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الكفاءة اللغوية والتواصلية في برنامج اللغة الانجليزية في ليبيا: الاهداف المنهجية والممارسات الصفية

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ملخص الدراسة:

يتبنى برنامج جارنت القرن الحادي والعشرين لتعليم الإنجليزية في ليبيا (2024-2025) المنهج التواصلي في تعليم اللغة الذي يهدف إلى تطوير الكفاءة اللغوية والتواصلية . وقد جاءت المادة التعليمية في الكتب المنهجية مُدمِجةً لدروس القواعد مع أنشطة وتمارين لتطوير مختلف مهارات اللغة. وبالرغم من هذا التكامل إلا أنه من الملاحظ أن هناك فجوة بين أهداف ومادة البرنامج من جهة وبين تطبيقاتها في الفصول الدراسية من جهة أخرى، حيث يُلاحظ أن الفصول تركز على تطوير الكفاءة اللغوية وتُهمِل ربطها بنظيرتها الكفاءة التواصلية. وتهدف هذه الدراسة إلى استكشاف مدى اندماج هاتين الكفائتين في الكتاب المدرسي للتعليم الثانوي، وتطبيقاتها في الفصل الدراسي داخل المدارس العامة الثانوية بطرابلس. واستعانت الدراسة بمنهج مزجي من خلال استخدام أداتين هما: تحليل الوثائق والاستبيان، وتشير نتائج الدراسة إلى وجود تركيز على الدراسة النظرية لقواعد اللغة الإنجليزية، وإهمال تطبيقاتها التواصلية داخل الفصل الدراسي، وتعود أسباب هذه الفجوة إلى افتقار الفصول الدراسية إلى تفاعل المتعلمين ، كذلك الدافعية للتواصل باللغة الإنجليزية، وفرط استخدام اللغة الأولى داخل الفصل بالإضافة إلى التأثير السلبي للامتحانات التي لا تشتمل على اختبار مهارات اللغة التواصلية. إن نتائج الدراسة لها مضامين مهمة لبرامج تدريب المعلمين وتطوير المناهج في-ح ليبيا.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الكفاءة التواصلية، الكفاءة اللغوية، المقاربة التكامليّة، تعليم اللغة التواصلية

Linguistic and Communicative Competencies in the English for Libya Program: Curriculum Goals and Classroom Practices

Abstract:

Garnet's 21st Century English for Libya (2024-2025) adopts a communicative approach, whose main objective is to develop learners' linguistic and communicative competencies. The content materials of the course books integrate grammar lessons with various language skills. However, it is noted that there is a mismatch between the program goals and classroom implementation. Classroom practices put extra emphasis on developing learners' linguistic competence with no corresponding emphasis on linking it to their communicative competence. This study examines the integration between these two competencies in the EFL secondary Textbooks and their implementation in the Libyan EFL classroom in public schools in Tripoli. The study adopts a mixed-method approach, employing document analysis and a questionnaire as data collection instruments. The study's findings highlight a bias towards implementing the grammar sections, while neglecting the corresponding communicative practices in the classroom. This gap is attributed to classrooms that lack learners' interaction and motivation to communicate in English, overreliance on the mother tongue, and the negative effect of invalid school examinations, which overlook testing the learner's communicative skills. The findings have important implications for teacher training and curriculum development in Libya.

Keywords: communicative competence, linguistic competence, integrative approach, Communicative Language Teaching (CLT)

Introduction

Over the past few decades, teaching English as a foreign language (EFL) has undergone significant changes. There has been a shift from form-focused methods, such as the Grammar Translation Method (GTM) and the Audio-lingual Method, to function-focused approaches like the Communicative Method. Form-focused methods prioritize grammar as a key component of language learning, emphasizing explicit grammar instruction to achieve language accuracy. In contrast, the Communicative Method focuses on the functional aspects of language, minimizing explicit grammar teaching in favor of language fluency and preparing learners to communicate in real-life situations. However, focusing on one method and overlooking the other have produced learners who are unable to achieve both fluency and accuracy. Considering theses disadvantages, later versions of the communicative approach have aimed to integrate form-focused instruction with communicative activities (Spada & Lightbown, 2013). This new trend has led to the development of an integrative approach in EFL teaching, which connects language skills with grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation. For instance, grammar is often linked with writing and speaking, vocabulary development is linked with reading. Shen (2013) states that mastering language use in communication should involve blending linguistic competence and communicative skills, enabling learners to develop both fluency and accuracy simultaneously. These views have resulted in incorporating communicative tasks alongside grammar lessons. Many EFL programs now adopt this integrated approach. For example, the 21st Century Garnet English for Libya Program (2024/2025) designs grammar lessons intertwined with speaking, writing, and reading activities in their course books. This research focuses on analyzing the integration of grammar and speaking skills in the third-year secondary school course books.

