

# Exploring English Language Teachers' Perception of Classroom Management at Secondary Schools in Libya

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**Abstract:** Classroom management is an important aspect of teaching-learning process. Management is a procedure of integrating resources and responsibilities towards the accomplishment of stated goals. The study was conducted to determine the teachers' level of awareness regarding classroom management based on their own perception. Tools used in the study were questionnaires and teachers' interview. Participants of the study consists of 25 teachers of English in four secondary schools in Misrata. Findings showed that teachers of English are to some extent aware to some qualities and strategies needed for maintaining well-managed classrooms. It was concluded that classroom environment was gradually satisfactory to those teachers in spite of the fact that they are not fully utilizing the available resources in their classrooms. It was recommended that there is a need for empowerment of teachers for the management of their classrooms which built on competency rather than authority. The study also recommended that a democratic environment may be encouraged in the classroom as it has an important impact on teaching-learning process.

**Keywords:** Classroom management, English, study, teaching-learning process, secondary schools in Misrata.

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## I. INTRODUCTION

Teachers are appreciated to be professionally efficient classroom managers in order to create productive classrooms and achieve positive educational outcomes. The management of the classroom is usually focused towards the teacher's actions, and how these contribute towards helping the students willingly and freely participate in class discussion. However, the absence of experience and professional development in classroom organisation and behaviour management significantly reduces the efficiency of many teachers.

In Libya, there is a great tendency for such problems to be faced by secondary school teachers of English. This poses a challenge for those teachers to implement different techniques and strategies in order to effectively manage their classrooms, and to prevent problems from occurring by nipping misbehaviour in the bud.

## II. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The most challenging aspect of teachers' work is developing and maintaining a well-managed classroom. This challenge has led us to conduct a study exploring a variety of techniques and strategies Libyan secondary school teachers of English could utilize to improve their professional efficiency in managing their classrooms; also to provide recommendations related to teacher quality, proficiency and effectiveness, so teachers can work in practical ways towards consistent, positive and purposeful management and organisation in their classrooms.

One limitation of this work is that the obtained findings are not consistent due to the fact that the participants were all females, and the study may not show the same results with different batch of teachers, different schools, and different cities.

In addition, the results of this paper are not reliable determiner of the participants' level of awareness of the effective classroom management styles, since the study focuses on their own perception; as well as the study was a self-report questionnaire, so there was no way of checking whether teachers actually practised what they had espoused.

### III. THE LITERATURE REVIEW

Alberto and Troutman (1986) cited in Oliver and Reschly (2007: 2) defines classroom management as 'The teacher's ability to cooperatively manage time, space, resources, student roles and behaviour to provide a climate that encourages learning'. Crops (2008: 6) sees that 'Classroom management refers to teachers' behaviours that facilitate learning. A well-managed classroom increases learning because students spend more time on tasks'.

Nasey (2012: 6) points out that 'Classroom management refers to the actions of the teacher to ensure that things get done. It has to do with rules, routines, managing instruction, organizing learning materials and activities'. Froyen and Iverson (1999), cited in Net 1: 230) define classroom management as:

*School and classroom management aim at encouraging and establishing students' self-control through a process of prompting positive student achievement and behaviour. Thus, academic achievement, teacher efficacy, and teacher and student behaviour are directly linked with the concept of school and classroom management.*

### IV. SIGNIFICANCE OF EFFECTIVE CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT

Yarbrough (Net 1: 1) shares the same view with Rogers (2005: 5) in that, effective classroom management is essential to the smooth running of a school and in the creation of an environment where the learning is the focus and everyone's right and responsibilities are addressed. In order to achieve positive educational outcomes, the teacher's ability to organize the classroom and manage behaviour of the students is not only the required aspect; however, it plays an important role to create fruitful learning environment. Oliver and Reschly (2007: 1) state that: 'Highly effective instruction reduces, but does not eliminate, classroom behaviour problems'.

Crops (2008: 7) demonstrates that in a well-managed classroom, students are deeply involved with their work. The climate of the classroom is work-oriented, but relaxed and pleasant. The teacher is in charge able to establish an excellent professional relationships with students and cooperative as well. Therefore, the learners are expected to succeed due to the clear instructions and fruitful learning environment.

### V. DATA ANALYSIS

This paper has been conducted on (25) twenty-five teachers of English in four secondary schools in Misrata. Selection of teachers and schools were based on random cluster procedure. These twenty-five teachers were all females from different secondary schools despite the fact that others refused to participate when they were asked to. This research was carried out to determine the teacher's awareness of effective classroom management and to observe the different techniques used by Libyan secondary school teachers of English.

