



**University of Benghazi
Faculty of Languages
Department of English**

**Investigating Learner-Centered English
Language Teaching at the Faculty of
Languages, University of Benghazi: Towards
a Dual-Focused Model of Implementation**

By

Nisreen Salah Elfeitouri

Supervisor

Dr. Hana A El-Badri

Associate Professor

**This Dissertation was Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in
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Student name: Nisreen Salah Elfeitouri

Signature:

Date: 28/12/2025



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Nisreen Salah Elfeitouri

This thesis has been Approved by the Examination Committee:

Dr. Hana A Ali El-Badri

University of Benghazi

Prof. Senussi Mohamed Orafi

University of Benghazi

Prof. Ageila Ali Elabbar

University of Benghazi

Prof. Abdulhameed Ali Salem Attelisi

University of Bani Walid

Dr. Fathi Mohamed Ramadan Akle

The Libyan Academy - Janzour

Supervisor

.....
[Signature]

Internal examiner

.....
[Signature]

Internal examiner

.....
[Signature]

External examiner

.....
[Signature]

External examiner

.....
[Signature]

Dr. Zeinab Mouftah Ben Saoud
Director of the College's
Graduate Studies Office

.....

Dr. Hana A Ali El-Badri
Dean of the Faculty

.....

Dr. Suliman Rabe Elsheref
Head of Graduate Studies
and Training Office

.....

Date: 28 / 12 / 2025

Dedication

This dissertation is lovingly dedicated to my parents, my husband, my daughters, my in-laws, my sisters, my brother, my dearest cousins Esraa and Omaima, my special friends, Najah, Hana, Azeeza, and Abeer. Your presence, love, and support have been the source of comfort and motivation during my PhD journey. I am forever grateful for each one of you.

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Abstract

The teacher's teaching approach plays a crucial role in influencing students' learning achievements. Teaching approaches are largely classified into two main types: (1) teacher-centered approaches, which typically position the teacher as the primary director of the educational process, while students are expected to receive and memorize the information presented by the teacher passively, and (2) learner-centered approaches, which emphasize learners' involvement, responsibility, needs, and experiences. Research findings from international and local contexts endorse learner-centered teaching and highlight its impact on enhancing learning outcomes, particularly in language learning. Accordingly, and guided by the theory of andragogy, this case study investigated the feasibility of implementing a learner-centered English language teaching approach at the Faculty of Languages, University of Benghazi. To achieve this aim, it was necessary to examine the degree to which English language instructors currently integrate andragogy's learner-centered practices into their classrooms and explore their perceptions of them. Respectively, the research was conducted in two stages. The initial stage involved 48 English language instructors and focused on assessing their implementation of andragogy's learner-centered principles using the Adult Learning Principles Scale (PALS). The results revealed no evidence of andragogy's practices among the instructors. Alternatively, the instructors were strongly committed to the pedagogical, teacher-centered approach. Subsequently, the second stage of the study aimed to explore the instructors' perceptions of andragogy's principles using semi-structured interviews with ten instructors. The findings revealed a strong theoretical knowledge among the instructors of the concept and benefits of andragogy's principles. Nonetheless, the instructors' practices were teacher-centered due to several limitations in their environment. Analyzing this study's findings in light of andragogy highlighted the need for adjusting its principles to suit the study setting. Consequently, the researcher proposed a dual-focused context-specific model for implementing andragogy's principles for EFL teaching at the Faculty of Languages.

Keywords: *learner-centered teaching, teacher-centered teaching, andragogy, adult learners, Libyan EFL context.*

Chapter One: Background to the Study

1.0 Introduction

Teachers are the most powerful and influential factor in the educational process (Knowles, 1970). This is largely attributed to the direct link between a teacher's teaching style and students' learning outcomes (Abushina, 2017; Conti, 2004; Doyle, 2008; Omar, 2025). A teaching style describes the teacher's characteristics and actions in the classroom, which are consistent regardless of the subject being taught and the context in which the teacher is teaching. The teaching style is a broad concept that reflects how teachers view learning and approach teaching. In essence, it represents the teacher's educational philosophy and significantly shapes how they behave within the classroom (Conti, 2004).

Teaching styles are generally classified into two main types: teacher-centered and learner-centered (Conti, 2004). The teacher-centered approach, as the name implies, is completely controlled and directed by the teacher. It works under the assumption that learners are inherently passive and only become active when prompted by the teacher. Within this framework, teachers create an environment that stimulates and encourages learners to form correct learning habits while minimizing the occurrence of errors (Conti, 2004).

In contrast, the learner-centered approach highlights the learner's active role in the educational process. It emphasizes each learner's potential for growth and highly values their involvement, experiences, and independence. Central to this approach is adapting the content and delivery method based on the learners' needs and interests (Conti, 2004).

