

# **Students' and Instructors' Evaluation of The English Language Teacher Preparation Program of Zawia College of Education (ELTPPZC)**

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## **1.Introduction:**

Libya is a developing country of approximately seven million people. Throughout its modern history, the country has experienced a variety of other cultures and languages through military occupation, commercial transactions, tourism, and ties of cultural exchange. After the discovery of oil in the late 1950s foreign companies headed for Libya to join the adventures of local business and industrial communities which were promising opportunities of oil and gas wealth. This situation has convinced government officials of the significant role English language

could play to secure a modern state and educated citizens. Paving the way to that end, the Libyan government has taken it as its sole responsibility to implement teaching English as a foreign language (EFL) in the school curriculum as early as possible. As such, the English language has become a compulsory subject through grades 5 - to 12, and for two more years of college.

Libya has witnessed several attempts to reform English education. These efforts, however, dealt mainly with improving teaching methods and textbooks used. This trend reached its peak during the 1970s and mid 1980s where positive measures were taken to boost learning English language in secondary schools and other institutions of learning (Youssef, 2012: 370).-

Unfortunately, this positive thrust came to a sudden halt in 1986 when the military regime of Gaddafi, for a political clash with the West, banned the teaching of English in all educational institutions. This decision was in force for seven years which constituted a major setback to already struggling structure of establishing teaching/learning English environment. However, this position was overturned in early 1990s, so the ban was lifted and the EFL was back to schools and universities.

The conditions prescribed so far gave evidence that teaching EFL in Libya has gone a bumpy road. This was very clear to all individuals acquainted with the teaching learning process of EFL in the country. The indications are: First, the leading educational authorities, all along, were only preoccupied with providing English textbooks to students (Barton, 1968: 1-2). The linguistic and pedagogical qualities of these textbooks were not a matter of concern. Second, the EFL teacher education programs and the selection policies of EFL teachers were left to changing political circumstances. From the early years of independence up to 2000s, teachers' preparation programs and regulations were a copy of the Egyptian model.

Not only that, but most EFL secondary school teachers were Egyptian nationals ( Omar, 2014: 32). Added to that, the Libyan teachers of EFL were during the ban restriction asked to teach academic subjects instead. So, when the ban was lifted and EFL teaching was back into the curriculum, teachers found themselves feel despaired, less confident, less motivated, and unqualified to teach the newly adopted Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach (UNESCO, 1994: 24).

The negligence of research in the area of EFL teacher preparation programs in Libya is a matter of surprise. Reviewing literature related to EFL teaching development in the country reveals that hundreds of research theses and articles have been written on almost all aspects of teaching EFL to Elementary and secondary students. But one could find only a few empirical studies that directly dealt with evaluation of EFL teacher preparation programs. These studies were conducted by Hawana (1981) and Elhensheri (2004). Both studies' research context was the EFL teacher preparation program of the Department of English of Tripoli University (then called Alfateh University).

So, this empirical study comes in this regard to shed the light on the importance of studying this subject to concerned local institutions; both EFL teacher educators and field practitioners. In addition, it has been conducted in a new training setting which is the Department of English at Zawia College of Education, University of Zawia.

## **2. Objectives of the Study:**

As stated in the introduction, there is a limited number of empirical studies on the four-year pre-service EFL teacher education in Libya. Except for a few studies not much has been researched or written with respect to

the evaluation of such programs. As such, this study is an attempt to describe.

the English language teacher preparation program of the Department of English at Zawia College of Education (ELTPPZC), University of Zawia. Specifically, the present study sought to answer the following questions:

(1) What are the positive and negative aspects of the ELTPPZC from the perspective of the fourth year students of the program?. (Negative aspects concept is used in the sense of being either weaknesses, below one's expectations, or below normal standards).

(2) What are the positive and negative aspects of the ELTPPZC from the perspective of the instructors of the program?. (Negative aspects concept is used in the sense of being either weaknesses, below one's expectations, or below normal standards).

(3) Are there any significant differences between the students' perspective and that of their instructors regarding the ELTPPZC?