Statement of the problem

Through supervising The Faculty of Education student teachers in their Teaching Practice Program inside public schools in Tripoli, the supervisors observed a noticeable mismatch between the curriculum goals of the 21st Century Garnet English for Libya Program (2024-2025) as stated in their course books, and classroom implementation. Classroom practices are devoid of language skills activities. In their grammar lessons, classroom teachers tend to focus on long lesson presentations performed by the teacher and some written exercises for practice. There is no room for performing speaking tasks that reinforce grammar and relate it to natural language use. Isolating grammar lessons from speaking skills does not give the learners adequate opportunities to apply their grammar knowledge in speaking tasks and connect it with its use. There is an urgent need to enquire whether this shortcoming is a result of insufficient speaking activities integrated with grammar in the textbooks, or it is a result of classroom practice where teachers neglect doing these activities.

Research questions

The study specifically addresses the following questions:

1. Is there effective integration between grammar lessons and speaking activities in the 21st Century English for Libya Program?
2. Are EFL teachers aware of the connection between grammar and speaking activities in the course materials?
3. Do EFL teachers adhere to the course book plan and implement activities designed to integrate grammar and speaking?

Theoretical Review

Curriculum goals, materials & implementation

Linguistic competence vs communicative competence

The *linguistic competence* and the *communicative competence* are two distinctions that are often considered when establishing curricula and syllabuses. The linguistic competence was described by Noam Chomsky (1965) as the ideal speaker-hearer's

internalized knowledge of grammar and language rules, whereas communicative competence was later introduced by Hymes (1972) as the ability to use language appropriately in social contexts. This entails that language learners are not expected only to produce correct grammatical structures, but they should also be able to apply these structures in the right context.

Communicative language Methodology

Fulfilling the goal of acquiring communicative competence has led to creating Communicative Language Teaching Methodology (CLT) by a number of contributors e.g., Michael Halliday (1970), Wilkins (1976), Swain (1980), and Richards & Rogers 1986. This communicative methodology started new instruction programs that sought to design materials, classroom strategies and techniques for the purpose of building language learners' communicative competence. Materials and classroom activities were designed to engage the learner in meaningful functional use of language that seek to regard both fluency and accuracy as complementary requirements (Brown 2009). CLT regards classrooms as student-centred in which teachers are facilitators rather than lecturers. (Brown 2007:241) states that "in the communicative classroom, learners are led to use the language productively and receptively in an unrehearsed context."

The distinction between these two competencies had a great impact on EFL programs. While traditional classrooms prioritized grammar, vocabulary, and structural exercises, they often overlooked functional aspects of language. On the other hand, (CLT) shifting the focus toward fluency and real-life interaction marginalized form-focused instruction, resulting in fluent learners whose communicative interactions are often grammatically inaccurate.

Towards an integrative approach

Recent research practice now emphasizes the importance of integrating both competencies, recognizing that effective language use requires both grammatical accuracy and communicative fluency. Linguistic and communicative competence ought to be regarded as interdependent language competencies. Modern EFL methodologies such as Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) and Content-Based Instruction (CBI) strive to bridge the gap between the two competencies. Similarly, Michael Long's (1991) concept of "focus on form" shows that teaching grammatical structures should occur within

meaningful communication, rather than in isolation. Material design, based on the integrative approach, has started to merge grammar lessons with skill activities that give learners the opportunity to link their grammar knowledge with the actual use of language. In the Libyan context, where English is a foreign language, learners have limited exposure to English outside the classroom. Therefore, integration of linguistic and communicative competence is crucial.