Learner-centered teaching represents a notable departure from conventional teacher-centered approaches. It shifts the focus from the teacher to the learner and from passive to active learning (Blumberg, 2008). This shift has long attracted considerable attention from researchers and has been positively perceived in the fields of teaching and learning. Respectively, there has been an increasing emphasis on abandoning traditional teacher-centered teaching and adopting learner-centered teaching methods (Barr & Tagg, 1995).

Important organizations, such as the European Commission, the EU's executive body responsible for proposing and enforcing legislation and managing policies (European Union, 2024), have questioned the effectiveness of the traditional teaching methods and their strong reliance on lectures and direct instruction. In light of these concerns, it emphasized the value of actively involving the learner and employing learner-centered approaches (Todorovski et al., 2015). Likewise, the Bologna Process, a series of agreements between European countries aimed at regulating higher education across Europe (European Education Area, 2024), has endorsed the implementation of a learner-centered approach and underscored that it leads to greater academic achievement (Lemos et al., 2014).

Furthermore, the learner-centered teaching approach has received significant recognition in English Language Teaching (ELT). One of the pioneers of learner-centered English language teaching is David Nunan, who has strongly advocated for its application over traditional teacher-centered approaches (Nunan, 2013). Nunan argued that English language learning necessitates a learner-focused perspective because students need to actively engage with the language in authentic, real-world contexts rather than passively memorize rules and vocabulary (Nunan, 2013).

Similarly, Ellis (2017) noted that learner-centered teaching is particularly beneficial for addressing students' common language problems, such as limited vocabulary, grammatical errors, and inadequate speaking skills. This is because the interactive nature of learner-centered activities encourages students to create and negotiate meaning, which allows them to expand their linguistic repertoire and subject content knowledge simultaneously (Ellis, 2017). Moreover, Jones (2007) argued that students are more motivated to learn the English language in learner-centered classrooms because they are characterized by collaborative learning opportunities, which allow students to support one another in developing their skills.

The numerous advantages related to learner-centered teaching have led many universities worldwide to increasingly implement its principles (Gover et al., 2019). In Libya, a

substantial amount of research emphasizes the benefits of the learner-centered approach for English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teaching and encourages its application (e.g., El Mezughi, 2021; Elramli, 2023; Masaud, 2023; Omar, 2014; Omar, 2019; Orafi et al., 2021). Hence, this study aimed to investigate the learner-centered approach in English language teaching, specifically at the Faculty of Languages at the University of Benghazi.

1.1 Rationale of the Study

The application of the learner-centered approach in English language teaching has been associated with several academic benefits, such as increasing student engagement, reinforcing the link between theoretical and practical language knowledge, promoting the application of language skills in real-life situations, and enhancing students' overall language proficiency (Gibbons, 2015; Jones, 2007; Nunan, 2013). Consequently, there has been a growing body of research recommending the implementation of the learner-centered approach, both globally (e.g., Althubaiti & Alqurashi, 2022; Du, 2021; Gibbons, 2015; Jones, 2007; Nunan, 2013; Mohamed, 2022; Yaqubi et al., 2022) and in the Libyan EFL context (e.g., Abushina, 2017; Al-Araibi & Saleh, 2020; El Mezughi, 2021; Omar, 2014; Omar, 2019; Omar, 2020).

Despite this global trend and researchers' recommendations, previous studies in the Libyan EFL context have revealed a prevalent dominance of traditional teacher-centered methods, often due to institutional limitations and a lack of teacher training and resources (Abushina, 2017; Masaud, 2023; Omar, 2019; Omar, 2025; Shihiba, 2011). This observation necessitates further research to explore contextually suitable and practical solutions for these challenges within the Libyan educational setting.

The Faculty of Languages at the University of Benghazi holds a significant status as a leading institution for English language education in Benghazi, Libya. Nevertheless, to the best of the researcher's knowledge, there is limited research exploring the implementation of the learner-centered approach in this

particular setting. Therefore, this study aimed to address a gap in the literature by examining the learner-centered approach at the Faculty of Languages, University of Benghazi.

Moreover, this research was guided by the framework of andragogy, an adult learner-centered theory that, to the best of the researcher's knowledge, has not been thoroughly examined within the Libyan EFL context before. By adopting this framework, this study aimed to contribute to the theoretical understanding of learner-centered teaching approaches in the Libyan higher education context.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Coping with the complexity and rapid nature of today's world requires that individuals possess critical thinking as well as independent and practical learning skills (Doyle, 2008). As Herbert Simon (1996) noted, "The meaning of knowing has shifted from being able to remember and repeat information to being able to find and use it" (as cited in Bransford et al., 2000, p.5). Consequently, passive teacher-centered teaching approaches are no longer sufficient to equip learners with the demands of the present time (Doyle, 2008).

