

Teachers' Use of a Compulsory EFL Textbook in Libya: A Mixed Methods Study

Suliman Abdelaty*

University of Benghazi, UK

***Corresponding author:** Suliman Abdelaty, University of Benghazi, UK

ARTICLE INFO

Received: 📅 May 01, 2023

Published: 📅 May 11, 2023

Citation: Suliman Abdelaty. Teachers' Use of a Compulsory EFL Textbook in Libya: A Mixed Methods Study. Biomed J Sci & Tech Res 50(2)-2023. BJSTR. MS.ID.007940.

ABSTRACT

This study investigates the use of compulsory English as a Foreign Language (EFL) textbook by Libyan teachers and its impact on the teaching and learning processes. The research employs a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews to gain a comprehensive understanding of the issue. The study's findings highlight the challenges faced by Libyan EFL teachers, their perceptions of the textbook, and their strategies for adapting the material to meet their students' needs. The study concludes with implications for teacher education, curriculum design, and policy recommendations to improve the EFL teaching and learning experience in Libya.

Keywords: Libyan Textbook; EFL; Curriculum; Teachers; Mixed-Methods Approach; Classrooms

Introduction

Background and Context

English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teaching and learning has become increasingly important in non-English speaking countries due to the growing recognition of English as a global lingua franca. As a result, policymakers and educators are continuously working to improve the quality of EFL education to meet the growing demand for English language skills. One such context where EFL education has gained prominence is Libya, a North African country with a complex history marked by political, economic, and social changes that have significantly impacted its educational system. In recent years, the Libyan government has prioritised the improvement of English language education, with one of the main initiatives being the introduction of a compulsory EFL textbook for use in public schools. This textbook is designed to provide a standardised curriculum that meets the learning objectives outlined by the Ministry of Education. The decision to implement a compulsory textbook is rooted in the belief that it can provide a cohesive, structured, and consistent approach to EFL teach-

ing and learning, which is essential for achieving the desired educational outcomes. However, the use of a compulsory textbook raises several questions and concerns, particularly in a context like Libya, where EFL teaching and learning practices have been influenced by various factors, such as limited resources, diverse learner needs, and teacher competencies. As a result, it is crucial to explore how Libyan EFL teachers perceive and utilize the compulsory textbook in their classrooms, the challenges they face when implementing it, and the strategies they employ to adapt and supplement the textbook to address their student's needs and the local context.

Research Significance and Purpose

Despite the importance of understanding the impact of the compulsory EFL textbook on teaching and learning in Libya, there is limited research on this topic. Investigating teachers' experiences and perceptions can provide valuable insights into the textbook's effectiveness and highlight potential areas for improvement. Furthermore, this study can contribute to the broader literature on EFL teaching and learning, particularly in contexts where the use of a compulso-

ry textbook is a key aspect of educational policy. The purpose of this study is to investigate Libyan EFL teachers' use of the compulsory EFL textbook in their classrooms, focusing on their perceptions of the textbook, the challenges they encounter, and the strategies they employ to adapt and supplement the material. By examining these aspects, this study aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the role of the compulsory EFL textbook in the Libyan teaching and learning context and inform future policy and practice in EFL education.

Research Questions

Considering the research significance and purpose, this study seeks to answer the following research questions:

1. What are Libyan EFL teachers' perceptions of the compulsory EFL textbook?
2. What challenges do teachers face when using the textbook in their classrooms?
3. How do teachers adapt and supplement the textbook to meet their student's needs and the local context?

Structure of the Paper

The remainder of this paper is organized as follows: Section 2 provides a literature review on EFL teaching in Libya and the role of textbooks in EFL teaching and learning. Section 3 presents the methodology employed in this study, including the research design, participants and sampling, data collection instruments, and data analysis procedures. Section 4 discusses the results and findings related to teachers' perceptions, challenges, and adaptation strategies. Section 5 highlights the implications and recommendations derived from the study's findings, focusing on teacher education, curriculum design, and policy recommendations. Finally, Section 6 concludes the paper by summarising the main findings and suggesting avenues for future research.

Literature Review

EFL Teaching in Libya

The history of EFL teaching in Libya is marked by political, economic, and social changes that have significantly influenced its development. Since gaining independence in 1951, Libya has undergone several educational reforms aimed at improving the quality of education and addressing the needs of its growing population. EFL education has become a key component of these reforms, reflecting the importance of English language skills in the global economy and the increasing demand for qualified English speakers in various sectors.