### **3. Need for the Study:**

More than thirty five years have passed since the establishment of the first ELTPPZC at Zawia University in 1983. The affiliation of the program has changed overtime from the College of Education , to the College of Arts (within Zawia University organization), to the Higher Institute for the Preparation of Teachers (within the Ministry of Education system), to moving back to the university as a Zawia College of Education. Despite this long period of time as well as the sudden government's decisions to move the program from one teaching institute to another, no one single scientific research has so far addressed the issue and its consequences. This study, then, comes as a matter of necessity to evaluate

the degree of efficiency of the preparation program being delivered to students. The healthy system of any human group work is the open one whereby the system regularly exchanges feedback messages with its internal components and external environment (Katz, 2017). Hence, the present study aims to get a feedback of students and their instructors in relation to their evaluation of the ELTPPZC.

Similar studies, that were carried out to evaluate the English teacher preparation program at Tripoli University (ETPPTU), revealed discouraging results. The pioneering study was that of Walid Hawaana (1981). The study pointed out that the major weakness of the program was its failure to achieve any of its objectives. Just to mention a few of the bothering findings; the program graduates were “unable to express themselves in the English language to work in the government”. Also, “they were not adequately prepared to teach English in the junior high schools” (Hawaana, 1982: 24).

The other study aimed at pinpointing the strong and weak elements of the (ETPPTU) as seen by its student teachers. The result was that 88% of those students believed the program was not related to their needs and interests. Also, 64% of them said that they were unable to communicate with native speakers. Added to that, 76% of the participants found the program unhelpful to them to reflect on their teaching performance (Elhenshire, 2004: 204).

When looking at teaching of EFL in Libya, on a large scale, there is an ample evidence that it faces serious deficiencies (Soliman, 2013: 6). Among these, secondary school graduates are unable to express themselves in simple English, either in reading or writing. And the lack of proficiency among EFL teachers was the main contributing factor to that (Balhuq,

1982). In his study of Libyan training centers for pre-service and in-service English teachers, Fenaish (1981) stated that, apart from external limitations such as insufficient teaching times and limited teaching resources, EFL teachers in most schools feel disappointed by their low proficiency in speaking English and in using technology during teaching times.

There are some researchers who attribute the Libyan students' learning difficulties to most of teachers who suffer from "lack of fluency of English, lack of English language knowledge, lack of awareness of the function of English in its culture, and lack of confidence of themselves as users of English" (Omar, 2014: 162). To this effect, Ibrahim (Ibrahim, et al, 2017: 2) puts the blame of low quality EFL teachers on the preparation program departments. He states that "The quality of English language teacher education in Libya is underdeveloped" because "the Libyan government's accreditation procedures for universities' programs are not well developed". With the same token, In a study to assess the EFL teachers' performance in some Tripoli secondary schools El-Saadi (2008: 42,43) found it to be low. And that low performance was related in part to the inadequate pre-service teacher preparation which they attended in college. So, within these unfavorable findings concerning the EFL pre-service teacher education in the country, anyone who is connected to ELTPPZC is curious enough to find out if students and instructors of the program are satisfied with their outcomes.

#### **4. Brief Review of Literature:**

No one can deny the benefit of evaluation of ELTPP, from time to time, in any institution offering pre-service teacher education. This process enables educators to improve program content and cater the search for

better practice (Goktepe, 2015). However, the literature on ELTPP goes back to the early 1990s where researchers became more interested in teacher education in general and in English teacher education in particular (Ping,2015). And the focus of most literature was on how to achieve balance between linguistic, pedagogic, and managerial competence of ELTPP (Richards, 2009). In addition, one should not be confused by reading different terms for ELTPP such as pre-service teacher education and teacher preparation programs. Both of them refer to the same phenomenon.

The main topic of discussion as related to ELTPP evaluation has been the weight which must be given to each of its components. Wedell (1992) paid attention to how courses of the program distributed between linguistic, pedagogic, and classroom management. Whereas Richards (2009) suggests “a scheme made up of ten types of knowledge (language proficiency factor, content knowledge, teaching skills, contextual knowledge, teacher’s identity, learner-focused teaching, subject matter knowledge, pedagogical reasoning skills, and decision-making skills”. Gholami (2016) who has extensively written on this issue believes that ELTPP should make student teachers familiar with the teaching technology, techniques, as well as practices to succeed on the job later on.