Research conducted across various contexts worldwide revealed that learner-centered teaching positively impacted English Language learning by enhancing student engagement, motivation, reflective thinking, social skills, and overall academic achievement (Acost et al., 2023; Althubaiti & Alqurashi, 2022; Du, 2021; Jones, 2007; Kassem, 2019; Mermelstein, 2015; Miglietti & Strange, 1998; Mohamed, 2022; Navarro et al., 2024; Yaqubi et al., 2022).

On the other hand, in Libya, there are pressing concerns regarding the low proficiency levels of English language students. Research has highlighted a connection between this outcome and the prevalent EFL teaching approaches. Specifically, it is argued that Libyan EFL teachers' passive teaching approaches

hinder Libyan EFL students' engagement and ultimately limit the development of essential language skills needed to use the language for practical and productive purposes (Abushina, 2017; Elabbar, 2011; El Mezughi, 2021; Masaud, 2023; Omar, 2019; Omar, 2020; Omar, 2025; Orafi et al., 2021).

In the same vein, during the researcher's more than ten years of teaching experience at the Faculty of Languages at the University of Benghazi, she has observed that EFL students rely heavily on passive learning strategies, such as rote memorization and repetitive drills, rather than on meaningful understanding. Additionally, there are significant deficiencies in English proficiency among EFL Libyan students, who struggle to use the language effectively for practical purposes. For example, in speaking activities, students often struggle to express themselves. When asked to give presentations, it was evident that they had memorized their speeches and frequently relied on reading from papers. The same issue was observed in writing classes, where students showed notable weaknesses in their ability to respond to written assignments and convey their ideas in writing.

Research findings from the Faculty of Languages at the University of Benghazi confirm the researcher's observation that students and graduates in the English Department exhibit significant weaknesses in their English language skills, such as oral proficiency (El-zoway, 2025) and writing abilities (Sukran, 2025). Additionally, these poor learning outcomes have been associated with inadequacies in teaching approaches (El-zoway, 2025; Sukran, 2025).

Based on previous research findings regarding the inadequate language learning outcomes among Libyan EFL students and their link to traditional teacher-centered teaching approaches, there have been constant appeals for further research that focuses on refining and improving teaching approaches among Libyan EFL teachers (Abushina, 2017; AlManafi et al., 2023; Alshibany, 2018;

El Mezughi, 2021; Elramli, 2023; Masaud, 2023; Mohamed, 2016; Omar, 2019; Omar, 2025; Sukran, 2025; Zraga, 2018).

Correspondingly, this research was conducted to study the feasibility of applying a learner-centered English language teaching approach at the Faculty of Languages, University of Benghazi. The goal of this examination was to elicit and offer context-specific insights that could contribute to enhancing EFL teaching practices and learning outcomes in this setting and other similar higher education contexts.

1.3 Importance of the Study

Teachers must be fully mindful and knowledgeable about their teaching style. This awareness enables teachers to understand their classroom behavior and practices, and to identify their strengths, weaknesses, and areas that require further development (Conti, 1985a). Elias and Merriam stated that “the difference between those who are just practicing a profession and professionals is an awareness of the causal factors behind their basic behavior” (as cited in Conti, 1985a, p. 8). It follows that assessing a teacher’s teaching style can be a critical step in their professional development. Moreover, understanding the nature and intricacies of language teaching requires examining and observing language teachers’ actions, underlying beliefs, knowledge, and learning experiences (Freeman & Richards, 1996, as cited in Orafi et al., 2021).

Furthermore, a significant body of literature, as highlighted by Conti (1989) and Knowles et al. (2020), advocates for learner-centered teaching as the most effective approach to educating adults. In Libya, there have been constant appeals for teachers to transition from a teacher-centered approach to a learner-centered one to address the inadequate language proficiency of learners and enhance their English language acquisition (Abushina, 2017; Elramli, 2023; Masaud, 2023; Omar, 2019).

Respectively, the significance of this study lies in its potential to assess and shed light on teachers' practices and perceptions, specifically regarding learner-centered English language teaching at the Faculty of Languages, University of Benghazi. Based on this examination, the research aims to derive insights to enhance teaching approaches within this context. As noted by Orafi et al. (2021), any improvement in the educational process is influenced by the contextual factors specific to that setting. Therefore, this study is particularly significant as it focuses on learner-centered teaching in light of the contextual aspects that impact its implementation at the Faculty of Languages.

1.4 Aims of the Study

The primary objective of this study was to investigate the possibility of applying learner-centered English language teaching, as conceptualized by andragogy theory, at the Faculty of Languages, University of Benghazi. Achieving the main objective relied on accomplishing two supporting objectives. The first objective was to assess the present degree to which English language instructors apply learner-centered teaching in their classrooms. The second objective was to examine the teachers' perceptions of this teaching approach. The insights gained from these two subsidiary aims sought to inform the development of a mechanism that enables the effective application of learner-centered teaching in this setting.