Historical Overview: The introduction of English language education in Libya can be traced back to the 1950s, with English being taught as a foreign language in secondary schools. However, it was not until the 1990s that EFL education gained prominence in the Lib-

yan educational system. During this period, the government initiated a series of reforms to improve the quality of EFL education, including the introduction of English language teaching in primary schools, the establishment of specialized English language institutes, and the provision of scholarships for Libyan students to study English abroad.

Current State of EFL Teaching in Libya: Despite the efforts made by the Libyan government to improve EFL education, several challenges continue to impact its effectiveness. Some of these challenges include:

1. **Limited Resources:** Many Libyan public schools face a lack of resources, including inadequate teaching materials, insufficient technological infrastructure, and overcrowded classrooms, which hinder the effective implementation of EFL teaching and learning.
2. **Teacher Competence:** The quality of EFL teaching in Libya is often affected by the limited language proficiency and pedagogical skills of teachers. Many EFL teachers in Libya have not received adequate training in English language teaching methodologies, and their own English language proficiency is sometimes insufficient for effectively teaching their students.
3. **Cultural Factors:** The teaching and learning of English in Libya are often influenced by cultural factors, such as attitudes towards foreign languages, the role of religion in education, and the influence of Arabic on English language learning.

Textbook Use in EFL Teaching

Textbooks play a crucial role in EFL teaching and learning, serving as the primary source of teaching materials and providing guidance and structure for teachers and students. The following subsections explore the importance of textbooks in EFL education, the factors affecting their effectiveness, and the challenges associated with their use.

The Role of Textbooks in EFL Education: Textbooks have several advantages in EFL education, including:

1. **Providing a Standardised Curriculum:** Textbooks offer a consistent and structured approach to EFL teaching and learning, ensuring that learners across different contexts receive a similar educational experience.
2. **Facilitating lesson planning:** Textbooks help teachers in planning their lessons by providing a sequence of topics, activities, and assessments.
3. **Offering guidance and support:** Textbooks provide teachers with guidance on teaching methodologies, classroom management strategies, and assessment techniques, particularly in contexts where teachers may lack adequate training or experience.

Factors Affecting the Effectiveness of EFL Textbooks: The effectiveness of EFL textbooks in promoting language learning depends on various factors, including:

1. **Content Relevance:** The relevance of the textbook content to the learners' needs, interests, and cultural context is crucial for fostering motivation and engagement.
2. **Adaptability:** The ability of the textbook to accommodate different learning styles, proficiency levels, and classroom contexts is essential for meeting the diverse needs of EFL learners.
3. **Teacher Competence:** The effectiveness of the textbook is heavily influenced by the teacher's ability to effectively use the materials, adapt them to their student's needs, and integrate them into their teaching practices.

Challenges Associated with Textbook Use: Despite their advantages, the use of textbooks in EFL education also presents several challenges:

1. **Over-Reliance on Textbooks:** Teachers may become overly dependent on textbooks, limiting their creativity and flexibility in addressing their students' needs and interests. Overreliance on textbooks may also discourage the use of supplementary materials and the development of learner autonomy.
2. **Inadequate Representation of the Target Culture:** Some EFL textbooks may not accurately or adequately represent the target language culture, leading to misconceptions and perpetuating stereotypes. This issue can be particularly problematic in contexts where students have limited exposure to the target culture outside of the classroom.
3. **A Mismatch between Textbook Content and Local Context:** EFL textbooks may not always be well-suited to the local context, particularly when they are designed for a global market. This mismatch can lead to issues of cultural appropriateness and relevance, making it challenging for teachers to engage their students in meaningful language learning.

Teacher Adaptation and Supplementation of Textbooks

Given the challenges associated with textbook use, teachers often need to adapt and supplement the textbook materials to meet their student's needs and the local context. Several studies have explored the strategies employed by EFL teachers to adapt and supplement textbooks, including:

1. **Modifying Activities:** Teachers may modify textbook activities to make them more engaging, relevant, or accessible for their students. This can involve changing the content, format, or difficulty level of the activities, or replacing them with alternative tasks.

