. They act as facilitators and role models who influence their pupils' learning experiences. As English teachers, the crucial aspect is the way they use the language in the classroom. The language choice that teachers make can greatly affect pupils' attitudes, motivation, and ability to acquire the language.

In Libya, the use of English has gained popularity after 2011. Now, it recognises how important English in today's global world is. English is taught in schools across the country, and learning it is regarded as an opening way to several opportunities. English is no longer merely a subject in the Libyan curriculum; it is also a fundamental skill for occupational development and a means of communication with the rest of the world.

English has a significant role in the EFL primary classroom. It is not considered a subject to study but a medium of instruction that enhances pupils' proficiency and exposure to the foreign language. Teachers' constant use of English may assist pupils in improving their four major skills (i.e., listening, speaking, reading, & writing). However, in Libya, there is a discrepancy between teachers' way of teaching the language and how the pupils perceive it. In addition, there is a gap between what the Teacher's Book recommends and the teachers' practical part of teaching in their classrooms. According to the Curricula and Educational Research Centre (2019), sometimes as a teacher, you want to explain things in Arabic but try other ways first. Only use Arabic if you have to. Demonstrating with actions or drawing on the board can help pupils understand. You can teach them a lot of real English by using English for classroom instructions and showing them what you mean. Slowly, pupils will grasp it, and some will even start speaking English themselves.

Several Libyan primary school teachers tend to overuse Arabic in their classrooms, which may affect pupils negatively. Abugadam's (2023) findings showed that the majority of Libyan primary school teachers used Arabic in their classrooms because they thought that pupils did not understand them if they used English constantly in their classrooms.

The effective use of the English language in the classroom is a fundamental factor in fostering language learning. Teachers play a crucial role in creating a conducive environment for language acquisition. Thus, this study delves into the attitudes, interactions, and perceptions of Libyan primary school pupils towards their teacher's use of English in the EFL classroom.

### **Statement of the Problem**

As English is still widely used for communication across the world, it is important to make sure that it is taught effectively in countries, where it is considered as a foreign language such as Libya. Teachers' use of the English language in the classroom has a significant effect on how motivated pupils are to learn the language and how well they learn it. However, Libyan pupils may have varying attitudes towards their teachers' use of English, which can either facilitate or hamper their learning process. Some pupils

may find it beneficial to improve their language skills. Although pupils are motivated, they may be taken aback when they are challenged to respond to their teachers in English. In addition, pupils may encounter challenges in comprehending their teachers' use of English, which may affect their attitudes, interactions, and perceptions in learning the language. Therefore, this situation shows a gap in how pupils perceive their teachers' constant use of English. Understanding their attitudes, interactions, and perceptions is paramount because it shows the teaching strategies that teachers have to use to meet their pupils' requirements.

Nevertheless, there is limited research has been explored Libyan pupils' attitudes, interactions, and perceptions towards their teacher's use of English in EFL classrooms.

### **The Purpose of the Study**

This research aims to investigate primary school pupils' attitudes towards the use of English language in the fifth grade. This study also explores pupils' attitudes towards their teacher's use of English in the classroom with the goal of improving teaching practices in Libyan primary schools. Moreover, it identifies the pupils' interactions and perceptions to enrich English language teaching.

### **Research Questions**

To achieve the objectives of the study, it has to address the following research questions:

1. To what extent do pupils agree on the use of the target language in learning English?
2. To what extend do pupils interact when the teacher explains in English as the mode of instruction?
3. To what extent do pupils perceive their teacher's use of English?

### **Significance of the Study**

This research may assist primary school teachers to know pupils' attitudes, interaction, and their perceptions towards the use of English inside the classroom. Furthermore, it may help them understand pupils' motivation in the EFL classroom. It may also aid English language inspectors to know the extent needed for the English language to be used by teachers and guide them in which condition they must use it and when they need to use the first

language. For book designers, it may assist them to know whether the topics included in the textbooks are understandable to pupils when their teacher uses English to explain the lessons.

### **Scope and Delimitation of the Study**

The current study focused on the pupils' attitudes towards the use of the English language in fifth grade at Al-Ghiran Al-Markazia School and not in any other schools or other grades in Misurata.

