

Libyan EFL Teachers' Perceptions of the Role of Lesson Planning in Classroom Management: A Study at the University of Benghazi

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تصورات معلمي اللغة الإنجليزية بوصفها لغة أجنبية في ليبيا حول دور تخطيط الدروس في إدارة الصف: دراسة في جامعة بنغازي

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Abstract:

Understanding the relationship between lesson planning and classroom management is essential for creating a positive EFL classroom environment. This study aimed to investigate this relationship, focusing on the impact of Libyan EFL teachers' lesson preparation on lesson implementation. It explored English teachers' perceptions of how lesson planning contributes to effective classroom management within Libyan EFL contexts. Employing a positivist research design, quantitative data were collected from 30 English teachers at the Faculty of Languages at the University of Benghazi through an electronic questionnaire. Descriptive statistics were analyzed using SPSS. The findings highlighted the essential role of lesson planning in classroom management, indicating that Libyan EFL teachers effectively prepare their lessons to promote well-managed classrooms. Moreover, the results underscored lesson planning as a crucial skill for English teachers to foster a productive learning environment. Most Libyan English teachers reported positive attitudes regarding the importance of lesson planning in classroom management. The study concluded that there is a significant and positive relationship between effective lesson preparation and teachers' ability to create successful EFL classroom environments.

Keywords: EFL teachers, Lesson planning, Classroom management.

الملخص:

يُعد فهم العلاقة بين تخطيط الدروس وإدارة الصف أمرًا بالغ الأهمية لخلق بيئة صافية إيجابية لتدريس اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية [1]. هدفت هذه الدراسة إلى بحث العلاقة بين تخطيط الدروس وإدارة الصف، مع التركيز على أثر إعداد معلمي اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية للبيبين للدروس على تنفيذها. كما هدفت إلى استكشاف تصورات معلمي اللغة الإنجليزية حول دور تخطيط الدروس في إدارة الصفوف الدراسية بفعالية في سياقات تدريس اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية في ليبيا. جمعت البيانات من 30 معلماً للغة الإنجليزية في كلية اللغات في بنغازي من خلال استبيان إلكتروني. أكدت النتائج على الدور المحوري لتخطيط الدروس في إدارة الصف، مُظهراً أن معلمي اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية للبيبين يُعدون دروسهم بفعالية لضمان إدارة جيدة للصفوف الدراسية. بالإضافة إلى ذلك، كشفت النتائج أن تخطيط الدروس مهارة أساسية لمعلمي اللغة الإنجليزية لتعزيز بيئة تعليمية مثمرة. وقد أبدى معظم معلمي اللغة الإنجليزية للبيبين موافق إيجابية تجاه أهمية تخطيط

الدروس في إدارة الصف. وخلصت الدراسة إلى وجود علاقة إيجابية و هامة بين إعداد الدروس بفعالية وقدرة المعلمين على خلق بيئات صافية ناجحة لتدريس اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية.

الكلمات المفتاحية: معلمون اللغة الإنجليزية بوصفها لغة أجنبية، تخطيط الدروس، إدارة الصف.

Introduction:

Effective teaching helps learners enhance their knowledge and learning skills [2]. However, teaching effectiveness is not solely measured by student performance but rather by teachers' ability to carefully plan their lessons and actively engage their students throughout their teaching [3]. The first step of teaching is planning a lesson [4]. It is the process of bringing together various teaching components to create a structured cohesive lesson that students can understand, engage with, and respond to [5].

When planning a lesson, teachers need to prepare activities, strategies, and evaluation tools [6]. Regardless of how skilled a teacher is, lesson planning plays a crucial role in increasing the productivity of teaching [7]. According to Lynch and Warner [8], there are specific traits associated with a good lesson plan. First, it should address the individual diversity of learners in classrooms. And second, it acknowledges and incorporates learners' different cognitive and learning abilities [8]. In simple words, a lesson plan serves as a guide that teachers use to ensure lesson objectives are met within a specific time frame.

The impact of a lesson plan on teachers' practices in the classroom largely depends on how well teachers understand and apply each component of their plan [9]. A lesson plan should not be viewed merely as a formality; teachers must also recognize its significance as a tool to meet the needs of both learners and themselves [10]. A study by Moradi [3] emphasized the importance of lesson planning that teachers should acknowledge. He noted that effective teachers prepare effective lessons, highlighting that the preparation of a lesson is one of the most crucial tasks a teacher can undertake [3].

After planning a lesson, strategies are needed to direct and apply this plan. These strategies are called classroom management. It involves a range of strategies used by teachers to keep students organized, disciplined, attentive, focused, and productive during class time [11]. It ensures that classroom operations align with the educational planned goals [12]. It is assumed that teachers should learn how to maintain effective classroom management before learning how to teach [13]. Thus, there are three main reasons why classroom management is important in any learning environment: It allows more time for learning, improves access to learning opportunities, and helps students develop their ability to manage themselves [14].