21st Century English for Libya

21st Century English for Libya designed by Garnet Education states that the program adopts a communicative approach to teaching and learning and takes the development of *communicative competence* as its principal aim (Secondary3 Teachers' Book 2024, p 6). This communicative methodology incorporates more explicit study of the English language structure. This integration is based on the program's belief that students at the secondary stage are cognitively more ready to analyse the concepts behind the rules; and that overt grammar analysis is part of the development of *communicative competence*. The program states clearly that students need to demonstrate both their knowledge of language and their ability to use it. In its introduction to the Secondary3 Teachers' Book (2024, p 6), the program states that "The program is a topic-based course that follows a clear grammatical and functional syllabus within which there is a coherent strand of skills development which gives students the opportunity to expand their knowledge of English and become more fluent users of language." The material design has reflected an integrated approach that linked grammar with different language skills.

Curriculum goals and content vs classroom practice

Curriculum materials are important tools to achieve curriculum goals. According to Brown (2009), materials are designed to guarantee the achievement of the program objectives. They guide the classroom teachers and ensure that their practice inside the classroom achieves the specified goals. However, no matter how the goals of a curriculum are stated clearly; and no matter how the content materials match these goals, the success of any teaching program depends on actual implementation inside the classrooms. Implementation depends largely on the attitude and practice of the classroom teacher as well as the school and the type of state examinations. Research has shown that teachers' interaction with the course materials can be holistic adhering to the content as a cohesive

whole, or selective covering some parts and leaving others (Ben-Peretz 1990.) Hargreaves (1989) claims that any curriculum change will not take place if there is no change in the teachers' attitude. Therefore, to understand the implementation of syllabuses, it is important to study teachers' attitudes towards them.

Observing the mainstream practice inside English classrooms, it is often noted that there is bias towards teaching grammar, vocabulary, and reading comprehension. Skills activities such as listening, speaking and writing are often overlooked. This trend is attributed to a number of reasons. First, the appropriate environment for these activities inside the classroom is not often available. Successful integrated activities of grammar and skills depend on classroom organization, appropriate size, sufficient time and adequate equipment. Second, the type of school assessment and state examinations are restricted to measuring grammar in spite of the fact that research emphasizes exam validity for achieving beneficial learning outcomes (Turner 2000). The exclusion of the skills areas in examinations has rendered these exams invalid. Teachers and students are often led to skip the skills parts, the point that negatively impacted learning outcomes.

Previous studies & the gap in the literature

There is a considerable amount of research done concerning the difficulties that teachers face in teaching EFL in the Libyan context. For example, Othman and Izzuan (2024) state that Libyan learners face difficulties in developing the speaking skill although they study English ever since the elementary school. Libyan learners have limited opportunities for practicing speaking, and the teachers overlook teaching speaking for several reasons that deal with teachers' limited English proficiency, large classrooms, and limited lesson time. Altaib & Omar (2015) discussed the mismatch between the goals and content of the new English curriculum and the reality of teaching inside classrooms. Their study reveals that there is a gap between what was expected from the new curriculum and what is being done in classrooms. Some studies focused on teaching English in general, such as Giaber 2014, Dalala 2019, Mohsen 2014, and Pathan et al 2016. They highlighted the need for better teacher qualifications, more learner-centred classrooms, more use of technology, and more training programs for professional development.

It appears that there is considerable research on teaching grammar and the development of speaking skill. However, each of these components was researched

separately. Little attention has been paid to the integrative aspects of grammar and speaking. In the Libyan context, teaching grammar is isolated from teaching speaking. Grammar is regarded as an exam topic rather than a tool for improving speaking. To my knowledge, there have been no studies that examined how far the 21st Century English for Libya achieves this integration, nor how teachers apply it in their classrooms. This study aims to fill this gap.

Method

Research design

To explore the integrative aspects of teaching grammar and speaking in the 21st Century English for Libya coursebooks and their applications inside English classrooms, the study employed a **mixed-methods research design** that employed **document analysis** and an **online questionnaire** that included both **closed- and open-ended items**. This triangulation approach aimed for generating findings from multiple sources for the purpose of gaining a comprehensive understanding of the research topic.

Participants

The participants of the questionnaire study were 31 secondary school teachers from different schools in Tripoli. They were holders of bachelor's degree and appointed by the Ministry of Education as full-time teachers of English. Their teaching experiences ranged from 1 to over 15 years of teaching English.