### **Literature Review**

#### **The Use of English Language in an EFL Classroom**

English language teachers need to take into account that the use of English in teaching young foreign language learners is not the same as second language learners. According to Rachmajanti (2008), some teachers agreed that foreign language instruction that starts at a young age significantly improves a child's chances of becoming highly skilled in that language. Additionally, extended language learning leads to greater proficiency. Abdallah (2024) mentioned that each learner has distinct experiences and expectations that can greatly shape their learning journey. Thus, an essential aspect of teaching English as a foreign language is recognising the significance of understanding students' backgrounds, motivations, and individual needs.

Scott and Ytreberg (1991) contended that learning a foreign language is similar to the first language. Children naturally enjoy fiction and imagination, and they respond well to activities involving movements, visuals, and music. In terms of recognising children's limited attention spans, the authors stressed the importance of varying the activities, pace, and tone of voice. They suggested using classroom grouping bearing in mind children's natural inclination to socialise with their peers. Cameron (2001) mentioned that lessons and activities are more effective when they are tailored to what pupils need to learn, instead of what the textbook dictates or what the teacher is interested in.

A study was conducted by Elibariki (2017) which investigated the challenges that primary school pupils encountered in learning English as a foreign language. The study was mixed method because of the three instruments that were used to collect data namely, questionnaire,

observation, and documentation. The participants were composed of 15 primary school teachers, one school inspector, and 3000 pupils specifically from levels three and six. The results indicated that due to an unsatisfactory classroom environment, pupils experienced a loss of motivation in learning the English language.

In EFL classrooms, teachers have to create a suitable environment that matches their pupils' interests. Abukhattala (2013) posited that a welcoming and encouraging classroom is essential for language acquisition. The Language Acquisition Devise (LAD) benefits from abundant input in such setting. However, student anxiety or a demotivating environment negates the value of that input. Yet, the motivation of foreign language learners is not restricted to the environment only. Petrides (2006) asserted that it is essential to recognise the significance of motivation in foreign language acquisition when creating learning resources or planning language programs.

Another factor that EFL teachers should consider is the way they correct pupils' errors, because it affects their motivation and their overall performance in learning the language. Amara (2015) explained that teachers are frequently concerned about students' errors and they are afraid that these mistakes will become fixed. This view originates from behaviourist learning theory, which suggests that language acquisition occurs through repeating correct forms while repeating incorrect forms is detrimental. In addition, Lightbown and Spada (1993) highlighted that teachers must recognise that errors are a normal part of both first and second language acquisition indicating that the language system of learners is evolving. These errors often result from overgeneralisation or native language interference. When persistent errors are prevalent, teachers should address them with patience because mastery requires time and repetition, especially when errors align with developmental patterns. Since excessive correction can hinder motivation, teachers remain responsible for guiding learners to improvement, which may require correcting errors that persist despite communicative practice.

Consequently, Broughton et al. (2002) explained that learning a foreign language requires learners to make errors, which should be seen as signs of

progress. When students are skeptical of how to express themselves, they use their knowledge of their first and the new language to make guesses. When students are practicing language, using both previously taught language and other language, error correction should focus on mistakes involving the previously taught language.

In line with this, Richards and Rodgers (2014) affirmed that teachers should avoid excessive interruption of pupils' speech to correct errors, especially in the early stages of learning. They argued that teachers should emulate parents, who typically correct their children's mistakes minimally as over-correction can hinder learning. Nonetheless, correction of common errors is also appropriate. In a class where students share the same first language, similar errors are likely to be repeated; thus, correcting them will benefit everyone. However, correction during speaking exercises can disrupt their flow of thoughts and impede fluency. Therefore, it is better to provide feedback after the activity is completed (Riddell, 2010).

Communication among learners or with their teacher in the EFL classroom is essential. According to Reilly and Ward (1997) although communication is key to the learning process, asking children to use only English when they are unable to do is equivalent to telling them to be quiet. The authors also recommended when teaching English to children, teachers should use words that are similar to the learners' first language. Nevertheless, they warned that children face the risk of assuming that English words that are similar to their native language have identical meanings due to their failure to recognise "false friends" [words with similar forms but different meanings]. However, the benefits of immediate comprehension and increased young learners' confidence are believed to outweigh this potential drawback. Cameron (2001) explained that asking a pupil to re-tell a story in a foreign language after listening requires significant effort, because young foreign language learners must find and produce appropriate language at the word, sentence, and discourse levels. Speaking demands more from language learners' resources and skills than listening. Because speaking is extremely difficult, it requires careful and extensive support not only for comprehension but also for production.