1.5 Research Questions

To achieve the aim of this study, two research questions were formulated:

1. To what extent is learner-centered teaching currently implemented by English language instructors at the Faculty of Languages at the University of Benghazi?
2. What are the instructors' perceptions of learner-centered teaching?

1.6 Context of the Study

This study was about English language teaching at the Faculty of Languages at Benghazi University in Libya. This section describes the broad context of this study: Libya. The discussion includes a brief introduction to Libya and its education system, as well as highlighting the status of the English language and discussing the history of its teaching in the Libyan education system.

1.6.1 Introduction to the Context: Libya

This research was conducted in Libya, a North African country located on the Mediterranean coast. Libya shares its borders with Egypt to the east, Sudan to the southeast, Chad and Niger to the south, and Algeria and Tunisia to the west. Covering an area of approximately 1.8 million square kilometers, Libya ranks as the fourth largest country on the African continent (Vandewall, 2006, as cited in Elabbar, 2011). The population of Libya exceeds six million people (Abdelaty & Saleh, 2023).

The languages spoken in Libya include: (1) Modern Standard Arabic, which is used in official contexts, media, and education, (2) Libyan dialects, which are common in everyday interactions, (3) Berber, which is spoken in certain cities in the western and southern regions (Omar, 2014), and (4) English, which is considered an essential foreign language in Libya that is recognized for its significance across international, economic, and educational domains (Abdelaty & Saleh, 2023).

1.6.2 The Libyan Education System

The Libyan education system comprises four main stages (Tomi, 2023). The first stage is the Kindergarten Stage, in which children, aged four or five, can join preschool for one or two years. The second stage of education in Libya is known as the Basic Education Stage, which spans nine years. This stage consists of six years of primary school followed by three years of preparatory school. The third stage is the Secondary Level, which can include three to four

years, depending on the major students choose during their secondary education. This level is divided into two categories: the academic and the vocational and technical sections, which are commonly known as Specialized Secondary Education (Tomi, 2023).

The Libyan school system comprises three sectors at the primary, preparatory, and secondary levels: public, private, and international schools. Public schools provide free education, while private schools require tuition fees. Both types follow the national curriculum established by the Ministry of Education and use Arabic as the language of instruction. In contrast, international schools have a distinct system that may be based on one of various curricula, including American, Canadian, Irish, or England's national curriculum. The language of instruction in these schools also corresponds to the implemented curriculum (Helal & Nuseir, 2024).

The fourth and final stage of the Libyan education system is known as Tertiary Education. During this stage, students can advance their studies in various fields, including science, technical and vocational institutions, colleges, and universities (Tomi, 2023). This stage is also known as Higher Education, which refers to the academic stage that follows the completion of secondary education (Elferjani, 2015). Particularly, higher education “includes all types of studies, training or training for research at the post-secondary level, provided by universities or other educational establishments that are approved as institutions of higher education by the competent state authorities” (UNESCO, 1998, as cited in Elferjani, 2015, p.54).

In Libya, higher education is provided by many institutions, including general and specialized universities, polytechnic schools, higher education institutes, and teacher-training colleges. Furthermore, the higher education system comprises two distinct sectors: public and private. The public sector was

established in 1951, whereas the private higher education sector was established in the 1990s (Elferjani, 2015).

The duration of study in higher education varies from three to five years, depending on the institution and major. Graduates from higher education are awarded qualifications such as higher technician diplomas or bachelor's degrees (Aldabbus, 2008). Moreover, certain Libyan universities offer postgraduate education, including master's and doctoral degrees, such as the Academy of Higher Studies, Tripoli University, and the University of Benghazi (Clark, 2004, as cited in Tomi,2023).

It is worth noting that there are some marked differences between the Libyan school and university systems. Mainly, schools are constrained by national regulations, whereas universities function under individual management (Gadour, 2006, as cited in Elabbar, 2011). For example, the English language curriculum at the school level is organized and assessed by the education authority. However, at the university level, the curriculum is selected by those in charge of the English department (i.e., heads) based on personal preferences and individual judgment, rather than a consistent and clear policy. As a result, there is a deficiency in appropriate and well-structured course content (Elabbar, 2011; Gadour, 2006, as cited in Mansor, 2017).

Furthermore, universities operate under a hierarchical management structure for faculty and teaching positions (Elabbar, 2011). El-Hawat (2003), cited in Elabbar (2019), maintained that this management approach allowed some faculty deans to impose their management styles and select department heads based on personal or social considerations. Simultaneously, certain department heads impose their views on their teachers regarding the choice of instructional materials, teaching methods, and exam management. As a result of this management structure, there is an evident gap and inconsistencies between departments, faculties, and universities.