For this research to be both reliable and valid, the questionnaire tool was used to serve the purpose of the study. Data for this research was collected through teachers' questionnaires which kept in view all the important aspects of classroom management at the secondary level. It was made up of twenty-seven items divided into two types of questions: twelve items were answered in (always, often, sometimes, never), the remaining fifteen items were answered in (Yes or No). The questionnaire covered the following aspects:

1. The physical conditions of classroom
2. The teachers' awareness of classroom management
3. The teachers' reaction and attitude towards student's challenging behaviour

The twenty-five teachers who have participated in the questionnaire were greatly appreciated and informed that they have the choice of not including their names and their answers will be kept in confidence.

Table (1) shows that the majority of teachers always come well-prepared to their classes and often finish their lessons within the class time. Physical condition of classrooms has been found satisfactory to those teachers and they sometimes

assign students to different seating arrangements. The data also reveals that the commonly used techniques in dealing with non-disruptive misbehaviour is tactical ignoring. Besides, half of the participants are always giving reminders to the disruptive students before reprimands. Regarding the skills of encouragement, motivation and reinforcement, teachers gave considerably varied answers which are relatively similar under the scales 'always, often, and sometimes', but no answer under the scale of 'never', only 8% for the question about providing rewards for learners.

The second table (2) demonstrates the fifteen items in the second question which are rated according to two main scales (Yes or No). Beside each item in the table, there is a number of answers (N<sub>o</sub>) and the percentage under each scale.

The collected data is classified and presented in the following two tables. Table (1) is concerned with the first questions which consist of twelve items having four points rating scale (always – 3, often – 2, sometimes – 1, never – 0) that enable the participants to answer in numbers representing the mentioned adverbs of frequency. The table shows the number of teachers who have chosen each adverb, next to is the calculated percentage for each item.

Table: 1

QUESTIONS	Answers							
	Always		Often		Sometimes		Never	
	N <sub>o</sub>	%	N <sub>o</sub>	%	N <sub>o</sub>	%	N <sub>o</sub>	%
1. Getting the class done on time schedule	7	28%	14	56%	4	16%	0	0%
2. Being well-prepared for your lessons	19	76%	5	20%	1	4%	0	0%
3. Using different seating arrangements	2	8%	6	24%	12	48%	5	20%
4. Engaging students in a variety of pair and group activities	4	16%	9	36%	11	44%	1	4%
5. Getting the students interact with each other besides the teacher	7	28%	13	52%	4	16%	1	4%
6. Maintaining students' interest and not giving them opportunities to be easily distracted	16	64%	6	24%	2	8%	1	4%
7. Having good relationships with students	15	60%	9	36%	1	4%	0	0%
8. Keeping the students motivated	11	44%	9	36%	5	20%	0	0%
9. Rewarding the students on their achievement	6	24%	11	44%	6	24%	2	8%
10. Ignoring misbehaviour that is non-disruptive to class	3	12%	12	48%	9	36%	1	4%
11. Giving reminders before reprimands	13	52%	7	28%	3	12%	2	8%
12. Reprimanding in a loud voice	8	32%	3	12%	9	36%	5	20%

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The second table (2) demonstrates the fifteen items in the second question which are rated according to two main scales (Yes or No). Beside each item in the table, there is a number of answers (N<sub>o</sub>) and the percentage under each scale.

Table: 2

S. N <sub>o</sub>	QUESTIONS	YES		NO	
		N <sub>o</sub>	%	N <sub>o</sub>	%
01	Do you have any well-prepared rules or principles on how you expect students to behave well in class?	18	72%	7	28%
02	Are the sitting positions of the students acceptable?	16	64%	9	36%
03	Do you keep an eye-contact with your students to maintain their attention?	25	100%	0	0%
04	Do you divide your attention among all the students in your class?	21	84%	4	16%
05	Are you aware of the effective use of your voice, volume and pitch?	24	96%	1	4%
06	Are you aware of the significance of humour in behaviour management?	18	72%	7	28%

07	Do you make use of gestures and facial expressions in managing the class?	20	80%	5	20%
08	Do you make use of students' first language while providing discipline?	16	64%	6	24%
09	Do you try to encourage students and raise confidence in them?	25	100%	0	0%
10	Do you praise your students for well-done work?	22	88%	3	12%
11	Do you have different strategies to deal with different types of students that will address their individualized needs?	18	72%	7	28%
12	Do you move properly and quickly in class to deal with any misbehaviour?	13	52%	1 2	48%
13	Do you have any disciplinary strategies in place to reinforce good behaviour or prevent bad one?	23	92%	2	8%
14	Do you have a specific technique that will help you to be aware of any potential problems in the classroom?	17	68%	8	32%
15	Have you ever experienced situations when you lose your patience of disruptive behaviour?	11	44%	1 4	56%

It is further revealed that the bulk of participants establish classroom rules, also they are using strategies for preventing misbehaviour before it occurs and for reinforcing good behaviour. The data also reveals that most teachers are generally aware of some needed skills and personal qualities, such as: paying equal attention, keeping eye-contact with students, encouraging and praising them, appropriately using the voice, body language, gestures and facial expressions. Besides, 56% of the teachers declare that they have not misbehaviour leads them to lose their patience. 64% of the participants manipulate the learners' first language while providing discipline.