Forcing young learners to speak prematurely can cause considerable emotional distress. Even if young children are not speaking, they are still processing the language. It is also worth noting that some children might remain silent in class but demonstrate their learning by using the language at home. Thus, language teachers should take into account that children often need a significant period to absorb a language before they start producing it (Reilly & Ward, 1997). Cameron (2001) emphasised that children learn foreign languages better when the content is familiar. Teachers should teach communication strategies and ensure children's understanding, as they have difficulty understanding on their own.

### **Students' Attitudes Towards English as a Foreign Language**

There are research studies from different countries that have been conducted on pupils' attitudes towards English in primary schools. Kızıltan and Atlı (2013) carried out a study on Turkish pupils enrolled in fourth grade to seek their attitudes towards learning English. Two questionnaires were used as tools for collecting data. The results showed that the pupils had positive attitudes towards learning English. The majority of pupils also showed positive attitudes towards learning grammar. Besides, the study revealed that there was no difference in the attitudes of pupils in terms of gender.

Firat's (2009) study aimed to investigate fifth grade pupils' attitudes and their English language proficiency. Two questionnaires were distributed to 300 Turkish primary school pupils in Adiyaman. The results demonstrated that pupils possessed a positive attitude towards the language, and there was a significant relationship between their attitudes and their language proficiency. Similarly, Mat and Yunus (2014) conducted a study on primary school pupils seeking for their attitudes and motivation towards the English language. The participants were 40 pupils from FELDA school. The researchers used a questionnaire and an interview for collecting data. The results revealed that the pupils were motivated and their attitudes towards the English language were positive.

While several research has shown a positive attitude towards English language learning among Arab and non-Arab students, some research has also indicated negative attitudes. For instance, Abidin et al. (2012) carried



out a study in Libya about the attitudes of secondary school students towards learning English language. The study invited 180 students to answer the questionnaire. The results showed that the students had a negative attitude towards learning English. Thus, the researchers recommended that teachers should shed light on the importance of learning English to the students. In addition, teachers should vary their teaching methods and create a relaxing environment, as well as motivate their students to learn the language.

All in all, although the aforementioned studies have some similarities with this current study regarding the research design, the instrument used to collect the data, and the primary level are the same. However, none of them focused on pupils' attitudes, interactions, and perceptions towards their teacher's use of English in the EFL classroom. They all investigated pupils' attitudes towards learning English language.

### **Methodology**

#### **Research Design**

This study is quantitative in nature. Quantitative research is defined by Kothari (2004) as "based on the measurement of quantity or amount. It is applicable to phenomena that can be expressed in terms of quantity" (p. 3). Since the aim is to investigate the frequency and extent of agreement in the questionnaire responses, a quantitative research design is appropriate to achieve this objective.

#### **Participants and Setting**

The participants were 58 fifth-grade pupils in the primary level. They were all females and studying at Al-Ghiran Al-Markazia School which is located in Misurata city, Libya.

#### **Data-Gathering Instrument**

A questionnaire as a research instrument was utilised to collect data in this study. The questionnaire was defined by Kumar (2011) as "a written list of questions, the answers to which are recorded by respondents. In a questionnaire, respondents read the questions, interpret what is expected and then write down the answers" (p. 394). The questionnaire used in this study contained three sections. The first section consisted of six items about pupils' attitudes towards their teacher's instruction. The second section

consisted of seven items on pupils' interaction in the class. Meanwhile, there were eleven items in the third section which focused on pupils' perceptions towards their teacher's use of English in the classroom.

### **Validity and Reliability**

Validity means "the most critical criterion and indicates the degree to which an instrument measures what it is supposed to measure" (Kothari, 2004, p. 73). However, reliability is "the ability of a research instrument to provide similar results when used repeatedly under similar conditions. Reliability indicates accuracy, stability and predictability of a research instrument: the higher the reliability, the higher the accuracy; or the higher the accuracy of an instrument, the higher its reliability" (Kumar, 2011, p. 396).