In conclusion, the Libyan education system can be considered inclusive and accessible as it provides free education to citizens from the primary levels to undergraduate studies (Mohamed, 2016). Nonetheless, the system faces ongoing challenges due to the discrepancies in teaching and learning systems among schools and universities (Elabbar, 2011). The next section focuses on the status of the English language within the Libyan educational context.

1.6.3 The Status of English in the Libyan Education System

English is a universal language spoken worldwide, with people relying on it in various socio-cultural and economic domains (Crystal, 2003). The international demand for learning English has increased dramatically during the last three decades. Proficiency in English has become a vital tool for global communication across multiple sectors (El Mezughi, 2021). As a result, English has become the most widely studied foreign language in the world (Richard & Rogers, 2001).

Similarly, in Libya, the English language holds a significant status (Omar, 2014). Learning and using English in Libya has become a main requirement for participation in the globalized world (Omar, 2020). In this respect, the Libyan government has prioritized English language teaching. According to the General Peoples' Committees of Education (now referred to as the Ministry of Education), among the goals of the education system in Libya is equipping students with proficiency in the English language to facilitate communication on a global scale (GPCE, 2008, as cited in Owen, Razali, & Elhaj, 2019). Respectively, English is introduced as a foreign language in Libya (Aldabbus, 2008; El Mezughi, 2021; Omar, 2020; Orafi et al., 2021) and is taught from elementary school to the university level (Orafi et al., 2021). Moreover, English is considered one of the most important subjects in Libyan schools (El Mezughi, 2021).

Additionally, proficiency in the English language has become a crucial skill to ensure the advancement of one's career. As a result, there has been a growing number of international schools across the country. In these schools, English serves as the primary medium of instruction through which other subjects are taught. For instance, in Tripoli alone, there are currently 20 international schools (Helal & Nuseir, 2024).

It is worth noting that the strong emphasis on the English language in Libya has also led to the establishment of various English language teaching institutes across the country. These institutions offer a variety of programs designed to enhance students' English language knowledge and skills.

Although English language teaching is currently highly prioritized in Libya, an examination of Libyan history reveals different historical facts. That is to say, the history of English language teaching in Libya reveals a complex evolution that was influenced by political factors, as explored in the next section.

1.6.4 History of English Language Teaching in Libya

This section describes the history of English language teaching in Libya and focuses on its changes over the years. It also describes the English language curricula used and modified over the years in Libyan schools. A brief discussion of the teaching methods associated with these curricula is included to illustrate the transitions between different curricula and stages. However, Chapter 2 presents a more detailed examination of the English language teaching methods used in Libya over the years.

English teaching and learning in Libya began in 1946, shortly after the Second World War and during the British administration (Alshibany, 2018; Omar, 2014; Orafi et al., 2021). During this period, several curricula were employed, including *Basic Way to English* by KC Ogden, which focused on teaching English through a vocabulary of 850 essential words (El Mezughi, 2021). After

that, two additional texts were incorporated: *Basic Reading Book* by L.W. Lockhart (Hashim, 1997, as cited in El Mezughi, 2021) and *New Method* by Michael West, which was adopted in the mid-1960s as an alternative to the earlier curriculum. Both curricula focused on teaching reading and comprehension skills (El Mezughi, 2021).

The first English textbooks specifically designed for Libyan students were developed in 1961 by Mustafa Gusbi and Roland John for the preparatory levels. In 1971, Gusbi introduced a new series titled *English for Libya*, in addition to another series for secondary education called *Further English for Libya* (Orafi et al., 2021). Mansor (2017) claimed that the preparatory stage series focused on Libyan culture, whereas the secondary stage series incorporated English culture. Gusbi's curricula emphasized the teaching of grammatical rules and were based on the audio-lingual teaching approach (Orafi et al., 2021). In other words, it emphasized teaching structure and form over meaning, relied heavily on drills and exercises, and allowed little opportunity for group activities. This series continued to be taught in Libya until the 1980s (Mansor, 2017).

In 1982, Gusbi introduced another textbook titled *Living English for Libya* (Abusrewel, 2002, as cited in Orafi et al., 2021). These new editions emphasized grammar structure, vocabulary, and translation. Correspondingly, Libyan teachers taught these textbooks using the grammar translation method, which focused on grammar teaching and the use of the first language, and gave little emphasis to the communicative use of the language (Omar, 2014). This series was criticized for its focus on isolated vocabulary memorization and grammatical structures (Abukhattala, 2016, as cited in Mansor, 2017).

During the period from the 1970s to the mid-1980s, English teaching in the Libyan national curriculum was mandatory (Sawani, 2009). However, in 1986, the teaching and learning of foreign languages were banned in all Libyan

schools and universities due to political tensions between Libya and the West (Abushina, 2017; Mohamed, 2016; Orafi & Borg, 2009; Sawani, 2009; Shihiba, 2011).