Many studies on evaluation of ELTPP have been carried out in different cultural contexts all over the world to upgrade the academic and professional quality of their local programs. This effort, eventually, led to the appearance of new concepts, models, and applications of ELTPP, such as “student centered vs. teacher centered teaching” and “learner autonomy vs. teacher autonomy curriculum” (Smith, 2000).

To give some examples of these studies, Al-Gaeed (1983) in his doctoral dissertation on ELTPP in Saudi Arabia found that student teachers and in-service teachers held positive attitudes towards the linguistic, methodology, and teaching practice courses as well as the expertise of their university professors. In Turkey, Salli-Copur (2008) explored if graduates of ELTPP perceived themselves as competent teachers, and which component of the program helped them to gain this competency. The study revealed that the participants saw themselves to be competent in most areas required by the Turkish Higher Education Council. However, the participants expressed a need for improvements in areas of language knowledge, spoken use of English, classroom management, and students' assessment.

Coskun (2010: 24), who is a leading expert in the area of ELTPP's evaluation and development, conducted a study on the pre-service English teacher education program components that were in need of improvement or maintenance both from teachers' and students' perspectives. He used Peacock's model (Peacock, 2009) to evaluate ELTPP in a Turkish social setting. The collected data has shown that teachers and students shared the same view about most program components. However, they had a different look at the balance among the pedagogic and linguistic components. Teachers believed that the linguistic component was not efficient enough to improve students' linguistic competence; while students believed that it was the pedagogic component that needed improvements.

Peacock (2009) offered a model for the evaluation of ELTPP by describing its weaknesses and strengths, and to show the amount of success achieved in meeting students' needs. He applied his model in Hong Kong area and collected data based on course content analysis, group discussion,

individual interview, and a questionnaire. These qualitative and quantitative instruments dealt with major aspects of the evaluated program. Peacock claimed that the data-collection instruments in his model functioned well in the Hong Kong context, and he later claimed that his model could facilitate evaluation of other ELTPP in other countries. He went, further, to say that the evaluation of ELTPP is the route to professionalization of the EFL field and contributes to program improvement. As matter of fact, Peacock's framework was admired and used by many researchers in the field in many countries who were satisfied with the results obtained (Coskun,2010; Salihoglu, 2012; Gholami,2016). It is for this reason, I have reached the conclusion that using an adapted version of Peacock's (2009) Foreign Language Teacher Education Program Evaluation questionnaire would achieve the objectives of this study.

## **5. Design of the study:**

The data of this study was collected through an adapted form of the student-22 item questionnaire used by Peacock ( Peacock, 2009: 262-63). The slightly adapted form that was used in this study consisted of 25 items relevant to the ELTPPZC setting. The questionnaire asked students and instructors about their perception of the ELTPPZC (see. Appendix 1, 2). The items of the questionnaire were centered on issues, such as, linkage between courses, avoidance of overlapping information, teaching practice, interaction between instructors and students, and adequacy of teaching/learning facilities.

The participants were 64 of 4<sup>th</sup> year students who enrolled at the Department of English, Zawia College of Education, Zawia University; and 14 out of 20 instructors of the Department for the academic year

2016/2017. However, I should mention that these figures refer to those individuals who attended classes in the last two weeks of May 2017.

The participants were asked to evaluate the program presented to them in their four undergraduate years. They could do so by selecting a response from a scale ranged from 1 to 3 for the responses. The score 1 indicated the notion of disagreement with the statement, the score 2 for not being sure to either agree or disagree, and the score 3 for agreeing with the statement.

## **6. Validity and Reliability of Questionnaire:**

The construct validity of the questionnaire was ensured by consulting two experts in the field of English language and teaching methodology. Neither of the experts had any modifications. The data obtained by the questionnaire were treated by the statistical package (SPSS version 22). The questionnaire reliability was found to be reasonably good with a Cronbach's alpha coefficient at value 0.662.