Understanding the relationship between developing a lesson plan and managing a classroom is important for creating a positive harmonious classroom environment [1]. Planning a lesson is the first phase of the teaching process [4], while classroom management is the mechanism used to apply that lesson plan [15]. Thus, successful classroom management depends on detailed well-planned classroom activities. A study by Alghamdy [1] in Saudi Arabia aimed to explore the connection between lesson plans and classroom management found that there was a strong positive relationship between effective lesson preparation and teachers' ability to create a productive EFL classroom. The study showed that lesson planning is crucial for effective classroom management, and it is the primary skill that English teachers need to develop to foster a successful learning environment [1]. His study was aligned with Moradi [3] who stated that teachers cannot successfully manage their classrooms without well-structured lesson plans.

However, lesson planning and management is not an easy task. Most EFL teachers face several challenges related to their students when planning and managing their classes [16, 17]. Issues such as poor time management, student absenteeism, diverse student backgrounds, and a lack of motivation complicate classroom management and make teaching more difficult [16]. To effectively manage their classrooms, teachers need to build and maintain positive relationships with their students [1]. However, challenges like students' refusal to follow rules, being noisy, showing disrespect, exhibiting poor behavior, and lacking interest create significant obstacles for effective lesson planning and management in most EFL contexts [16, 18]. This is also true in the Libyan context. A study by Abu Habil and Abu Lifa [17] found that behavioral problems are a major issue for Libyan EFL teachers. Some students do not listen to instructions and are unwilling to cooperate during lessons. Additionally, many students frequently discuss topics unrelated to the lesson, further disrupting the learning process [17]. Some other challenges are environmental in nature, with large class sizes being a major obstacle [16]. Teaching large classes can be overwhelming for teachers [19] as these classrooms often become noisy, disrupting the teaching process [15]. This makes it difficult to implement effective management strategies that support students' learning [20]. Large classes also limit teachers' ability to provide individual attention and ensure that all students have opportunities to participate [21]. This issue is particularly common in Libyan EFL classrooms. Teachers often struggle to manage large numbers of

students and find it challenging to assess individual performance effectively [17]. Along with large class sizes, time constraints and the limited time available for teaching English burden teachers, making it challenging to complete their planned lessons while managing the classroom. Wheida [22] noted that the strict time allocated for teaching English forces Libyan EFL teachers to focus on certain skills while neglecting others. As a result, many students do not receive enough support to develop their learning skills, and most teachers concentrate on following their lesson plans while neglecting classroom management [23, 24].

Most EFL teachers find classroom planning and management challenging [17, 21]. This difficulty arises from their lack of knowledge about how to effectively plan lessons and manage their classrooms [25]. A teacher's ability to plan and manage lessons depends on their understanding of how to anticipate challenges and respond appropriately to classroom dynamics [26]. Without this knowledge, teachers may experience poor learning outcomes and struggle to achieve their teaching goals [17, 25]. This is why many Libyan researchers have emphasized the need for more studies to enhance teachers' perceptions and understanding of the complex tasks involved in lesson planning and classroom management [17, 16, 27]. Hence, the aim of this study was to investigate Libyan EFL teachers' perceptions of the role of lesson planning in classroom management.

Materials and Methods:

This research aimed to investigate Libyan EFL teachers' perceptions of the role of lesson planning in classroom management. To address this research aim, a descriptive quantitative research design was used as it allows for the collection and analysis of numerical data while focusing on the relationships between specific variables [28]. A closed-ended questionnaire, adapted from Alghamdy [1] and Nkwabi [29], was employed as the data collection instrument. This type of questionnaire was chosen because it facilitates data collection, simplifies analysis, and ensures efficiency and clarity for respondents [28, 30]. Closed-ended questions are also quicker to complete and help improve the comparability of responses [28]. The questionnaire consisted of 29 items divided into four sections: lesson preparation and planning, lesson plan implementation, classroom management practices, and Libyan EFL teachers' attitudes toward the role of lesson planning in classroom management. A 5-point Likert scale was used, ranging from 1 "Never" to 5 "Always" to identify the English teachers' perceptions of the role of lesson planning in classroom management. Table 1 below shows the interpretation of the means of the five Likert-points of the questionnaire.