In the late 1980s and early 1990s, any actions that seemed to endorse Western culture, including teaching and learning English, were completely prohibited in Libya (Omar, 2014). English was removed from the curriculum, and English language departments and university faculties were shut down (Abosnan, 2016). As a result, English teachers were unemployed and had to transition to teaching other subjects, and students were instructed not to learn the language. However, it was not until they reached the university level that students' lack of English proficiency became evident, and they recognized the consequences of the government's decision to ban English teaching and learning (Sawani, 2009).

The decision to ban English language instruction had a prominent impact on the history of teaching and learning English in Libya, because it resulted in an entire generation growing up with limited or no exposure to the English language (Abushina, 2017; Mohamed, 2016; Sawani, 2009). It is worth noting that Libya continues to face significant challenges due to the long ban on English. This is compounded by the persistent political instability in the country (Abosnan, 2016).

In the mid-1990s, Libyan educators recognized the repercussions of the ban on English language teaching and learning and realized the importance of reintroducing English into the curriculum (Sawani, 2009). Correspondingly, the Ministry of Education reformed its policy regarding English language teaching and learning and placed a considerable emphasis on English education (Aldabbus, 2008). This shift in the government's policy was driven by the growing importance of the English language in academic settings and the substantial increase in students pursuing higher education, which necessitated knowledge of the English language. This shift was further motivated by using

English as the medium for teaching engineering, medicine, and other fields (Aldabbus, 2008).

In 1994, private schools were established in Libya, and English was part of the curriculum. However, due to a lack of qualified English teachers, English was taught by non-specialized graduates from other fields. These teachers had limited English proficiency and insufficient knowledge of appropriate teaching methods. Additionally, the textbooks were outdated. Together, these factors rendered the quality of English instruction in private schools ineffective (Omar, 2014).

In 1997, English language teaching was integrated into the curriculum of public middle and high schools. However, the same challenges faced in private schools, such as the lack of qualified English teachers and suitable textbooks, were also present in public schools. Thus, English was taught by non-specialized teachers, or those who majored in English but had not been teaching the subject for years (Omar, 2014). Therefore, although English language teaching resumed, significant damage had already impacted educational standards (Abushina, 2017).

The decision to continue English language teaching without a clear strategy led to numerous challenges. The extended closure of English language departments and training institutions led to a severe shortage of Libyan English language teachers. Additionally, it was difficult for many teachers to restart teaching English because they lacked the necessary practice. Furthermore, students at the university level had limited English knowledge. This led to a situation where graduates became English teachers but had a limited command of the language themselves, which further complicated the situation (Mohamed, 2016).

Omar (2014) maintained that the English language teaching methods used in Libyan schools during the 2000s were ineffective. These mainly involved the

grammar translation and audio-lingual Methods, which emphasized grammar, vocabulary, and reading through repetitive drills and relied heavily on the first language. As a result of these limitations and the growing educational needs, the Ministry of Education saw the need to send Libyan English inspectors to Malta to develop new versions of English textbooks (Omar, 2014).

Accordingly, a revised version of the series *English for Libya* was introduced for preparatory and secondary schools in 2000. This curriculum was developed by Jenny Quintana and Bab Mardsen and published by Garnet Education in the UK (Alshibany, 2018). The coursebooks focused on teaching reading, vocabulary, grammar, functional language use, listening, speaking, and writing skills (Orafi et al., 2021). Notably, the new curriculum involved communicative and collaborative language activities to encourage students to use the language in the classroom (Aloreibi & Carey, 2017; Mohamed, 2016). Respectively, it mandated the use of the Communicative Language Teaching approach for instruction, which focused on the communicative use of the language (Omar, 2014). This transition marked a significant departure from the earlier traditional teaching curricula, which focused heavily on grammar, memorization, and reading aloud.

However, in reality, the new curricula's communicative learning objectives were inconsistent with the prevalent teaching practices (Mohamed, 2016). A significant challenge in implementing these new versions was teachers' lack of English proficiency and qualifications (Omar, 2014; Sawani, 2009). Additionally, these new textbooks involved aspects of English culture, which were often unfamiliar to most Libyan English teachers (Omar, 2014). Efforts were made to address this issue through teacher training programs, but the prevailing educational culture among teachers and learners hindered this progress (Sawani, 2009). Furthermore, the training provided to support teachers in implementing the new curriculum was limited and insufficient (Orafi & Borg, 2009).

A study by Orafi and Borg (2009) examined teachers' implementation of the new communicative English language curriculum in Libyan secondary schools and found that teachers were not applying the main principles of the new curriculum, such as pair work and the use of English. Instead, their lessons were characterized by teacher-centered activities and the use of Arabic. In essence, the teachers adapted the content and teaching of the new curriculum according to what they considered practical in their context. In other words, although the new curriculum was substantially different from the previous one, it was taught in the same traditional and teacher-centered manner (Orafi & Borg, 2009).