For ethical considerations, participation in the study was entirely voluntary through responding to an online questionnaire at the participants' convenience. The questionnaire was distributed via a shared link, and no login or identifying information was required to access it. Furthermore, the questionnaire design ensured anonymity and does not include any items that reveal personal identifiable information.

Instruments

Document analysis

Document analysis has been carried out for the purpose of exploring the extent to which integration between grammar and speaking is achieved in the the 21st Century

English for Libya program (2024-2025) focusing on third secondary school classes. Relevant documents have been collected namely: the course book, the workbook and the teacher's book. The examination was guided by the research questions, specifically question No 1, which seeks to know whether there is effective integration between grammar lessons and speaking in the Garnet English program.

Questionnaire

An online questionnaire was designed and administered using **Google Forms**. The questionnaire was divided into sections depending on different enquiries. The first 10 items require the participants to select from a range of choices ranging from *always, sometimes, occasionally* and *never*, the next 25 items require the participants to select from a range of choices ranging from *strongly agree, agree, disagree,* and *neutral*, and two open-ended items designed to elicit more in-depth, qualitative responses. The questionnaire was reviewed by two educational researchers for content validity and piloted with a group of 4 teachers not included in the main study.

Data collection & analysis

Questionnaire data collection was conducted entirely online. The questionnaire link was distributed via email, and responses were collected anonymously over a period of a month. Document data collection was carried out concurrently.

Quantitative data from the closed-ended questionnaire items were compiled and analyzed using statistics in the form of percentages calculated via **Google Forms' built-in analytics**. Qualitative data from the open-ended questionnaire responses were analyzed thematically. Thematic analysis followed the steps outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006): familiarization, coding, theme development, review, definition, and write-up. Document analysis was carried out through gathering evidence from the textbooks that proves integrating grammar lessons with speaking activities, listing them with references to units, lessons, and page numbers.

Results

Document analysis results

The EFL program adopted by the Ministry of Education in Libya is the last Garnet version "21st Century English for Libya, 2024-2025" designed for elementary, preparatory and secondary schools. A course book of 8 units supported by a workbook is designed for each year. The books include a variety of materials that cover the four language skills, reading, listening, writing and speaking. These skills are supported by a variety of grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation activities. The speaking skill material occupies an important part in each unit. Each unit can have up to 3 speaking activities in addition to the speaking activities provided in the workbook. Garnet has designed a web site that provides a variety of services to the users. Teachers can download the material, teaching aids and the CDs. A teacher guidebook is also available to the teachers.

The course book under investigation: the 21st Century English for Libya, Secondary 3 was designed to fulfil objectives that opt for a communicative approach to teaching and learning and takes the development of *communicative competence* as its principal aim. First, a course book that contains a variety of texts that represent real life situations such as articles, websites, emails, advertisements, leaflets, and timetables that link both grammar knowledge and activities that support the use of this knowledge with students working in groups and in pairs. Second, there is a workbook with a variety of tasks that consolidate and support the language presented in the course book. These books are supported by a teacher guidebook which provides guidelines and procedures that lead the teachers towards the best implementation of the program. A closer investigation of the content of the book has been conducted. Instances of grammar lessons supported by speaking tasks are found in various units. Table 1 below presents some of these instances.

Table 1

Integrating Grammar Lessons with Speaking Activities: Secondary School 3 Coursebook & Workbook

No	Coursebook	Page	Workbook	Page
1	Describing events in the past using *while + past continuous*	Unit 1, lesson 2, section A	Students practice a dialogue in pairs replacing words and phrases in the dialogue.	Unit 1, lesson 2, section A, page 6