## **7. The Findings:**

The analysis of the data obtained, according to the three objectives of this study, has led to the following results:

1) Few students expressed their disagreement with any of the statements of the questionnaire. The only exception was that 33% of the participants disagreed with the statement (No. 7) to the effect that there were not enough courses for teaching the listening skill of English. (see Appendix 3).

2) Few instructors expressed their disagreement with most of the questionnaire's statements. However, A) 36% of them disagreed with the

statement (No. 2) to the effect that there was overlapping information between the English courses; B) 36% of them disagreed with the statement (No. 10) to the effect that there was a shortage of instructional media necessary for teaching English; and C) 43% of them disagreed with the statement (No. 16) to the effect that the program did not prepare prospective teachers to be able to evaluate their performance on the job. (see Appendix 3).

3) The students agreed with eleven statements of the questionnaire as follows (Table No. 1):

**Table 1**  
**Questionnaire Statements Agreed to by Students\*\***

No	Statements	# Stud.	%
1	good linkage between English courses	38	59%
3	gave students adequate training in English.	36	56%
4	gave students adequate training in teach. skills.	37	58%
8	adequate courses for teaching writing skill.	33	52%
15	prepared students to teach English in classroom	42	65%
16	taught students to evaluate oneself as a teacher.	35	54%
17	taught students classroom management skills.	44	69%
21	The total course load of program is reasonable.	39	61%
22	Understand relation. between. theory and practice	39	61%
24	encourage student-group work for learning.	46	72%
25	After graduation, students ready to teach English.	42	66%

**\*\*When 50% or higher of students agreed with the statement.**

4) The students inclined to feel uncertain of their feelings toward thirteen statements of the questionnaire as follows (Table 2):

**Table 2**  
**Questionnaire Statements Which Students**  
**Most Likely Felt “Uncertain” About**

No	Statements	# Stud.	%
2	avoids overlapping information between courses	35	55%
5	met students needs of learning English	24	36%
6	adequate courses for teaching speaking skill.	21	33%
9	adequate courses for teaching reading skill	25	39%
10	adequate instructional media for teaching	28	44%
11	sufficient time for teaching practice.	23	36%
12	priority to content memorization in learning	29	45%
13	balance of lingu., litera., and teach. components	26	41%
14	overlapping informa. between educa. courses.	26	41%
18	extra activities for commu. Lang. learning.	28	44%
19	posit. atmos. between instructors and students.	24	38%
20	students present ideas for program improve..	24	38%
23	should allow for elective courses.	27	42%

5) The instructors agreed with seven statements of the questionnaire as follows (Table No. 3):

**Table 3**  
**Questionnaire Statements Agreed to by Instructors\*\***

No	Statements	# Stud.	%
6	adequate courses for teaching speaking skill	8	57%
8	adequate courses for teaching writing skill	10	71%
9	adequate courses for teaching reading skill	9	64%
14	overlapping informa. between educa. Courses	8	57%
15	prepared students to teach English in classroom	7	50%
17	taught students classroom management skills	7	50%
24	taught students classroom management skills.	12	86%

**\*\*When 50% or higher of instructors agreed with the statement.**

6) The instructors felt uncertain toward nine statements of the questionnaire as follows (Table 4):

**Table 4**  
**Questionnaire Statements Which Instructors**  
**Felt “ Uncertain “ About**

No	Statements	# Stud.	%
1	good linkage between English courses	7	50%
4	gave students adequate training in teach. skills.	8	57%
5	met students needs of learning English.	9	64%
10	adequate instructional media for teaching	9	64%
11	sufficient time for teaching practice.	7	50%
12	priority to content memorization in learning	8	57%
18	extra activities for commu. Lang. learning.	7	50%
21	The total course load of program is reasonable	8	57%
25	understand relation. betwe. theory and practice	11	79%

7) Concerning the third objective of this study, the data obtained analysis has indicated that there were no significant differences between the students' and instructors' preferences toward twenty three of the statements of the questionnaire. Using Levene's Test for Equality of Variances at 0.05 level of significance has revealed just one significant difference related to the statement No. 25; whereby, students said that after graduation they would be competent to teach English in public schools. The instructors, however, said that they were not sure that it would be the case (Table 5):