Table (1 Range of Means to Identify the English Teachers' Perceptions

N	Mean	Score
1	< 1.80	Never
2	1.81–2.60	Seldom
3	2.61–3.40	Sometimes
4	3.41–4.20	Often
5	4.21–5.00	Always

Quantitative data were analyzed using statistical methods, and internal consistency was assessed with Cronbach's alpha test in SPSS to determine reliability. The result for the 29 items was 0.830, exceeding the acceptable threshold of 0.7, which indicates that the questionnaire is reliable. Also, Bivariate analysis was conducted in SPSS to check the validity of the questionnaire using the Pearson Correlation Method. The results revealed strong positive correlations ($r > 0.5$) between many items, particularly within the same sections of the questionnaire, such as lesson preparation, classroom management practices, and teacher attitudes toward the role of lesson planning. These strong correlations were statistically significant ($p < 0.01$) and indicate that the items effectively measured related constructs. This meant that the analysis showed the questionnaire was both reliable and valid. The study included 30 EFL teachers from the Department of English at the Faculty of Languages at Benghazi University. These participants were selected because understanding their perceptions about how implementing a lesson plan can enhance effective classroom management would provide vital feedback and help decision-makers at the faculty identify necessary improvements. Ethical guidelines were strictly followed throughout the research. Verbal approval was obtained from the head of the Faculty of Languages, and participants were informed of their rights. They received a detailed form outlining the study's purpose and methods, and were assured that participation was voluntary. The questionnaire was distributed directly to participants through a face-to-face procedure, resulting in the collection of 30 completed questionnaires.

Results and Discussion:

To accomplish the aim of this research, the means and standard deviations related to the first component of the questionnaire "lesson preparation and planning practices" were calculated. Table 2 presents the results.

Table (2): Lesson Preparation and Planning Practices

Skill	N	Mean	SD	Practice Strength	Order
1. How often do you plan lessons before teaching?	30	4.13	.973	Often	2
2. Do you carry lesson notes with you when teaching?	30	4.07	1.230	Often	3
3. Do you prepare lesson notes before teaching?	30	4.87	.346	Always	1
4. Do you prepare teaching aids (e.g., visual, audio, audio-visual) before teaching?	30	2.90	1.062	Sometimes	5
5. Do you believe your classroom environment accommodates the teaching techniques you plan to use?	30	3.20	.925	Sometimes	4
Total		3.89	.548	Always	

The findings from the survey of 30 teachers regarding lesson preparation and planning practices revealed a generally positive approach to lesson readiness. The overall total mean score of 3.89 suggested that participants generally exhibit a high level of preparation, although there was room for improvement in using teaching aids and making the classroom environment better.

Findings of the second component of the questionnaire which was related to 'Lesson Plan Implementation' are exemplified in table 3.

Table (3): Lesson Plan Implementation

Skill	N	Mean	SD	Practice Strength	Order
1. I promote the full participation of all students throughout my lessons.	30	3.80	.805	Always	7
2. I encourage students to ask questions.	30	4.20	.805	Often	2
3. I implement my lessons effectively and as planned.	30	4.10	.885	Often	3
4. I provide my students with exercises.	30	4.33	.959	Always	1
5. I effectively utilize visual, audio, and audio-visual teaching aids.	30	3.17	1.289	Sometimes	9
6. I use a variety of procedures to evaluate learning progress during lessons (e.g., oral and written questions, activities).	30	3.80	1.126	Often	6
7. When a student misbehaves, I move closer to them for greater control.	30	3.83	.747	Always	5
8. Before I begin lessons, I remind students of classroom rules.	30	3.43	1.040	Always	8
9. I identify and implement any needed improvements for future lessons.	30	3.87	.730	Always	4
Total		3.84	.498	Always	

Findings in Table 3 highlighted several important classroom practices. The total overall mean score of 3.84 indicated that teachers generally used consistent and effective practices when implementing lesson plans, though there were some areas for improvement. There was a need to encourage full participation from all students, suggesting that this area could be enhanced. Additionally, teachers sometimes used visual, audio, and audiovisual aids, indicating that there was potential to improve lesson delivery by using a variety of teaching methods.

Findings related to teachers' practices in classroom management, which were part of the third component of the questionnaire, are shown in Table 4 below.

Table (4): Classroom Management Practices

Skill	N	Mean	SD	Practice Strength	Order
1. Students follow the classroom rules that I planned before implementing them.	30	3.07	1.01 5	Sometimes	4
2. Students share their knowledge and experiences with their peers.	30	3.87	1.04 2	Often	2
3. I involve other students when correcting a student's misbehavior.	30	2.47	1.13 7	Sometimes	5
4. I arrange the classroom according to my particular lesson of the day.	30	3.63	.669	Often	3
5. Students are free to ask me a question when something is not clear.	30	4.73	.691	Always	1
6. Students make noise, move from one desk to another, cry, play, sing, or fight in the classroom during teaching.	30	2.13	1.27 9	Seldom	7
7. I always address student misbehaviors while I am teaching.	30	2.33	1.12 4	Seldom	6
Total		3.18	.448	Sometimes	

As it is clear from the above table, findings showed that teachers faced different levels of student behavior and classroom management. The overall mean score of 3.18 suggested that classroom management practices were applied inconsistently, with room for improvement in handling student behavior. Students only sometimes followed classroom rules or helped in correcting a peer's misbehavior, and teachers seldom addressed misbehavior during lessons.