The questionnaire was handed to three English language experts for face validity. It was valid because of the score of validity that had been given, 2.9, based on the research instrument evaluation of Good and Scates (1972). For reliability, the questionnaire was given to a group of fifth-grade pupils studying in another class, and the results were determined by the consistency of the questionnaire, which resulted in 0.854.

### **Data Gathering**

This research followed certain steps to obtain valid data. Initially, a formal letter of permission was written by the Dean of Faculty of Languages and Translation to seek the consent to conduct the study of the Education Inspectorate of Misurata and the headteacher of Al-Ghiran Al-Markazia School. After that, the pupils were informed about the purpose of the study. After obtaining the approval of both the participants and their parents, the questionnaire was distributed. It was translated into Arabic to ensure that they could answer the items precisely. The data were collected during the second semester of the 2023-2024 school year.

### **Data Analysis**

The statistical method was chosen to match the nature of the study. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) 21 was used to analyse the collected data. Descriptive statistics was used to provide a general overview of the data including how it was organised, classified, summarised, and displayed clearly in tables. If an item is positive, it means that the

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participants agree with its content. If an item is negative, it means that the participants do not agree with its content.

**Table 1**

*Level of Pupils' Attitudes and Interaction*

| Mean Scale  | Interpretation |
|-------------|----------------|
| 4.50 – 5.00 | Always         |
| 3.50 – 4.49 | Often          |
| 2.50 – 3.49 | Sometimes      |
| 1.50 – 2.49 | Rarely         |
| 1.00 - 1.49 | Never          |

**Table 2**

*Pupils' Perceptions Towards Their Teacher's use of English in the Classroom*

| Mean Scale   | Interpretation    |
|--------------|-------------------|
| 4.50 – 5. 00 | Strongly Agree    |
| 3.50 – 4.49  | Agree             |
| 2.50 – 3.49  | Neutral           |
| 1.50 – 2.49  | Disagree          |
| 1.00 – 1.49  | Strongly Disagree |

### **Ethical Considerations**

Permission sought from the Education Inspectorate of Misurata, the head of primary office in Misurata, and the headmaster of the school, as well as pupils' parents in order to collect the data. They were informed about the aim of this research beforehand. Pupils were informed that they could withdraw from participation whenever they wanted. Besides, their participation in this research would not affect their scores during their study; also, their identities and personal information would be undisclosed.

## **Results**

In order to answer the research questions, the questionnaire was divided into three sections. The first section aimed to answer the first research question which was about pupils' attitudes towards English instruction and the analysis of this is as follows:

**Table 3**

| Items                                                                            | Mean  | SD    | Range |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------|-------|-------|
| I feel engaged and interested during English lessons.                            | 4.068 | 0.923 | 1     |
| I am comfortable when receiving instructions and explanations in English.        | 3.965 | 1.256 | 2     |
| I am interested to use English only in my English subject.                       | 3.362 | 1.552 | 6     |
| I am happy when the teacher uses English in the English subject.                 | 3.689 | 1.142 | 5     |
| I am confident when I speak English in front of my teacher and classmates.       | 3.827 | 1.352 | 3     |
| I can follow classroom discussions and activities when the teacher uses English. | 3.724 | 1.120 | 4     |

In Table 3, it is stipulated that the first ranked item, the participants ( $M = 4.068$ ,  $SD = 0.923$ ) indicated that they often felt engaged and interested during English lessons. For the second ranked item, the participants ( $M = 3.965$ ,  $SD = 1.256$ ) showed that they were often comfortable when receiving instructions and explanations in English. The participants ( $M = 3.827$ ,  $SD = 1.352$ ) revealed that they were often confident when they spoke English in front of their teacher which is the third ranked item. For the fourth ranked item, the participants ( $M = 3.724$ ,  $SD = 1.120$ ) could often follow classroom discussions and activities when the teacher used English. Moreover, the participants ( $M = 3.689$ ,  $SD = 1.142$ ) in the fifth ranked item indicated that they were often happy when the teacher used English in the English subject. Finally, for the last item with the lowest mean the participants ( $M = 3.362$ ,  $SD = 1.552$ ) were sometimes interested in using English only in their classroom.