**Table 5**  
**Significant Differences between Students' and Instructors'**  
**Preferences Toward some Statements of the Questionnaire**  
**Using Levene's Test for Equality of Variances**

No	statment	Sig.	St. mean	Ins. mean	t value	2 – tailed sign. .05
2	Avoids overlapping information between courses	.018	2.09	2.07	.106	.915
5	met students needs of learning English.	.050	2.20	2.21	-.050	.960
8	adequate courses for teaching writing skill	.001	2.27	2.71	-1.9	.058
25	After graduation, students ready to teach English	.003	2.58	2.07	2.80	.006*

**St.= students Ins.= instructors \*= significant difference**

From table 5 one can infer that both students and instructors are inclined to believe that: 1) there was some overlapping content between courses, 2) the program had somewhat met the students' needs of learning, and 3) that students received an appropriate teaching of writing skill. But the two groups significantly took different positions as to whether the program graduates would actually make a success on the job. The students felt that it would be the case; while their instructors had some reservations.

## **8. Conclusion:**

This study came at a time that the researcher felt that there was a lack of attention to the evaluation of English language teacher preparation programs at college level in Libya. In addition to that , the ELTPPZC program has not been subjected to such assessment before. Therefore, this study lays a ground for more in-depth research and for more use of multiple quantitative as well as qualitative research techniques.

This evaluation study was based on students' and instructors' subjective judgments about the ELTPPZC setting. This program consisted of a number of obligatory courses with no selective ones. And the findings, in general, seemed to suggest that, to a certain extent, there was a satisfaction level for the students and instructors. However, both groups expressed the need for more student teaching practice and for more language proficiency development. They felt that the program should pay more attention for training students and instructors to use information and communication technology for pedagogical use in the classroom.

The students and instructors considered the program to be balanced as to its linguistic, literature, and teaching skills components. At the same time, they preferred to see some improvements being implemented in the program such as allowing for elective courses, student-group work for learning activities, and more extra-curricular activities to improve the speaking skill of language of students and of instructors as well.

One final note worth mentioning, The Libyan government is required to confirm its political commitment and provide funds necessary to upgrade the teaching profession, at all levels, to that of comparable professions. The road to a progressive country, cultured society, and happy individuals is through education; and education only.

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**Appendix (1)**  
**The Questionnaire / Instructors' copy**

	I believe that our Department of English teacher program :	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree
1	good linkage between English courses.	3	2	1
2	avoids overlapping information between English courses.	3	2	1
3	gave students adequate training in English.	3	2	1
4	gave students adequate training in teaching skills.	3	2	1
5	met students needs of learning English.	3	2	1
6	adequate courses for teaching speaking skill.	3	2	1
7	adequate courses for teaching listening skill.	3	2	1
8	adequate courses for teaching writing skill.	3	2	1
9	adequate courses for teaching reading skill.	3	2	1
10	adequate instructional media for teaching.	3	2	1
11	sufficient time for teaching practice.	3	2	1
12	priority to content memorization in learning.	3	2	1
13	balance of linguistic, literature, and teaching components	3	2	1
14	overlapping information between educational courses.	3	2	1
15	prepared students to teach English in the classroom.	3	2	1
16	taught students to evaluate oneself as a teacher.	3	2	1
17	taught students classroom management skills.	3	2	1
18	extra activities for communicative language learning.	3	2	1
19	positive atmosphere between instructors and students.	3	2	1
20	students to present ideas for program improvements.	3	2	1
21	The total course load of program is reasonable.	3	2	1
22	understand relationship between theory and practice	3	2	1
23	should allow for elective courses.	3	2	1
24	should encourage student-group work for learning.	3	2	1
25	After graduation, students ready to teach English.	3	2	1