2	Studying the past continuous through reading a story	Unit 1, lesson 3, section A, page 11	Students take turns retelling the story in the course book page 11using the past continuous.	Unit 1, lesson 3, section D, page 10
3	Expressing expectations using *should/shouldn't*	Unit 2 / lesson/4 section B, p (23)	An oral task for the students to use their own ideas to respond to prompts about what people should do to keep their homes safe.	Unit 2 / lesson 7, section B, p 34
4	Zero & first conditionals	Unit 3, lesson 2, section C	Students work in pairs asking each other some personal questions. Students have conversations based on their partner's answers using if clauses.	Unit 3, lesson 2, section D, page 44 Unit 3, lesson 2, section E, p 45
5	Asking direct questions / forming questions Reported questions	Unit 3, lesson 4, section A (reading an interview), page 35 Unit 3, lesson 4, section B, page, 35	Students role play an interview with a pilot. Students report the interview questions.	Unit 3, lesson 4, section C page 48 Unit 3, lesson 4. Section D, page 49
6	Indirect speech	Unit 4, lesson 3, section B	Students take turns reporting to the class what their partner said about him/herself.	Unit 4, lesson 3, section A, page 65
7	Present perfect continuous with *for* and *since*	Unit 5, lesson 3, section A, page 53	Students work in pairs asking and answering a list of questions using *since* and *for*, then continue making up their own questions and answer them.	Unit 5, lesson 3, section C, page 78

The activities mentioned above are samples of the speaking activities linked with grammar lessons. There are other speaking activities that are not linked to grammar lessons designed for practicing speaking. The document analysis results show that the book does establish a clear connection between grammar and speaking; and the number of integrative activities is satisfactory. The question that arises is whether these lessons and consolidated activities are performed inside the classroom is left to the next instrument: the questionnaire.

The Questionnaire results

The analysis of the 37-item questionnaire was divided into different sections, which investigate different areas. The first was concerned with gathering information about the participants' classroom usual performance, the second with the participants' beliefs and attitudes towards teaching grammar and speaking, the third was concerned with the link between grammar and speaking in the course books, the fourth was made for investigating the use of speaking items in the assessment procedures, the fifth concerns the difficulties of integrating grammar and speaking inside classrooms, and two final open questionnaire items made to collect more information about the topic.

Questionnaire quantitative analysis

Table 2

Personal classroom performance & experience

No	Statement	Always	sometimes	Occasionally	Never
	In my classroom…	**%**	**%**	**%**	**%**
1	I focus on teaching grammar more than the language skills.	42.9	35.7	21.4	0
2	I use Grammar Translation Method in teaching grammar.	34.5	41.4	17.2	6.9
3	I teach the speaking lessons provided in the school course books.	42.3	26.9	15.4	15.4

4	I draw the attention of my students to the link between grammar and speaking lessons.	48.1	33.3	11.1	7.4
5	I use extra speaking activities specially designed for practicing grammar lessons.	25.9	25.9	7.4	40.7
6	I use pair work and group work activities.	25.9	33.3	29.6	11.1
7	My class is a teacher centered class.	59.3	18.5	11.1	11.1
8	The time devoted for students to practice speaking is sufficient.	16	20	12	52
9	Students' responses to speaking activities are weak.	46.2	19.2	26.9	7.7
10	Students fail to relate the grammar rules they learn to their speaking.	52	32	8	8

The results above show that 42.9 % of the participants always focus on teaching grammar, 35.7% sometimes do, and 21.4% occasionally do. The preferred teaching method is the Grammar Translation Method (GTM), where 34.5% always depend on this method, and 41.4% sometimes do. Only 17.2 % occasionally use this method and 6.9% never use it. 42.3% of the participants state that they always teach the speaking skills provided in the textbooks, 26.9% sometimes do, 14.4% occasionally do, and 15.4% never do. 48.1% report that they always draw the attention of their students to the link between grammar and speaking, 33.3% sometimes do, 11.1% occasionally do and 7.4% never do. 25.9% say they always design extra speaking activities for practicing grammar rules, 25.9% sometimes do, 7.4% occasionally do and 40.7% never do that. When enquired about the use of pair and group work, 25.9% state that they always do, 33.3% sometimes do, 29.6% occasionally do, and 11.1% never do. 59.3% state that their classrooms are always teacher centered, 18.5% are sometimes teachers centered, 11.1% occasionally and 11.1% never. When asked about whether the time devoted for students to participate and practice

speaking is sufficient, 16% believe it is always sufficient, 20% state it is sometimes sufficient, 12% state it is occasionally sufficient, but 52% believe it is never sufficient. Concerning the response of the students to the speaking activities, 46.2% find that their students' responses are weak, 19.2% find it sometimes weak, 26.9% find they are occasionally weak, and only 7.7% believe their students' responses are not weak. When asked whether their students fail to relate grammar rules to speaking abilities, 52% find their students fail in that, 32% believe their students sometimes fail, 8% occasionally fail, and 8% never fail.