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In conclusion, the participants generally felt engaged and interested during English lessons. They were often comfortable receiving instructions in English and confident speaking English in front of their teacher. Participants often followed classroom discussions and activities when the teacher used English and were often happy when the teacher used English. However, they were only sometimes interested in using English solely in English subject.

Meanwhile, the second section of the questionnaire about pupils' interaction was written to answer the second research question.

**Table 4**

| Items                                                                         | Mean  | SD    | Range |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------|-------|-------|
| I participate in the class activities with my English teacher.                | 3.637 | 1.238 | 5     |
| I speak English with my classmates and teacher.                               | 2.844 | 1.386 | 6     |
| I can communicate well in English during the class.                           | 2.137 | 1.369 | 7     |
| I feel comfortable when my teacher corrects my mistakes in English.           | 4.224 | 1.228 | 3     |
| I feel that my teacher's corrections help me learn English better.            | 4.258 | 1.228 | 2     |
| I am excited to get involved in the English activities with the teacher.      | 4.172 | 1.126 | 4     |
| My teacher uses varied activities that encourage me to interact in the class. | 4.586 | 0.676 | 1     |

The results from Table 4 provide valuable insights into the participants' attitudes towards their classroom interaction and participation in English. Based on the result shown in Table 4, the item with the highest item mean ranged as number 1 indicated that the participants ( $M = 4.586$ ,  $SD = 0.676$ ) observed that their teacher always used varied activities that encouraged them to interact in the class. The second highest item ranged as number 2 showed that the participants ( $M = 4.258$ ,  $SD = 1.228$ ) often felt that their teacher's correction helped them to learn English better. Similarly, the participants ( $M = 4.224$ ,  $SD = 1.228$ ) often felt comfortable when their teacher corrected their mistakes in English; followed by the participants ( $M$

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= 4.172, SD = 1.126) were often excited to get involved in the English activities with the teacher. Furthermore, the participants (M = 3.637, SD = 1.238) demonstrated that they often participated in class activities with their English teacher. The mean for item 6 showed that the participants (M = 2.844, SD = 1.386) sometimes spoke English with their classmates and teacher. However, the lowest item was ranked as number 7 revealed that the participants (M = 2.137, SD = 1.369) could rarely communicate well in English during the class.

In short, the results showed that according to the participants the primary English teacher used varied activities to encourage interaction in the class. The participants also felt that teacher correction was helpful and felt comfortable when they were corrected. Participants were generally excited to be involved in English activities. However, they reported that they sometimes spoke in English with their classmates and teacher. Nevertheless, they felt that they rarely communicated well in English during the class.

The last section of the questionnaire is about pupils' perceptions towards the teacher's use of English in the classroom aimed to answer the third research question.

**Table 5**

| Items                                                                                             | Mean  | SD    | Range |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------|-------|-------|
| My teacher's use of English helps me understand English better.                                   | 4.137 | 0.867 | 4     |
| It is easy to understand my teacher when she uses English in the class.                           | 3.344 | 1.000 | 9     |
| My teacher speaks slowly enough for me to follow.                                                 | 3.758 | 1.301 | 6     |
| My teacher uses clear and simple vocabulary to explain in English.                                | 4.224 | 0.955 | 3     |
| It is easy to understand grammar and other language concepts when my teacher explains in English. | 3.672 | 1.247 | 7     |
| I can comprehend and respond to the teacher's instructions or questions in English.               | 3.465 | 0.955 | 8     |
| My teacher supports and encourages me to use English in the class.                                | 4.517 | 0.731 | 1     |

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|                                                                                                                   |       |       |    |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------|-------|----|
| Teacher's constant use of English helps me improve my English language skills.                                    | 4.224 | 0.817 | 3  |
| Teacher's use of English in the class prepares me for real-life situations where English is commonly used.        | 3.172 | 1.141 | 10 |
| The teacher's use of English positively influences my motivation to learn and participate in the English subject. | 4.327 | 0.998 | 2  |
| I understand my teacher when she speaks in English.                                                               | 3.775 | 0.955 | 5  |