## VI. RESEARCH FINDINGS

The reason why this study have been conducted is to examine the existing classroom management practices; identify the classroom management problems and to examine the teacher's competency and attitude regarding classroom management. It was hypothesized that if Libyan secondary school teachers of English become aware and creative in terms of managing their classrooms with the use of various ways and strategies, they will come up with these remarkable results. The investigations lead to the fact that Libyan secondary school teachers of English endeavour to do their best in order to create a pleasant, effective, work-oriented and well-managed classrooms in spite of the difficulties they encounter while managing these classrooms.

It is evident from the literature review that classroom activities, procedures, rules and routines, setting arrangements, as well as incorporating humour, encouragement, motivation and reinforcement are all significant techniques and skills, teachers need to master in order to establish a fruitful classroom atmosphere. Furthermore, it has been established that teachers need to use their knowledge and resources to make the lesson interesting and understandable for students; they need to manage class time, individual and group interactions, student behaviour, and classroom resources to create a supportive learning environment. This environment should produce creativity, corporation, individual growth, social development, student interaction and good classroom behaviour.

Results of this study indicate that Libyan secondary school teachers of English are to some extent aware of the needed personal qualities which could foster their proficiency and effectiveness; for example: confidence, respect, sensitivity, patience, flexibility, and proper use of the voice. However, they are not properly using some of those required qualities like body language, proximity, movement, gestures and facial expressions inside the classroom either in managing undesirable behaviours or in imparting the knowledge to the learners.

Research reveal that it is important to create a classroom environment that uses innovative material and knowledge in positive manner and is able to incorporate new advances in education and learning. But, it is found that teachers of English in Libyan secondary schools are not enhancing the teaching-learning process with technology, also they are not aware that technology could be used as a management tool inside the classrooms. In other words, the available resources in the school are not fully utilized by teachers, such as computers, projects, CD players, smart boards, etc.

As it has been previously highlighted, there is a need for leadership based on knowledge rather than on authority; and on preventing problems from occurring rather than punishing students after has occurred. Though, the results of the paper reveals that teachers of English in Libyan secondary schools are to some extent sticking to the traditional ways in dealing with misbehaviour, for instance: punishing students using verbal abuse, sending them out of the class 'time out', giving

extra work, and reducing their grades. It is, therefore, necessary to promote and maintain a balanced approach conducive to learning and growth. In addition, managing challenging behaviour calls for some management skills to be understood and developed by teachers in either preventing the troubles or solving these troubles as they occur during the lesson. The teacher should be a role model for students and instead of using extra work, fines, and verbal abuse as punishment technique in the classroom, they should focus on motivational techniques.

Both instruction and learning are easier in a well-managed classroom where students are expected to succeed, since the learning objectives of the lesson are clearly stated; and as they are told the objectives, they become responsible for what they are learning. But when instructions fail to actively involve students in their learning, they become restless and classroom management becomes increasingly difficult. In fact, this is typical of some classrooms in Libyan secondary schools. According to gathered data, those classroom managers are not clearly stating the directions or the objectives of their lessons and are not assessing whether these objectives are attained. Hence, teachers can fix this by teaching to different learning styles and vary lesson presentations to keep teaching from going stale; making learning intrinsically interesting by relating lesson content to the students' common life experiences and local environment.

Another important finding of the study was that teacher-learner relationship in Libyan secondary schools is well-established and built on deeply shared respect. Teachers believe that simple compliments like 'thank you' and 'well-done'. Also calling the students by their names are fruitful and influential techniques. The majority of teachers are aware of the considerable impacts of managing eye-contact with students and paying enough and equal attention to all of them. It is further revealed that those teachers appropriately encouraging learners and motivate them to do their best that will certainly result in competitive and productive classroom.

## VII. CONCLUSION

Classroom management is challenging task to accomplish. Teachers are expected to create an environment that enhances learning; maintain positive, productive classroom atmosphere. Well-managed classroom is a safe and inviting place for students that fosters cooperation, concentration and collaboration since the teachers' proactive and appreciative management will affect their students' performance.

Any classroom has the potential to become carefully-managed, smoothly running classroom. Moreover, it can a great class if the teacher has solid, consistent classroom management skills. Some of those effective techniques, which teachers should manipulate, are: the ability to manage the time; how to properly conduct pair and group activities; how to build genuine rapport; how to effectively incorporate a sense of humour; purposely encourage and motivate learners to create a fruitful and facilitative learning climate.

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