Therefore, the new curricula were not effectively implemented in classrooms because teachers mainly taught them using the grammar-translation teacher-centered method. Furthermore, the quality of English language teacher education in Libya remained inadequate due to poorly developed accreditation processes for universities and educational programs (Aloreibi & Carey, 2017).

In 2018, the Libyan government integrated English language teaching at the primary school level as an initiative to improve students' English language learning. A new curriculum entitled *21st Century English for Libya* was developed for English teaching and incorporated from the first grade of primary school to the last year of secondary school. This curriculum combines a general English syllabus with essential skills such as study techniques, teamwork, critical thinking, and problem-solving. Moreover, it is based on a systematic, gradual, and engaging program for developing writing and reading skills, using games, songs, and stories. The speaking skills are also emphasized in this curriculum with attention to correct pronunciation and fluency, which are reinforced by accompanying recorded materials (Orafi et al., 2021). This curriculum is still in use today, and English is currently taught from the first grade of primary school to the university level in Libya.

Nonetheless, a recent study by Wheida (2023) examined the teaching of the *21st-century* English curriculum in first-year secondary schools across twenty different schools in Tripoli and found that many teachers lacked the necessary qualifications to teach the new skills outlined in this curriculum, and rarely taught them. Moreover, the schools lacked essential teaching tools, such as PowerPoint and interactive whiteboards, which hindered the effective application of this curriculum.

Thus, many attempts have been made to enhance the status of English language teaching in Libya through various decisions and curricular reforms as outlined in this section. However, the objectives of these decisions and reforms have not been met yet (Orafi, 2020, cited in Orafi et al., 2021). One reason for this failure is the prevailing teaching methods and approaches. Furthermore, the teachers lacked awareness of their underlying assumptions that influence their teaching practices (Orafi et al., 2021).

In conclusion, the history of English language teaching in Libya has involved numerous efforts to improve the educational process. Despite these initiatives, the teaching outcomes remain unsatisfactory, as highlighted in this overview of the Libyan context. This examination supports the aims of this study, which focuses on investigating teachers' current English language teaching practices and underlying assumptions regarding the widely recommended learner-centered teaching approach. The ultimate goal is to provide insights that can improve the status of English language teaching and learning in Libya.

1.7 Definition of Terms

The following are explanations of the key terms relevant to this study:

Theory. A theory is a comprehensive, coherent, and internally consistent system of ideas about a set of phenomena (Knowles et al., 2020, p.11).

Approach. An approach refers to theories about the nature of language and language learning. These theories form the foundation for classroom practices and explain their rationale (Harmer, 2015).

Method. A method is the practical application of an approach in the classroom. With the development of each new language teaching approach, there is a corresponding method developed to illustrate its execution in the classroom. Methods include specific activities, exercises, and techniques that can be used by teachers in their lessons (Harmer, 2015).

Teaching style. Teaching styles refer to the teacher's traits and actions in the classroom, which are constant across different subjects and situations (Conti, 2004).

Andragogy. Andragogy refers to “the art and science of helping adults learn” (Knowles et al., 2020, p. 40).

Pedagogy. Pedagogy refers to “the art and science of teaching children” (Knowles et al., 2020, p. 40).

Learner-centered teaching. Learner-centered teaching, or LCT, is an instructional approach characterized by strong student involvement and influence on learning content, activities, materials, and pace (Collins & O'Brien, 2003).

Teacher-centered teaching. Teacher-centered teaching, or TCT, is an instructional approach in which the teacher has complete control over the direction of the learning process, with learners playing a passive and dependent role (Conti, 2004).

ESL (English as a second language). ESL is an acronym used to describe situations where the teaching and learning of English takes place in settings where English is the primary means of communication. The teaching of English to immigrants in countries like Australia, Canada, and the United States exemplifies ESL in these nations (Nunan & Carter, 2001).

EFL (English as a foreign language). EFL refers to situations where English is not commonly used for communication or as the primary language of instruction, such as the case in Brazil, Japan, and Korea. In these settings, English is taught as a foreign language that is integrated into the school curriculum or offered in private educational institutions and other learning environments (Nunan & Carter, 2001).

ELT (English Language Teaching). ELT refers to English language teaching both as a second language and as a foreign language. The term also refers to the teaching of English as a mother tongue (Nunan & Carter, 2001).