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Table 5 shows the degree of agreement on the pupils' perceptions towards their teacher's use of English in the classroom. It is clear from the results in Table 5 that the participants ( $M = 4.517$ ,  $SD = 0.731$ ) strongly agreed that their teacher supported and encouraged them to use English in the class. For the item ranked as number 2, the participants ( $M = 4.327$ ,  $SD = 0.998$ ) agreed that their teacher's use of English positively influenced their motivation to learn and participate in the English subject. Moreover, the participants ( $M = 4.224$ ) agreed on two items: their teacher used clear and simple vocabulary to explain in English ( $SD = 0.955$ ), and their teacher's constant use of English helped them improve their English language skills ( $SD = 0.817$ ). Similarly, the item ranked as number 4 showed that the participants ( $M = 4.137$ ,  $SD = 0.867$ ) agreed that their teacher's use of English helped them to understand English better. The participants ( $M = 3.775$ ,  $SD = 0.955$ ) also agreed that they often understood their teacher when she spoke English.

Furthermore, the participants ( $M = 3.758$ ,  $SD = 1.301$ ) agreed that their teacher spoke slowly enough for them to follow. In addition, the participants ( $M = 3.672$ ,  $SD = 1.247$ ) agreed also that it was easy to understand grammar and other language concepts when their teacher explained in English. However, the participants ( $M = 3.465$ ,  $SD = 0.955$ ) were neutral about their ability to comprehend and respond to the teacher's instructions or questions in English. Similarly, the participants ( $M = 3.344$ ,  $SD = 1.000$ ) were also neutral towards the item ranked as number 9, which demonstrated that it was easy to understand their teacher when she used English in the class. The

lowest item was ranked as number 10, which showed that the participants ( $M = 3.172$ ,  $SD = 1.141$ ) revealed that their teacher's use of English in the class prepared them for real-life situations where English was commonly used.

In brief, participants generally agreed that their teacher effectively used English in the classroom. They strongly agreed that their teacher encouraged them to use English. Participants agreed that the teacher's constant use of English positively influenced their motivation and improved their English skills. The participants also agreed that they could comprehend and respond to the teacher's English instructions or questions in English, and they agreed that their teacher spoke slowly enough for them to follow. However, they were neutral about the ease of their understanding towards their teacher's use of English, and they were also neutral towards their teacher's use of English prepared them for real-life English situations.

### **Discussion**

Based on the results from Table 3, the participants generally show positive attitudes in their English lessons, but their interest in using English is limited primarily to the classroom setting. The high levels of involvement and interest reported by participants are positive indicators. This finding implies that the classroom setting and teaching techniques are successful in capturing pupils' interest and fostering their enjoyment of studying English. The participants' comfort when receiving instructions in English and their confidence in speaking in front of the teacher are also significant. These factors contribute to a more relaxing and learning environment, which can facilitate language production and learning. This can be a strong foundation for language acquisition. This result is in line with Abukhattala's (2013) explanation when he said that a positive and supportive classroom environment is crucial for language acquisition because it allows the Language Acquisition Device (LAD) to benefit from the input.

The ability of participants to follow classroom discussions and activities when the teacher uses English indicates that the teacher's use of the language is generally comprehensible. This is crucial for effective language learning, yet pupils need to understand the input they receive to make progress. Pinter (2006) notes that primary school teachers speak English



frequently during lessons to maximise pupils' exposure to the target language. Pupils may not comprehend all the teacher's words, but they can often deduce the meaning from the situation through their teacher's actions and the materials used in teaching them. Crawford (2004) asserted that in EFL classrooms, it is fundamental for teachers to use the target language. This is because it often represents the main or even the only opportunity for students to hear and understand the language. To enable students to become proficient language users, teachers themselves need to use the language actively and transform schools into environments where the language is dynamically practiced.

For the results of Table 4, the most significant finding shows that the participants strongly agree with their teacher's constant use of varied activities to promote interaction. This is a crucial element of effective language teaching. Varied activities can cater to different learning styles, maintain pupils' involvement; besides that, changing the activities during the class can draw pupils' attention and boost their motivation, which is confirmed by the results of this study. This aligns with Scott and Ytreberg (1991), who likened foreign language learning to first language acquisition, highlighting children's attraction for fiction and imagination and their engagement with movements, visuals, and musical activities. Additionally, the authors stressed the need for varied activities to address. The authors also recommended dividing the classroom into groups considering children's natural tendency to socialise with their classmates.

