A Lens on Using Teaching Aids in English Classes in Nalut Primary Schools

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Abstract:

This study aims to investigate the effectiveness of teaching aids used for teaching English to young learners in primary schools. The qualitative data were collected through a questionnaire from primary school English teachers focusing on the teaching aids used in English classes. The results show that most of the English teachers use classical teaching aids due to lack of support from the officials. The unavailability of modern Teaching aids and the dependency on classical teaching slower the learning process. Finally, the results indicate that English teacher must use teaching aids correctly to make the procedure of teaching handy and fun.

Keywords: Teaching aids, English class, English teachers, primary Schools, Nalut

الملخص:

تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى التحقق من فعالية الوسائل التعليمية المستخدمة لتعليم اللغة الإنجليزية للمتعلمين الصغار في المدارس الابتدائية، تم جمع البيانات النوعية من خلال استبيان موجه لمعلمي اللغة الإنجليزية في المدارس الابتدائية. حيث يركز الاستبيان على الوسائل التعليمية المستخدمة في فصول اللغة الإنجليزية. وتظهر النتائج المتعلقة أن معظم معلمي اللغة الإنجليزية يستخدمون الوسائل التعليمية الكلاسيكية ويرجح ذلك بسبب نقص الدعم من المسؤولين وعدم توفر الوسائل التعليمية الحديث. وتبين أن الاعتماد على التدريس الكلاسيكي يبطئ عملية التعلم. أخيرا، تشير النتائج إلى أنه يجب على مدرس اللغة الإنجليزية استخدام الوسائل التعليمية بشكل صحيح لجعل عملية التدريس سهلة الاستخدام وممتعة.

الكلمات المفتاحية: وسائل التدريس، فصول اللغة الإنجليزية، مدرسي اللغة الإنجليزية، المرحلة الإعدادية

Introduction

English is one of the most crucial contemporary languages globally, and mastering its skills ranks among today's top priorities. Besides its status as a global language, English is recognized as the language of technology. In the current era of communication and the Internet, where the world has transformed into a closely-knit community, the importance of English proficiency has surged. A growing interest in learning English has been noted due to its distinctive features. The rapidly advancing interconnected world has led to increased globalization and constant change. The ability to connect with people across different languages is essential in this dynamic environment. In the realms of science, technology, media, and the Internet, English stands out as the most widely used language in both public and higher education institutions. This phenomenon is not limited to specific nations; it extends beyond borders, particularly in Arab nations where English has become a mandatory language for instruction and communication across various subjects. At the local level, the ministries of education in successive Libyan governments have shown a keen interest in curriculum development. Notably, the English curriculum has undergone significant changes, both in content and teaching approaches. On October 6, 2018, the Ministry of Education of the former Government of National Accord announced the commencement of English language instruction from the first grade of primary level instead of the fifth grade. This adjustment was part of the Ministry's broader plan to enhance the educational curriculum in the country. Despite these positive developments, there is a noticeable slow progress in making English language teaching in Libya more effective and useful. The traditional teaching style still prevails, with a strong adherence to standard methods, as highlighted by Ben Hamid (2010) in various faculties. On the other hand, development is not only about the quality of the curriculum but also about how it is addressed and taught. Therefore, it was necessary to keep pace with advancements in the field of education, pay attention to research, and explore every developed and new aspect related to educational

methods. Additionally, it is crucial to develop teaching means and show interest in teaching aids to enhance effectiveness and improve scientific achievement and learners' efficiency. Due to the importance of this topic, UNESCO has encouraged discussions on technical and vocational objects to develop resources and facilitate education and training activities. Several international conferences have been held to emphasize the significance of curriculum development and introduce modern ideas to enhance the educational process. UNESCO, for instance, organized conferences such as the first International Conference on Technical Education in Berlin in 1987 and the Technical and Vocational Education Conference in 1992. Historically, the development of teaching aids has undergone several stages. In 1956, Erasmus encouraged teachers to create alphabets using candy to excite children and stimulate their motivation for learning. Montigny in 1952 advocated for the use of field visits in learning, promoting direct experience for the child. Comenos in 1663 AD called for learning through the senses using real things and illustrations, emphasizing the importance of pictures as a teaching method. Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1661 AD) criticized indoctrination-based teaching methods and advocated for education through direct experience with tangible things. Frowell in 1193 AD utilized various games and activities, including blocks, clay, pictures, sand play, knitting, and weaving, emphasizing the importance of trips and visits. ىIn 1908, the term "visual education" was introduced with the use of motion picture devices, marking one of the first audiovisual means. During the First World War, cinematography appeared, displaying training to thousands of soldiers through wall posters and other visual aids. The discovery of electricity further propelled the development of educational projectors and recorders. Numerous researchers and scholars have shown interest in the field of teaching and teaching aids, leading to the emergence of several theories supporting the importance of using teaching aids and their impact on learning, comprehension, and interaction. The Connectives theory by Siemens emphasizes the importance of connections and network interaction in learning, with technology playing a vital role. George Linderberg's Communication Theory underscores the role of symbols and codes in effective communication, ensuring understanding and interaction.