Last but not least, findings related to teachers' attitudes toward the role of lesson planning in classroom management, which were part of the fourth component of the questionnaire, are shown in Table 5 below.

Table (5): Teachers' Attitudes Toward the Role of Lesson Planning in Classroom Management.

Skill	N	Mean	SD	Practice Strength	Order
1. In classroom management, lesson planning is important.	30	4.63	.718	Always	2
2. I understand the importance of lesson planning before teaching.	30	4.63	.718	Always	2
3. I feel confident, comfortable, and secure during teaching when I plan my lessons before teaching.	30	4.73	.691	Always	1
4. Lesson planning is beneficial for classroom management.	30	4.73	.691	Always	1
5. Experienced teachers need lesson plans for effective classroom management.	30	4.47	.730	Always	4
6. Planning students' activities is effective in classroom management.	30	4.73	.691	Always	1
7. It is important to use lesson planning to manage overcrowded classrooms.	30	4.73	.691	Always	1
8. Lesson planning works well in my classroom management.	30	4.53	.730	Always	3
Total		4.65	.663	Always	

The findings from the survey of 30 Libyan EFL teachers regarding their attitudes toward lesson planning in classroom management revealed that teachers strongly valued lesson planning as an essential tool for effective classroom management. The total overall mean score of 4.65 reflected a unanimous and strong agreement among participants on the importance of lesson planning in enhancing classroom management. To sum it up, Figure 1 below summarizes the overall mean scores of the four components of the questionnaire.

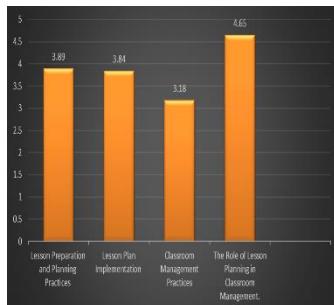


Figure (1): The Overall Mean Score of the Four Components of the Questionnaire

Figure One above shows the overall mean scores for the four components of the questionnaire. The highest mean score (4.65) was given to the fourth component, which reflected Libyan EFL teachers' attitudes toward the role of lesson planning in classroom management. Teachers recognized this role as essential for effective classroom management. The second highest mean score (3.89) was found in the first component, which focused on teachers' attitudes toward lesson preparation and planning practices. This suggested that teachers generally viewed lesson preparation and planning as important and valuable parts of their teaching process. The third highest mean score (3.84) was related to lesson plan implementation, and the lowest mean score was associated with classroom practices, indicating that teachers faced challenges in managing their classrooms and that there was room for improvement in handling student behavior.

The findings of this study aligned with Alghamdy [1] and Nkwabi [29] who found that teachers understood the strong connection between lesson plans and classroom management. They noted that lesson planning was crucial for effective classroom management and was a key skill that English teachers needed to develop to create a successful learning environment [1, 29]. In addition, findings from this study were also consistent with the work of Abu Habil and Abu Lifa [17] and Al-Jarf [21], who noted that most EFL teachers found classroom management challenging. Furthermore, findings of this research were in compatible with Ali (2020) who stated that EFL teachers faced managing difficulties which could lead to poor learning outcomes.

Conclusion:

In conclusion, Libyan EFL teachers at the Faculty of Languages at the University of Benghazi placed a strong emphasis on lesson planning as a key factor in effective classroom management. They consistently viewed lesson planning as essential for managing student activities and addressing overcrowded classrooms. There was a shared understanding among teachers of the important role lesson planning plays in creating a productive and organized learning environment. Participants demonstrated a strong commitment to lesson preparation, as evidenced by their consistent use of lesson notes and advance planning. They effectively implemented lesson plans by engaging students through exercises and fostering interaction by encouraging questions, thus creating a supportive and interactive classroom environment.

However, the findings revealed a pressing need for improvement in promoting full student participation and incorporating diverse teaching aids, such as visual, audio, and audiovisual materials, to further enhance lesson delivery. Most participants faced difficulties in managing certain students' behaviors and classroom dynamics. Consequently, there is an ongoing need to raise awareness among teachers about how to respond effectively to these challenges. The study underscored the critical necessity for teachers to receive training on managing misbehavior and strategies to address it, possibly through workshops. Additionally, it is suggested that decision-makers reduce the number of students per class to facilitate better classroom management. This study lays the groundwork for future research using qualitative interviews with teachers to gain deeper insights into the challenges they face. Moreover, studies could be conducted in different EFL contexts employing qualitative or mixed research methods.

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