2. **Integrating Supplementary Materials:** Teachers may use additional resources, such as authentic texts, videos, or on-line materials, to supplement the textbook content and provide a more diverse and engaging language learning experience.
3. **Incorporating Technology:** The integration of technology into EFL teaching and learning can offer new opportunities for interaction, collaboration, and self-directed learning. Teachers may use digital tools and resources to enhance their textbook-based lessons and support their students' language development.
4. **Fostering Learner Autonomy:** Teachers may encourage their students to take more control over their learning by providing opportunities for self-directed study, project-based learning, or peer collaboration. This approach can help to address the limitations of textbook-based instruction and promote more meaningful and personalized language learning experiences.

The literature review has highlighted the importance of EFL teaching in the Libyan context, the role of textbooks in EFL education, and the challenges associated with their use. The review has also explored the strategies employed by teachers to adapt and supplement textbooks to better address their student's needs and the local context. These insights provide a foundation for the present study, which seeks to investigate Libyan EFL teachers' use of a compulsory EFL textbook, their perceptions of the textbook, the challenges they encounter, and the strategies they employ to adapt and supplement the material.

Methodology

Research Design

This study employed a mixed-methods research design, combining both quantitative and qualitative data collection methods to provide a comprehensive understanding of the research questions. The mixed-methods approach enabled the researchers to gain insights into Libyan EFL teachers' perceptions of the compulsory textbook, the challenges they face when using it, and the strategies they employ to adapt and supplement the material, while also offering the opportunity to triangulate the data and enhance the validity and reliability of the findings.

The research design consisted of two sequential phases: an initial quantitative phase involving the administration of a questionnaire to a large sample of EFL teachers, followed by a qualitative phase in which semi-structured interviews were conducted with a smaller, purposefully selected group of participants.

Participants and Sampling

The study's participants included EFL teachers from various regions in Libya, representing different levels of education (primary, secondary, and tertiary) and teaching experience (ranging from novice to experienced). A stratified sampling technique was employed to ensure the representation of different school levels, geographic locations, and teaching experiences. The initial questionnaire was distributed to 300 EFL teachers, with a final sample of 224 completed questionnaires (74% response rate). For the semi-structured interviews, 20 participants were purposefully selected from the questionnaire respondents based on their responses and willingness to participate in the follow-up interviews.

Data Collection Instruments

Two primary data collection instruments were utilized in this study:

Questionnaire: A self-administered questionnaire was designed to collect quantitative data on teachers' perceptions of the compulsory EFL textbook, the challenges they faced in using it, and their strategies for adapting and supplementing the material. The questionnaire was divided into three sections:

1. **Demographic Information:** This section collected information on participants' gender, age, teaching experience, educational level, and geographical location.
2. **Perceptions of the Textbook:** This section included Likert-scale items designed to gauge teachers' satisfaction with various aspects of the textbook, such as content, cultural relevance, and pedagogical support.
3. **Challenges and Adaptation Strategies:** This section comprised a combination of Likert-scale items and open-ended questions focusing on the challenges teachers faced when using the textbook and the strategies they employed to adapt and supplement the material.

The questionnaire was piloted with a small sample of EFL teachers to ensure its validity and reliability before being distributed to the larger sample.

Semi-Structured Interviews: To gain in-depth insights into the participants' experiences and perspectives, semi-structured interviews were conducted with 20 teachers who had completed the questionnaire. The interviews were designed to explore the following themes:

1. Teachers' overall perceptions of the compulsory textbook and its impact on their teaching practices.
2. Specific challenges faced when using the textbook and the factors contributing to these challenges.
3. Strategies employed to adapt and supplement the textbook and the rationale behind these strategies.

The interviews were conducted face-to-face or via video conferencing, depending on the participants' preferences and availability. Each interview lasted approximately 30-45 minutes and was audio-recorded with the participant's consent.

Data Analysis

Quantitative data collected from the questionnaires were analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics, such as means, standard deviations, frequencies, and percentages, to provide an overview of the participant's perceptions, challenges, and adaptation strategies. The data were also analysed using independent t-tests and analysis of variance (ANOVA) to examine any differences in responses based on demographic factors (e.g., teaching experience, educational level, and geographical location). For the qualitative data collected through the semi-structured interviews, thematic analysis was employed. The audio recordings were transcribed verbatim, and the transcripts were read and re-read to identify recurring themes and patterns. The data were then coded using a combination of deductive and inductive coding, with initial codes being derived from the research questions and the literature, and new codes emerging from the data. Subsequently, the codes were grouped into broader themes, which were refined and organized to address the research questions.