Teaching aids play a crucial role in English language teaching and learning classrooms, especially in EFL classes. They allow English teachers in Libyan schools to bring the outside world into the classroom, exposing students to English materials and contexts. These aids provide learners with realistic experiences, capturing their attention and aiding in the understanding of historical phenomena. Visual and auditory teaching aids appeal to the senses and enliven the past, contributing to improved language comprehension and knowledge development. Audio resources like recordings or snippets assist students in developing pronunciation and listening abilities, while charts, flashcards, and other visual aids enhance vocabulary growth and understanding. Instructional tools also improve student engagement and effectiveness in English lessons, encouraging active participation and offering practical learning experiences. Overall, the effective use of teaching aids in English classes in Libya can create a stimulating and immersive learning environment, supporting students in their language acquisition journey. Despite these benefits, there is a common challenge in our schools regarding the use of teaching aids. English teachers often lack motivation or encouragement to incorporate them into their lessons. Motivation is considered a primary guideline in English teaching. The use of teaching aids faces obstacles, including insufficient knowledge among teachers about these aids and devices, as well as some schools lacking an appropriate environment for utilizing modern teaching aids and technologies. This paper aims to investigate the teaching aids used by English teachers, determining their impact on student engagement and participation, and exploring how specific teaching aids contribute to the learning process.

Aims of the Study:

This study endeavors to achieve the following objectives:

1-To explore the utilization of teaching aids by English teachers in primary schools and assess their proficiency in providing and creating suitable teaching aids.

2-To assess the availability of teaching aids in schools and examine their impact on the educational process.

3-To identify obstacles and challenges encountered by teachers in the effective use of teaching aids.

4-To offer recommendations and suggestions aimed at promoting the use, production, and development of teaching aids and techniques in primary schools in Nalut.

The Significance of the Study:

This study underscores the critical importance of integrating teaching aids into English lessons in primary schools and elucidates their positive impacts. Additionally, it addresses the obstacles and challenges faced by English teachers. The significance of this study is articulated as follows:

1-Given the dearth of prior studies and references on this topic, this research serves as a valuable reference for researchers interested in the subject. Utilizing a quantitative method, the study provides authentic data on the utilization and effectiveness of teaching aids in the teaching process, as well as the availability and impediments hindering their use.

2-The study offers an opportunity to familiarize teachers with the importance of incorporating teaching aids into the classroom, fostering a deeper understanding of their role.

3-Through its findings, the study sheds light on the obstacles and challenges faced by teachers in procuring and employing teaching aids, serving as a resource for administrators to address these issues.

4-This study contributes to enhancing teachers' motivation to improve and develop teaching aids, ultimately fostering increased student participation and interaction.

5-The study brings attention to curriculum designers, emphasizing the significance of incorporating teaching aids into the educational framework and discouraging their marginalization.

6-This study may prove beneficial in addressing the essential needs of primary schools in terms of teaching aids and modern technologies, ensuring they stay current with developments and modernization trends.

Study Terminology:

Teaching Aids:

Teaching aids are instructional devices designed to present units of knowledge through auditory, visual stimuli, or both, with the aim of facilitating the learning process. These aids serve to concretize presented knowledge, enhancing the learning experience by making it dynamic and essential. They function as supplementary tools for teachers and assist in

the comprehensive study of textbooks (Tiwari, 2008: 221). Barbara Matero provides a comprehensive definition, describing teaching aids as all means utilized for educational purposes. In essence, teaching aids encompass all the tools and resources employed by teachers to motivate pupils and enhance their interactivity, ultimately achieving the objectives of the teaching process.