Table 3

Teacher beliefs: The purpose of teaching grammar

No	Statement	Strongly agree %	Agree %	Disagree %	Neutral %
11	Grammar knowledge supports students' ability to communicate in English.	20	52	28	0
12	Grammar knowledge supports students' speaking skill.	24	40	32	4
13	Speaking activities make grammar lessons interesting and meaningful to students.	44	48	4	4
14	It is important to integrate grammar and speaking lessons.	37.5	29.2	25	8.3
15	There is no relationship between grammar and speaking. Teaching grammar does not lead to good speaking levels.	12	32	56	12
16	Grammar knowledge only enables student pass the state exams.	44	24	28	4

The results above show that 20% of the participants strongly agree that grammar knowledge supports students' ability to communicate in English, while 52% agree, and 28% disagree. 24% strongly agree that grammar knowledge supports students' speaking skill whereas 40% agree ,32% disagree, and 4% are neutral. 44% strongly agree that speaking activities make grammar lessons interesting and meaningful to students, whereas

48% agree, 4% disagree and 4% are neutral. 37.5% strongly agree that it is important to integrate grammar and speaking lessons, 29.2% agree, 25% disagree and 8.3% are neutral. 12% of the participants strongly agree that there is no relationship between grammar and speaking. 32% agree, 56% disagree, and 12% are neutral. 44% strongly agree that grammar knowledge only enables student pass the state exams, 24% agree, 28% disagree and only 4% are neutral.

Table 4

The link between grammar and speaking in the curriculum

No	Statement	Strongly agree	agree	disagree	Neutral
		%	%	%	%
17	The grammar lessons and the speaking lessons are closely related in the materials taught in 3rd year of the secondary school.	16	40	24	20
18	The material includes sufficient speaking activities related to the grammar lessons.	8	60	24	8
19	The speaking lessons enable students to recognize the use of grammar rules in their speaking.	24	44	32	0
20	The speaking exercises help students to apply grammar rules in their communication inside class.	28	40	32	0
21	The speaking exercises are based on pair and group work.	24	72	4	0
22	The material included in the course book is suitable to the students' level.	8	32	48	12

The results of this part show that 16% strongly believe that the grammar lessons and the speaking lessons are closely related in the materials taught in 3rd year of the secondary school whereas 40% agree, 24% disagree and 20% are neutral. 8% strongly

agree that the material includes sufficient speaking activities related to the grammar lessons, 60% agree, 24% disagree and 8% are neutral. 24% strongly agree that the speaking lessons enable students to recognize the use of grammar rules in their speaking, 44% agree, 32% disagree. 28% strongly agree that the speaking exercises help students apply grammar rules in their communication inside class, 40% agree, 32% disagree. 24% strongly agree that the speaking exercises are based on pair and group work, 72% agree, 4% disagree. 8% strongly agree that the material included in the course book is suitable to the students' level, 32% agree, 48% disagree and 12 neutral.

Table 5

The skill of speaking in grammar assessment

No	Statement	Strongly agree	agree	disagree	Neutral
23	Grammar tests are mainly written tests.	56%	36%	4%	4%
24	Grammar tests include speaking items.	0%	32%	52%	16%
25	School tests are based on the MCQ state examinations.	48%	32%	12%	8%

The results above show that 56% strongly agree that grammar tests are mainly written tests while 36% agree, 4% disagree and 4% are neutral. None of the participants strongly agree that grammar tests include speaking items, 32% agree, 52% disagree and 16% are neutral. 48% strongly agree that school tests are based on the MCQ state examinations, 32% agree, 12% disagree and 8% are neutral.