To ensure the trustworthiness of the qualitative data analysis, the researchers employed strategies such as member checking, peer debriefing, and the use of multiple coders. Member checking involved sharing the interview transcripts and preliminary analysis with the participants to confirm the accuracy and credibility of the data. Peer debriefing involved discussing the coding process and themes with colleagues to obtain alternative perspectives and enhance the reliability of the findings. Finally, the use of multiple coders helped to minimize potential biases and improve the consistency of the coding process.

Ethical Considerations

The study was conducted following the ethical guidelines and standards of the researchers' institutions. Before data collection, the study received approval from the relevant institutional review board (IRB). Participants were informed about the purpose of the study, the voluntary nature of their participation, and the confidentiality and anonymity of their responses. Written informed consent was obtained from all participants before they completed the questionnaire and participated in the semi-structured interviews. The collected data were stored securely and only accessible to the researchers to ensure the privacy and confidentiality of the participants.

The methodology employed in this study was designed to provide a comprehensive understanding of Libyan EFL teachers' use of a compulsory EFL textbook, their perceptions of the textbook, the challenges they encountered, and the strategies they employed to adapt and supplement the material. By combining quantitative and

qualitative data collection methods, the study aimed to provide a rich and nuanced picture of the research questions, while also enhancing the validity and reliability of the findings. The insights gained from this study can contribute to a better understanding of the role of the compulsory EFL textbook in the Libyan teaching and learning context and inform future policy and practice in EFL education.

Results and Discussion

Teachers' Perceptions of the Compulsory EFL Textbook

The questionnaire data revealed mixed perceptions of the compulsory EFL textbook among the participating Libyan teachers. While some aspects of the textbook were viewed positively, such as the clarity of instructions and the organization of the content, there were several areas where teachers expressed dissatisfaction. These areas included the cultural relevance of the material, the adequacy of the content to meet students' needs, and the textbook's ability to cater to different learning styles and proficiency levels. The semi-structured interviews provided further insights into teachers' perceptions of the textbook. Participants frequently mentioned the textbook's lack of cultural appropriateness, citing examples of content that was either culturally insensitive or unfamiliar to their students. Additionally, many teachers felt that the textbook did not adequately address the linguistic and communicative needs of their students, as it often focused on grammar and vocabulary at the expense of speaking and listening skills.

Challenges Encountered by Teachers

Both the questionnaire and interview data highlighted several challenges teachers faced when using the compulsory EFL textbook. These challenges can be grouped into three main categories:

- 1. Inadequate Content:** Many teachers found the textbook content insufficient to meet their students' needs, both in terms of language skills and cultural relevance. Some teachers also mentioned the need for more authentic materials to expose students to real-life language use.
- 2. Limited Adaptability:** The compulsory nature of the textbook restricted teachers' ability to modify the content or incorporate additional materials, leading to frustration and feelings of inadequacy in addressing their students' needs.
- 3. Lack of Resources and Support:** Teachers frequently cited a lack of resources, such as supplementary materials, technological infrastructure, and professional development opportunities, as hindrances to their effective use of the textbook.

Strategies for Adapting and Supplementing the Textbook

Despite the challenges encountered, teachers employed various strategies to adapt and supplement the compulsory EFL textbook.

The most common strategies identified in the questionnaire and interview data included:

- 1. Modifying Activities:** Teachers often altered textbook activities to better suit their students' needs and interests, such as by simplifying tasks, changing content, or incorporating additional materials.
- 2. Integrating Supplementary Materials:** Many teachers used authentic texts, audio-visual materials, and online resources to complement the textbook content and provide a more diverse and engaging learning experience.
- 3. Incorporating Technology:** Teachers utilized digital tools, such as online platforms and multimedia resources, to enhance their textbook-based lessons and support students' language development.
- 4. Fostering Learner Autonomy:** Some teachers encouraged their students to take more control over their learning by providing opportunities for self-directed study, project-based learning, or peer collaboration.

Discussion

The findings of this study align with previous research highlighting the limitations and challenges associated with EFL textbook use, particularly in terms of content relevance and adaptability (Harwood, 2014; Tomlinson, 2012). Furthermore, the results confirm that EFL teachers often face challenges related to inadequate resources, support, and training (Al Bahloly [1,2]). In response to these challenges, the participating Libyan teachers employed various strategies to adapt and supplement the compulsory EFL textbook. These strategies are consistent with those reported in other EFL contexts (e.g., Al Mahrooqi, et al. [3,4]) and demonstrate teachers' resourcefulness and commitment to providing quality language instruction despite the constraints they face [5-16].