English Language:

The English language holds a prominent position globally, ranking as the third most widely used language in the world. Additionally, it stands as the dominant language across various life domains. In our country, it is considered the second language after Arabic. Consequently, learning English is a crucial objective, contributing to knowledge transfer, relationship building, and facilitating communication among individuals worldwide. According to Park and Wee (2012), "The global spread of English involves the increasing adoption and appropriation of English among communities across the world, as well as the growing belief that English has become the language for global communication."

Teacher:

Traditionally, a teacher is the individual responsible for imparting knowledge, facilitating students' understanding, and simplifying information for them. However, in a broader sense, teachers are considered intellectual leaders who create opportunities for students to solidify and apply what they have learned in their lives
(Robert J. Havighurst, 2019). Procedurally, the researcher defines a teacher as someone responsible for directing the learning process and understanding the pupils and their needs.

Primary Schools:

Primary schools represent the initial phase of formal academic education, following kindergarten. During this stage, pupils spend six years establishing a strong educational foundation and refining early life skills. In this study, five primary schools in Nalut city serve as the defined sample: 17th February School, Nafoosa School, Al-Awael School, Iqraa School, and Shohadaa Nalut.

Study Limitations:

1-Objective Limits of the Study: The study is focused on the utilization of teaching aids in primary schools in Nalut.

2-Time Limits of the Study: The study is confined to the second semester of the academic year 2023/2024.

3-Geographical Limits of the Study: The study is restricted to five primary schools in

Nalut.

4-Human Limits of the Study: The study is centred on English teachers responsible for primary grades.

Study Problem:

The utilization of teaching aids is crucial in classrooms, representing a significant means of support, particularly in the context of the ongoing educational and technological developments. In the race to enhance educational methodologies, the primary question driving this study is:

To what extent do English teachers in primary schools rely on teaching aids to achieve the desired objectives of the learning process? This central question leads to several specific inquiries:

1-Are the currently employed teaching aids sufficient to meet the learners' needs, fostering enhanced interaction and understanding?

2-Do teachers possess the capability to produce and develop teaching aids, and is there sufficient support for the enhancement of their skills?

3-From the teacher's perspective, what difficulties and challenges do they encounter in the use of teaching aids, and how can these challenges be effectively addressed?

Review of the Related Studies:

Due to the importance of the study's topic, numerous studies have explored it. In this section, I am going to list studies related to the topic. Regarding the definition of teaching aids, each researcher defines it from their perspective. M. Alheela defines it as anything used in the educational process to help the learner achieve goals with a high degree of mastery; it encompasses all equipment, materials, and tools used by the teacher to transmit the lesson's content to a group of students inside or outside the classroom (M. Alheela, 2004). Tiwari, on the

other hand, defines teaching aids as devices presenting units of knowledge

through auditory or visual stimuli or both with the aim of aiding learning. They concretize the knowledge to be presented and help make the learning experience dynamic and vital. They serve as supplements to the teacher's work and aid in the study of textbooks (Tiwari, 2008). Alhassein, in his study, states that teaching aids in the classroom play an essential role in teaching language; they can be a valuable source of help for both the teacher and the learner. Simply put, bulletins, cards, and even posters can showcase certain features of the language and its homeland (Alhssein S. Mohsen, 2014). In addition, Demirel, in his study, points out that motivation is one of the primary guidelines in English teaching (Demirel, 2007). He explains that to keep students motivated in English classes, the teacher can use teaching aids to engage them and achieve the lesson's goals. This process requires students to be in small groups of 15–20 students each so that the teacher can allocate time for each of them. If the number of students is higher than 15–20, the time per student will be reduced. Another tool that has come into use is the interactive board, connected to a smart board, allowing the teacher to present the lesson on that board (A. S. Mohsen, 2014). According to research conducted by Awwad (2018), teaching aids can attract students' attention; 61% of respondents (students) believed that using instructional aids may capture their attention. Furthermore, 74% of respondents gave a positive response, stating that employing instructional aids in the classroom can help students remember the material better. Additionally, 80% of respondents agree that instructional tools can facilitate their understanding of a new language. On the other hand, some studies highlight the poor use of teaching aids in classes, emphasizing the need to pay attention to the provision of aids. Moreover, officials must pay attention to teachers by providing training courses on teaching aid and technique use. Emhamed and Krishnan (2011) indicate that if tools like overhead projectors are unavailable in classrooms, teaching aid adoption is not encouraged. Despite their incompetence, teachers stated that they do not feel stressed; in contrast, they feel comfortable using technology to find and present interesting and enjoyable audio-visual materials (M. Sahin & S. Secer, 2009). Furthermore, teachers lack the ability to operate this equipment. Additionally, teachers haven't been trained in the use of sophisticated

technology, inhibiting their use (M. Alkawash, 2020). Mohsen also notes that the use of computers in the classroom requires that the teacher should be qualified in using a computer, meaning they must have the required knowledge of computers (A. Mohsen, 2014). Technical constraints in the learning environment refer to challenges in using video due to unreliable internet access, low computer capacity, and poor maintenance of other technical facilities (M. Sahin & S. Secer, 2019).