The results in Table 4 also show that the participants generally appreciate their teacher's correction, which helps them learn when their mistakes are corrected. This result is significant in reinforcing the idea that constructive feedback plays a crucial role in language development. Several authors (Lightbown & Spada, 1993; Richards & Rodgers, 2014) asserted that teachers should not interrupt learners when they practise the language because learners may be demotivated to participate or distracted.

However, the lowest-rated item indicates that participants rarely feel they can communicate well in English during class raises a significant concern. Although the ability to communicate effectively is a primary goal of language learning, teachers can neither expect a high level of fluency

from the pupils nor the teachers can force them to communicate in the class because pupils are still at the primary level and are still exploring the new foreign language. Cameron (2001) claimed that asking pupils to retell a story in a foreign language after listening to it is very demanding. Young language learners must understand and produce appropriate language at the word, sentence, and speech levels. Speaking requires more skills than listening; hence, it requires careful and extensive support from both comprehension and production. According to Reilly and Ward (1997), language teachers must consider that young learners often require a significant period of language absorption before they start producing it. Compelling children to speak before they are ready to do so can result in considerable emotional distress. It is essential to recognise that language acquisition occurs even when children are not actively speaking. Moreover, some children may not speak in class but will demonstrate their learning through language use at home.

The results in Table 5 indicate that there is a strong agreement among participants regarding their teacher's support and encouragement of English use. This is a crucial finding because teacher's encouragement plays a significant role in fostering a positive learning environment and motivating pupils to take risks with the language. This aligns with research emphasising the importance of teacher support and positive reinforcement in language learning. For instance, Wallace and Leong's (2020) results showed that pupils had positive views towards their teacher's support and motivation, which encouraged them to learn English. In addition, feelings of demotivation could be reduced by having a supportive teacher. Pupils' motivation to interact with the learning material increases when they believe that their teachers care about their welfare.

However, the lowest agreement is on preparing pupils for real-life English situations. Based on my own experience, I believe that the reason behind the low level of agreement regarding the teacher's use of English in preparing participants for real-life situations is that the topics in the fifth-grade English textbook may not equip pupils for real-life communication. The textbook topics focus on "Country Information File," such as facts about other countries (e.g., Oman, India, Lebanon, & London) and other

topics; for instance, insects, names of countries, and nationalities. These topics lead teachers to deliver information stipulated by the textbook designers which often has nothing to do with real-life situations. Such topics are beyond pupils' comprehension; thus, the content may not contribute to developing pupils' fluency in English. This is supported by Westwood (2008), teaching methods and curriculum content should align with the learner's age, be suitable within social and cultural contexts, and meet individual needs. Moreover, Moon (2005) asserted that the curriculum and materials should be attractive and appropriate for pupils' cognitive and language skills, considering their traits and learning preferences. For young learners, this often means a hands-on approach, i.e., relevant and uses real objects, prioritises communication, incorporates play, initially focuses on speaking, provides strong teacher support, and aligns with their cognitive capabilities.

### **Implications**

The results provide meaningful implications for English language teaching, particularly in the context of enhancing pupils' interest, comfort, and language use in the classroom. The high mean score presents pupils' involvement and interest during English lessons which suggests that the current teaching strategies are effective in capturing pupils' attention and interest. This implies that continuous usage of interactive and student-centred activities promote interaction such as communicative activities, games, and the Total Physical Response method. Second, the fact that participants were often comfortable receiving instructions and explanations in English highlights the importance of consistent use of English as the medium of instruction. This level of comfort implies that immersion in the language is beneficial for comprehension and encourages the acquisition process. Therefore, teachers should maintain and increase their use of English in teaching young learners. Pupils also reported feeling confident when speaking English in front of their teacher which indicates that the classroom environment is supportive and reduces anxiety which assists speaking skill development. Teachers should benefit from this confidence by providing more speaking opportunities such as role-playing and peer dialogues to boost pupils' fluency. The ability of pupils to follow classroom

discussions and activities in English reinforces the idea that exposure to English input develops comprehension. This implies that teachers should continue integrating the use of the English language into all aspects of classroom activities and increase the complexity of the language gradually to support language growth.