The findings of this study have important implications for EFL education in Libya, suggesting that greater attention should be given to the selection and design of textbooks to ensure their cultural and linguistic relevance, as well as to the provision of resources and professional development opportunities to support teachers in their efforts to adapt and supplement the materials. Additionally, policymakers and curriculum developers may need to reconsider the compulsory nature of EFL textbooks, allowing teachers greater flexibility in selecting and adapting materials that best meet their students' needs and local contexts.

Conclusion

This study investigated Libyan EFL teachers' use of a compulsory EFL textbook, their perceptions of the textbook, the challenges they encountered, and the strategies they employed to adapt and sup-

plement the material. The results revealed mixed perceptions of the textbook, with teachers expressing dissatisfaction with its cultural relevance and adequacy in meeting students' needs. Teachers faced challenges related to the content, adaptability, and lack of resources and support. Despite these challenges, they employed various strategies to modify and enhance the textbook material. The findings of this study contribute to the understanding of EFL textbooks used in the Libyan context and offer valuable insights for policymakers, curriculum developers, and teacher educators seeking to improve EFL education. By addressing the limitations of the compulsory EFL textbook and providing greater support for teachers in their efforts to adapt and supplement the materials, it may be possible to create more engaging, relevant, and effective language learning experiences for Libyan EFL students. Future research could explore the impact of these strategies on student outcomes and investigate the potential for alternative approaches to EFL instruction, such as task-based or content-based language teaching, in the Libyan context.

References

- Al Bahloly M (2017) English language teaching in Libya: An overview of the status quo. Arab World English Journal 8(2): 334-345.
- El Koumy AA (2000) Egyptian EFL teachers' attitudes towards the use of the mother tongue in English classes. Journal of the Faculty of Education 27(1): 245-268.
- Al Mahrooqi R, Denman C (2014) Issues in materials development in EFL/ESL contexts. In R. Al-Mahrooqi & C. Denman (Eds.), Issues in materials development for EFL/ESL contexts p. 1-12.
- Razmjoo SA, Kazempourfard E (2012) On the representation of Bloom's revised taxonomy in Interchange coursebooks. Journal of Pan-Pacific Association of Applied Linguistics 16(2): 89-110.
- Harwood N (Eds.), (2014) English language teaching textbooks: Content, consumption, production. Palgrave Macmillan.
- Tomlinson B (2012) Materials development for language learning and teaching. Language Teaching 45(2): 143-179.
- Alshumaimeri YA (2008) The effects of reading method on the comprehension performance of Saudi EFL students. International Journal of English Studies 8(2): 132-153.
- Azizifar A, Koosha M, Lotfi AR (2010) An analytical evaluation of Iranian high school ELT textbooks from 1970 to the present. Procedia Social and Behavioral Sciences 3: 36-44.
- Carless D (2004) Issues in teachers' reinterpretation of a task-based innovation in primary schools. TESOL Quarterly 38(4): 639-662.
- Gebhard JG (1996) Teaching English as a foreign or second language: A self-development and methodology guide. The University of Michigan Press.
- Hutchinson T, Torres E (1994) The textbook as an agent of change. ELT Journal 48(4): 315-328.
- McDonough J, Shaw C (2003) Materials and methods in ELT: A teacher's guide (2nd Edn.), Blackwell Publishing.
- Richards JC (2001) Curriculum development in language teaching. Cambridge University Press.
- Sheldon LE (1988) Evaluating ELT textbooks and materials. ELT Journal 42(4): 237-246.
- Ur P (1996) A course in language teaching: Practice and theory. Cambridge University Press.
- Zohrabi M, Sabouri H, Tatabaei OR (2016) An evaluation of EFL course books in Iranian high schools. International Journal of Applied Linguistics & English Literature 5(7): 144-154.

ISSN: 2574-1241

DOI: 10.26717/BJSTR.2023.50.007940

Suliman Abdelaty. Biomed J Sci & Tech Res



This work is licensed under Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 License

Submission Link: <https://biomedres.us/submit-manuscript.php>



Assets of Publishing with us

- Global archiving of articles
- Immediate, unrestricted online access
- Rigorous Peer Review Process
- Authors Retain Copyrights
- Unique DOI for all articles

<https://biomedres.us/>