Research Hypotheses:

1-Teaching aids play an effective role in enhancing the educational process.

2-Teaching aids contribute to the accomplishment of teaching objectives as planned by the teacher.

3-Investigate the availability of teaching aids in primary schools.

Study Methodology:

The study employed a descriptive and analytical approach, as it is deemed most suitable for investigating a real phenomenon. This approach involves the collection of materials, accurate description, and the expression of the phenomenon in quantitative or qualitative terms.

Study Population:

The study population comprised teachers from 1st grade to 4th grade in five primary schools in Nalut, namely 17th February, Nafusa, Awael, Iqraa, and Shohadaa Nalut. The total number of teachers was twenty-five. Additionally, questionnaires were sent via messenger to teachers from other schools, but the level of interaction was poor.

Variables of Study:

Independent Variables:

Using teaching aids in the teaching process.

Dependent Variables:

English language teaching.

Study Instrument:

This study employs the quantitative method, suitable for collecting data from samples, particularly when obtaining the opinions of those samples is crucial. The questionnaire was developed using Microsoft Forms and was distributed in both hard copy (28 copies) and through social media. Unfortunately, the interaction with the online questionnaire was limited.

The questionnaire is structured with an introduction to provide clarity on its purpose, followed by information about the instructor (e.g., years of experience and academic qualifications). The main components of the questionnaire include the availability of teaching aids in primary schools, along with the availability of periodic maintenance. Additionally, it explores the level of teacher interest in using teaching aids and their ability to produce and develop them. The questionnaire also examines disparities in comprehension and understanding observed in students when their teacher employs teaching aids versus when they do not, as well as challenges and obstacles that instructors face in utilizing teaching aids.

Data Analysis & Results:

Table (1): **Results of the questions relating to the personal data of the study sample individuals.**

Variables	Variable Levels	Quantity	Percentage
Gender	Female	28	100%
	Male	-	
Qualification	Bachelor	26	92%
	Other	2	8%
Study specialization	English	28	100%
	Other	-	-
Years of Experience	Less than 5 years	7	25%
	Between 5- 10 years	14	50%
	Between 10- 20 years	7	25%
	More than 20 years	-	0%
Student Numbers	Less than 20	6	21%
	Between 20-30	17	60%
	More than 30	5	17.8%

The last table shows that there are no male teachers teach English in primary schools, whereas the percentage is 100% of female teachers, and the most of the study sample individuals have Bachelor degree in the rate of 92%; and 100% of them their study specialization is English (I deliberately asked about specialization, because in some schools the

teaching subjects are given to teachers who have another speciality). As for years of experience, the table shows that the number of teachers whose years of teaching experience ranged less than 5 years was 7 individuals at rate of 25%, and between 5 and 10 was 14 at rate of 50% of the sample individuals. While the percentage of those whose years of experience exceeded ten years was about 25% and at rate of 0% of the sample individuals whose years of teaching experience was more than 20 years. In addition to that, table (1) illustrates the percentage of student numbers in the class, whereas the number of teachers whose student numbers less than 20 students were 6 of sample individuals in rate of 21%, and 60% of teachers have from 20-30 students. while the percentage of sample individuals whose student numbers in the class exceeded 30 was 17%.The answers of teachers relating to these questions were analysed, as well as the percentage of every section was calculated.

Table 2: Results of the questions relating to teaching aids importance:

Section	Agree	Neutral	Disagree
9. From your perspective do you see that teaching aids are important for improving educational process.	93%	0%	7%
10.I use them continuously.	64%	36%	0%
21. Teaching aids make the lesson more effective.	82%	14%	4%
22. Using teaching aids motivate students, enhance their comprehensive, and overcomes individual learning differences.	71%	29%	0%
23. It strengthens the relationship between teacher and pupils, as well as between pupils and their colleague.	61%	32%	7%
24. Teaching aid makes the educational process difficult and confuse students.	18%	14%	68%

The results above in table 2 show that most of English teachers believe in the importance of teaching aids to make educational process easy and flexible.