Additionally, the results offer significant implications for enhancing classroom interaction and pupils' participation in English language learning environments. The high mean score for the item stating that teacher consistently used varied activities to encourage interaction suggests that such strategies are highly effective in encouraging pupils. This implies continued utilisation of different activities such as group work, games, role-playing, and practical tasks stimulate pupils' involvement and create an active classroom atmosphere. The results also indicate that error correction plays a supportive role in learning, as many participants felt that their teacher's corrections helped them improve and made them felt comfortable when they were corrected. This suggests that constructive and encouraging feedback helps pupils learn the language faster. Teachers also should take into account creating a safe space where pupils feel secure and motivated to take risks and learn from their mistakes. Training primary school teachers to use positive correction techniques can further enhance pupils' confidence.

Moreover, participants reported feeling enthusiastic about participating in activities with their teacher, which assures the importance of the teacher-student relationship in increasing pupils' motivation and enthusiasm. Teachers who show genuine interest in pupils' involvement can significantly influence pupils' willingness to interact in class. While participants showed a moderate level of participation in class activities, the low frequency of using English with peers and teacher, and particularly their struggles to communicate effectively in English reveal a critical area for improvement. These results suggest that while pupils enjoy participating and are open to interaction, their actual use of English remains limited, especially in peer communication. This implies a need to increase opportunities for authentic language use among pupils such as through pair work, small group activity, and communicative tasks that promote real conversations. Teachers should foster the intensive use of English in EFL

classrooms. They should also consider that pupils are EFL learners and they are in the initial stage of learning. In this phase, they are figuring out the foreign language instead of using it, because they need time to absorb it. They may say words or phrases in English, but they will not be able to express themselves perfectly.

Teacher's consistent and supportive use of English in the classroom has a strong positive influence on pupils' motivation, understanding, and language development. Pupils' agreement with teacher's encouragement and the use of simple and clear vocabulary indicates that these strategies are effective in building pupils' confidence and involvement in English lessons. When teachers encourage pupils to use English and make their input comprehensible, pupils become active in the class and their skills are improved as well, especially in listening and speaking. These results imply that teacher's language use plays a crucial role in shaping the learning environment. For young learners, exposure to English through meaningful input can enhance comprehension and boost motivation. Pupils felt their teacher's use of English improved their language skills, which highlights the importance of maximising target language use in EFL class, particularly when delivered in a clear and understandable manner.

The low level of agreement regarding the role of the teacher's English use in preparing pupils for real-life communication highlights a significant gap between classroom content and practical language use. This suggests that while teachers may use English in the classroom, the curricular content itself may not support the development of communicative competence in real-world contexts; for example, when the textbook topics are abstract or unrelated to pupils' daily experiences such as learning about distant countries or insects. They fail to equip learners with the language skills necessary for authentic communication. This result has important implications for curriculum developers, teachers, and educational policymakers. There is a clear need to revise and adapt English language materials to include content that reflects real-life and age-appropriate lessons. The topic should align more closely with pupils' everyday environments, interests, and communicative needs such as talking about family, school routines, shopping, and simple social interactions. This shift

would support pupils in using English accurately in different real-life situations.

### **Limitation of the Study**

There were two pupils absent on the day of distributing the questionnaire for data collection. There is also a dearth of resources regarding the attitudes, interactions, and perceptions of pupils pertaining to their teacher's use of English in the EFL classroom. All studies examined how pupils felt about studying English.

### **Conclusion**

This study delves into pupils' attitudes, interactions, and perceptions towards their teacher's use of English in an EFL classroom. The results showed that the participants had positive attitudes to their teacher's use of English. They revealed that their teacher utilised diverse activities which encouraged them to participate in the class. The questionnaire results showed that they strongly agree that their teacher supports and encourages them to use English in the class. However, the participants revealed that they could not communicate very well with their classmates and their teacher's use of English does not prepare them for real-life situations. This is attributed to the textbook contents, which unable to equip pupils with topics that benefit them in a real-world context. Thus, it forces primary school teachers to use the language that matches the lesson requirements.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the results of the study, there is a need for the Ministry of Education and book designers to re-evaluate English fifth-grade textbooks and provide lessons that can benefit the Libyan primary school pupils in real-life situations. In addition, primary school teachers should use English in their classes, vary their activities, and encourage their pupils to learn the language.

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