Table 6

Difficulties of integrating grammar and speaking

No	Statement	Strongly agree %	Agree %	Disagree %	Neutral %
26	English lesson time in the classroom schedule is not sufficient for covering the speaking lessons.	65	23.1	11.5	0

27	Overdependence on L1 (Arabic) does not give students opportunities to use L2 (English) in class.	56	24	12	8
82	The classroom size is too big for speaking activities to take place.	62.5	20.8	8.3	8.3
92	Teachers are too much concerned with preparing students for the state examinations that do not include speaking test items.	58.3	37.5	0	4
30	Students are not used to the speaking exercises; they don't usually do them in previous years.	68	24	4	4
13	Teachers ignore the speaking lessons provided in the course and workbook.	52	24	20	4
23	The speaking skill is not seriously considered in the EFL program in public schools.	60	28	12	0
33	There is a gap between learning the grammar rules and using them in speech.	48	36	12	4
43	Teachers are not qualified to teach the speaking skill.	16	60	20	4
53	Teachers need extra training that target improving their strategies and techniques in teaching grammar and speaking.	68	32	0	0

The results of this part of the questionnaire reveal that 65% of the participants strongly agree that the English lesson time in the classroom schedule is not sufficient for covering the speaking lessons, 23.1% agree, and 11.5% disagree. 56% strongly agree that overdependence on L1 (Arabic) does not give students opportunities to use L2 (English) in class, 24% agree, 12% disagree and 8% are neutral. 62.5% strongly agree

that the classroom size is too big for speaking activities to take place, 20.8% agree, 8.3 % disagree and 8.3% are neutral. 58.3% strongly agree that teachers are too concerned with preparing students for the state examinations that do not include speaking test items, 37.5% agree, and 4% are neutral. 68% strongly agree that students are not used to the speaking exercises, i.e., they don't usually do them in previous years. 24% agree, 4% disagree and 4% are neutral. 52% strongly agree that teachers ignore the speaking lessons provided in the course and workbook, 24% agree, 20% disagree and 4% are neutral. 60% strongly agree that the speaking skill is not seriously considered in the EFL program in public schools, 28% agree, 12% disagree. 48% strongly agree that there is a gap between learning the grammar rules and using them in speech, 36% agree, 12% disagree and 4% are neutral. 16% strongly agree that teachers are not qualified to teach the speaking skill, 60% agree, 20% disagree and 4% are neutral. 68% strongly agree that teachers need extra training that target improving their strategies and techniques in teaching grammar and speaking and 32% agree.

Qualitative questionnaire results

This section presents the thematic analysis of the open questionnaire items 36 and 37 which sought more information about why students cannot apply the grammar they learn in their speech, and why teachers ignore teaching the speaking exercises. The participants responses to both questions targeted similar issues. Therefore, the answers to both questions were grouped together in one table and classified under thematic titles.

Table 7

Qualitative questionnaire results

Theme	Description	Illustrative quotes
1. **Exam-centered Learning**	Students study grammar for the purpose of passing exams, not communication.	"They just want to pass the exam."– "Grammar lessons are boring and not helpful… they are done for passing exams." –"They memorize the rules just to pass the exam."

2. Lack of Communicative Practice	Grammar is not practiced in speaking contexts, so students are unable to link the rules to real usage.	– “Students do not speak; they avoid interacting in class.”– “Teachers provide the forms without practicing how to use them.”– “Grammar and speaking need practice outside the school more than inside of it.”
3. Teachers’ limited English proficiency	Teachers have problems with English fluency and accuracy. They depend on traditional methods	– “Teachers have low speaking skills… they just explain the rules in Arabic.”– “Some teachers are not qualified enough due to limited vocabulary.”– “Teachers themselves are not competent enough in speaking.”
4. Curriculum and Classroom Constraints	Problematic material issues like overloaded lessons, large class sizes, limited speaking practice.	– “The curriculum is full of unnecessary information.”– “The classrooms are extremely crowded… 45 students and 45 minutes.”– “The syllabus plan… is just a hypothetical plan.”
5. Motivational factors and attitudes	Grammar rules are meaningless to students, they prefer practical language use rather than theoretical lessons.	– “Students are interested more in language use than language analysis.”– “Grammar is often regarded as a boring, tough subject.”– “Grammar is a boring topic that can never lead to better speaking.”– “Teachers themselves do not believe there is a connection between grammar and speaking.”
6.Organizational and Environmental constraints	Insufficient exposure to English outside school, short class periods,	– “Students rely on the school lessons… they don’t practice at home.”– “45 minutes 4 times a week is never enough.”– “Usually, the time is not enough.”– “The focus is on grammar; there is no time for speaking.”