Table3: Results of the questions which show teacher interested in developing their teaching skills.

Section	Always	Very frequent	Rarely	Never
8.Are you interested in activities & courses to develop your teaching skills.	0%	39%	61%	0%
13. I try to develop myself by finding out updates and changes in the teaching aids and educational technology field.	43%	39%	11%	7%

The responses of English teachers about the developing their educational skills was good, they are often interested in developing their skills in English teaching and are keeping updated in teaching aids` field.

Table 4: Results of the questions which shows the difficulties due to using teaching aids.

Section	Agree	Neutral	Disagree
15.Lack of financial support prevent from being provided	46%	39%	14%
18. Class time is fair to use teaching aids	54%	14%	32%
19. The large number of pupils in classrooms leads to lack of using teaching aids	68%	18%	14%

The table above shows the rate of difficulties which face teachers when they use teaching aids.

Table 5: Results of the questions that show if teachers provide teaching aids by their selves.

Section	Always	Very often	Sometimes
11. I rely on myself to provide and prepare teaching aids.	57%	18%	25%
12. I use technical means such as computers and mobile phone applications as an important teaching aid	75%	14%	11%

The table illustrates English teachers' responses about providing teaching aids by their selves. As a result, more than a half of English teachers always provide teaching aids by their selves.

Table 6: Results of the questions that illustrate whether there is support for teachers regarding to teaching aids.

Section	Agree	Neutral	Disagree
16. Schools provide modern teaching aids and technologies, as well as maintain them periodically.	50%	18%	32%
20. The Ministry of Education provides courses and workshops on how to produce, develop, and use teaching aids.	14%	50%	36%

The table shows if the schools or educational officials provide financial support, whereas the English teachers' responses about the issue were: half of English teachers agree that there is not any support in regard to teaching aids providing.

In a question the researcher asked them to mention teaching aids that you were provided by yourself?

They mention: Drawing on board, flash cards, whiteboard & marker, pictures, short films, play dough, audio tracks by using mobile phone and portable speakers, CD player, role play, magnetic numbers and letters,

digital storytelling and cards**.** On other hand*, the questionnaire enquired about teaching aids that available in their schools?* The majority of them mentioned that teaching aids providing is lack and poor.

Recommendations:

Given the context and results of the study, the following recommendations are made:

Enhance the utilization of teaching aids by prioritizing them and providing schools with educational and technical equipment. Additionally, offer continuous training and development opportunities for teachers regarding the use of modern and effective teaching aids.

1-Enhance the utilization of teaching aids by prioritizing them and providing schools with educational and technical equipment. Additionally, offer continuous training and development opportunities for teachers regarding the use of modern and effective teaching aids.

2-Encourage the use of teaching aids to improve pupils' interaction and participation throughout the teaching process. The results indicate an increase in the level of interaction and participation when teachers incorporate teaching aids.

3-Provide support and encouragement for teachers to adopt new teaching aids by offering workshops and training courses to develop their skills and keep them updated on changes and innovations.

4-Recognize that teaching aids contribute to increased pupil motivation to learn, enhance comprehension, and diminish individual differences. Therefore, the study recommends the continuous use of teaching aids to enhance pupils' abilities.

5-Based on the study and its results, there is an encouragement for further research on this topic to illuminate the role of teaching aids and understand their impact and importance in the education process.

Conclusion:

Teaching aids are valuable tools to enhance the learning experience in the classroom. When used effectively, teaching aids can help improve students' engagement, understanding, and comprehension of the material**.** This study examined English language teachers' use of teaching aids, and how they are considered important and vital by making educational process easy and flexible. Actually, the researcher depended on research

tools to collect data, a questionnaire was distributed to English language teachers in primary schools in Nalut to shed light on their opinions, issues and difficulties they face regarding to this issue, and what types of teaching aids are used.

Despite of the lack of teaching aids in schools, but the results show how they are significant to improve the educational process by making lessons clearer, attracting pupils' attention and overcome individual differences. Because of lack of ministry supporting, teachers answered that they depend on their selves to provide teaching aids. Moreover, they asked to provide schools by modern and up to date devices and technological aids to keep in pace the scientific development. It should be highlighted, nevertheless, that the choice of instructional aids as well as their proper integration and application within the larger lesson plan determine how effective they are.

In summary, if teaching aids are used wisely and are carefully integrated into the curriculum in accordance with the intended learning outcomes, they can greatly enhance both teaching and learning.

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