Thank you

**Appendix (2)**  
**Questionnaire / Students' copy**

	I believe that our Department of English teacher program :	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree
1	.. has a good linkage between the English courses.	3	2	1
2	.. avoids overlapping information between the English courses.	3	2	1
3	.. gave me adequate training in English.	3	2	1
4	.. gave me adequate training in teaching skills.	3	2	1
5	.. met my needs of learning English.	3	2	1
6	.. provided adequate courses for teaching the speaking skill of English.	3	2	1
7	.. provided adequate courses for teaching the listening skill of English.	3	2	1
8	.. provided adequate courses for teaching the writing skill of English.	3	2	1
9	.. provided adequate courses for teaching the reading skill of English.	3	2	1
10	.. provided adequate instructional media for teaching English.	3	2	1
11	.. provided sufficient time for teaching practice.	3	2	1
12	.. gives priority to content memorization in learning assignments.	3	2	1
13	.. is balanced in its linguistic, literature, and teaching skills components	3	2	1
14	.. has overlapping information between the educational courses.	3	2	1
15	.. prepared me to teach English in the classroom.	3	2	1
16	.. taught me how to evaluate myself as a teacher.	3	2	1
17	.. taught me classroom management skills.	3	2	1
18	.. provided extra activities for communicative language learning.	3	2	1
19	.. promotes positive atmosphere between instructors and students.	3	2	1
20	.. encourages students to present ideas for program improvements.	3	2	1
21	.. The total course load of the program is reasonable.	3	2	1
22	.. helped me understand the relationship between theory and practice	3	2	1
23	.. should allow for elective courses.	3	2	1
24	.. should encourage more student-group work for learning.	3	2	1
25	After graduation, I am ready to teach English.	3	2	1

Thank you

**Appendix (3)**  
**Brief QUE. Statements & Results**

	I believe that our Dep. Of English teacher program:	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree
		S % In %	S % In %	S % In %
1	good linkage between English courses	38 59 6 43	21 99 7 50	5 8 1 7
2	avoids overlapping information between courses	17 26 6 43	35 55 3 21	12 19 5 36
3	gave students adequate training in English.	36 56 6 43	20 31 4 28	8 13 4 28
4	gave students adequate training in teach. skills.	37 58 4 28	16 25 8 57	11 17 2 14
5	met students needs of learning English.	26 41 4 28	24 36 9 64	14 22 1 7
6	adequate courses for teaching speaking skill.	26 41 8 57	21 33 3 21	17 27 3 21
7	adequate courses for teaching listening skill.	22 34 6 43	21 33 6 43	21 33 2 14
8	adequate courses for teaching writing skill.	33 52 10 71	15 23 4 28	16 25 0 0
9	adequate courses for teaching reading skill	29 45 9 64	25 39 4 28	10 16 1 7
10	adequate instructional media for teaching	21 33 0 0	28 44 9 64	15 23 5 36
11	sufficient time for teaching practice.	27 42 5 36	23 22 7 50	14 21 2 14
12	priority to content memorization in learning	27 42 4 28	29 45 8 57	8 13 2 14
13	balance of lingu., litera., and teach. components	26 41 5 36	26 41 5 36	12 19 4 28
14	overlapping informa. between educa. courses.	27 42 8 57	26 41 5 36	11 17 1 7
15	prepared students to teach English in classroom	42 65 7 50	13 20 6 43	9 14 1 7
16	taught students to evaluate oneself as a teacher.	35 54 4 28	20 31 4 28	9 14 6 43

*Students' and Instructors' Evaluation of The English Language* \_\_\_\_\_

	I believe that our Dep. Of English teacher program:	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree
		S % In %	S % In %	S % In %
17	taught students classroom management skills.	44 69 7 50	12 19 5 36	8 13 2 14
18	extra activities for commu. Lang. learning.	17 27 3 21	28 44 7 50	19 30 4 28
19	posit. atmos. between instructors and students.	30 47 6 43	24 38 6 43	10 16 2 14
20	students present ideas for program improve..	29 45 6 43	24 38 4 28	11 17 4 28
21	The total course load of program is reasonable.	39 61 3 21	12 19 8 57	13 20 3 21
22	understand relation. betwe. theory and practice	39 61 6 43	18 28 6 43	7 11 2 14
23	should allow for elective courses.	25 39 6 43	27 42 4 28	12 19 4 28
24	taught students classroom management skills.	46 72 12 86	11 17 1 7	7 7 1 7
25	After graduation, students ready to teach English.	42 66 2 14	17 27 11 79	5 8 1 7

**S = Students In = Instructors**