7. Lack of Teacher Motivation and Support	Teachers lack intrinsic motivation or institutional support.	– “Teachers are not motivated.”– “The attitude of the teachers.”

Discussion and Conclusion

This study was designed to investigate a phenomenon widely spread in EFL classroom, that of teaching grammar in isolation from real life contexts. It aimed to explore whether this shortcoming is attributed to insufficient integration of grammar and speaking within the textbook or it is attributed to classroom teachers’ reluctance to include these activities in class. Textbook analysis shows that they include sufficient grammar lessons supported by exercises of which there is a considerable amount of speaking. This was supported by the questionnaire analysis where the majority of the participants agreed that the textbook includes sufficient skills activities linked to the grammar lessons. When exploring the extent of integrative implementation of these lessons inside classrooms, the responses of the participants vary. The results of the questionnaire show that teaching grammar still occupies a central part of the English classroom in Libyan schools and the grammar translation method is the most popular method. The English classroom is highly teacher centered with little space left for students. While a considerable percentage of the participants claim they teach speaking, however, the results show that it is done in isolation of grammar with no sufficient linking between the grammar lesson and the speaking activity. The results show that there is a gap between the participants’ attitudes and beliefs from one side and the actual practices inside the classroom. While there is a considerable percentage of agreement that grammar knowledge supports speaking and communication; and speaking makes grammar lessons more interesting, however, most participants state that they find difficulties in including them in their classrooms. These difficulties refer to big class sizes which make it difficult to organize group work necessary for student interaction to develop speaking. Teachers are not properly ready for teaching speaking because they themselves have problems with fluency and accuracy of English. The state exams are mainly written tests that depend heavily on MCQ test items which leave no space for testing language production. The negative effects of state exams confirm Andrew’s statement

(2004) that tests can have negative impact on the learning process; the point that makes students less motivated to embark on speaking activities.

The results also show agreement with Kie's claim (2002) that teaching language structures in isolation of their application in real life activities is not motivating and produces learners who lack communicative competence. The research studies also confirm Ataib & Omar (2015) that there is a gap between curriculum goals and curriculum implementation. This gap is highly attributed to teachers' attitudes which play a great role in curriculum implementation as stated by Hargreaves (1989). Work to change teacher attitudes is important. If there is no enthusiasm from the side of the teacher towards any item in the syllabus, that item will be dropped from the agenda of the teacher plans. These changes require training workshops that raise teachers' awareness and uplift motivation towards incorporating more skills work inside the classroom. This should go hand in hand with support from the school, the Ministry of Education and the Examination Board. The thematic analysis of the open-ended responses highlighted the challenges facing English language teaching in public schools in Tripoli. E**xam-oriented learning, t**eacher incompetence, **curriculum and classroom constraints appeared to** limit the chances of effective implementation of the English program.

Recommendations

Several measures should be considered to achieve stronger integration of the linguistic and communicative competencies. Some of these are:

1. **Ministerial policy reform**
   The Ministry of Education should re-evaluate its existing policies and formulate guidelines that give priority to communicative competence and support teaching strategies that link grammar instruction with speaking practice.
2. **Time and class size adjustment**
   Schools should reconsider the allocation of class time and size. Smaller classes and longer instructional time would allow for more student interaction and reinforced speaking practice.
3. **Re-evaluation of the assessment procedures**

State and school exams should incorporate spoken accuracy and fluency in their assessment procedures. This inclusion can motivate teachers and students to treat spoken language as an important learning outcome.

4. **Professional development**

Workshops should be organized for teachers and program supervisors that focus on integrative approaches for developing linguistic and communicative competencies. It should equip them with the tools and methodologies necessary for bridging grammar teaching with real-life speaking practice.

Limitations

This study was limited by its sample size and the use of self-reported data from teachers, which reflect personal perceptions rather than observable classroom behavior. Additionally, the analysis focused on written responses, which, while rich, may lack the depth of spoken interviews or classroom observations.

Recommendations for further studies

This research can be expanded by future studies that make use of classroom observations, interviews and student focus groups to gain deeper insight into classroom dynamics. Studies across different educational levels and age could also provide a broader understanding of how contextual factors influence the integration of grammar and speaking.

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