1.8 Organization of the Study

This dissertation consists of the following chapters:

- Chapter One (Background to the Study) presents a brief overview of the study, which includes an introduction to the study, rationale of the study, statement of the problem, the significance of the study, the aim of the study, research questions, context of the study, definitions of key terms, and the organization of the chapters.
- Chapter Two (Literature Review) is divided into three parts. The first part examines teacher-centered teaching. The second part focuses on the description of learner-centered teaching, both in a general sense and within the context of English language education. The third part highlights the theoretical foundations of learner-centered teaching, with a

particular emphasis on the theoretical framework of the study: andragogy theory.

- Chapter Three (Methodology of the Study) outlines the methodology employed in conducting this research, specifically the research strategy and approach (including the research paradigm, design, and methods). Additionally, the chapter describes the steps involved in answering the two research questions by providing a detailed account of the two research stages (i.e., the tools used, population and sampling, data collection methods, and analysis).
- Chapter Four (Data Analysis and Results) presents comprehensive data analysis and results of each of the two research questions as obtained from the two research stages. First, the data from the initial research stage regarding the first research question are outlined and examined separately and in detail. The same procedure is followed with the data obtained from the second research stage concerning the second research question.
- Chapter Five (Findings and Discussion) describes the findings and the discussion of this study's two research questions. It addresses each question separately, reviewing its results and discussing them in light of the study's theoretical framework and the existing literature. Then, it provides an overall interpretation for the findings of this study.
- Chapter Six (A Proposed Framework for Implementation: A dual-Focused EFL Learner-Centered Teaching Model) proposes and introduces a model for implementing learner-centered English language teaching in this study context that builds on the findings discussed in the fifth chapter. The chapter presents the rationale behind the development

of the model, its theoretical basis, structure, and principles, with suggestions for their practical application.

- Chapter Seven (Conclusion and Recommendations) is the final chapter in this dissertation. It begins by summarizing the study and capturing its key elements. Then, it outlines the study's contribution to knowledge, its limitations, and future recommendations.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

2.0 Introduction

This chapter provides a review of the literature related to the objectives of the study, which is organized into three parts. The first part describes teacher-centered teaching. It begins with a thorough description of teacher-centered teaching, its related language teaching methods, and the reasons for its relevance in the Libyan setting. Finally, the first part of this literature review describes the historical shift from teacher-centered to learner-centered English language teaching by highlighting the evolution of the communicative language teaching approach.

The second part of this chapter examines learner-centered teaching. First, the approach is described broadly by defining it, identifying its key characteristics, highlighting its importance, and explaining its associated challenges. Following this introductory overview, the focus is narrowed down to learner-centered teaching specifically within the realm of English language education. This involves a detailed description of the learner-centered English language teaching approach, its significance, and a review of studies that examined its application and related perceptions.

The third part of this chapter highlights the historical and theoretical foundations of learner-centered teaching by exploring prominent insights and philosophies that recommend its application. The discussion concludes with a detailed account of the theoretical framework that underpins this study: the theory of andragogy. This framework guides the exploration of learner-centered English language teaching in this study and provides a lens through which it is measured and evaluated.

2.1 Part One: Teacher-Centered Teaching

The focus of the first part of this literature review is teacher-centered teaching. It begins by defining this teaching approach. Then, it explores common teacher-centered English

language teaching methods, their relevance in the Libyan EFL setting, and explains the reason for this prevalence. Finally, this part describes the historical advent of learner-centered English language teaching through the evolution of the communicative language teaching approach.

2.1.1 Defining Teacher-Centered Teaching

A thorough understanding of teacher-centered teaching is widely regarded as a prerequisite for comprehending the concept of learner-centered teaching (Liu et al., 2006). Teacher-centered teaching has been defined extensively in the literature, but its definitions largely share common elements in their interpretations.

Teacher-centered teaching is commonly conceived as a pedagogical approach in which the teacher is the primary source of knowledge and authority in the classroom. The teacher establishes the rules and regulations, delivers lectures, conveys information, and creates assessments. On the other hand, students are treated as passive recipients of information whose role is to listen and memorize what they are taught. In this context, understanding the material is not emphasized. Instead, students are expected to learn mechanically and reproduce information during assessments. Thus, students are mainly tasked with compliance rather than engagement in critical thinking (Hancock et al., 2002; Freire, 2005; Mascolo, 2009; Weimer, 2013; Mahmood & Iqbal, 2018). In Paulo Freire's work, *The Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, the teacher-centered approach is compared to banking education, where the teacher treats knowledge as a deposit placed into passive students. On the other hand, students are regarded solely as vessels for information (Freire, 2005).

According to Altun (2023), teacher-centered education offers several advantages. First, it can deliver a substantial volume of information within a limited time. Second, it is structured and predictable, which is beneficial for students who are challenged by self-directed learning and prefer the clear framework and guidance offered by teacher-centered teaching. Third, Lattimer (2015) claimed that teacher-centered classrooms are highly organized as they promote a mutually respectful relationship between the teacher and students, and encourage students to be more attentive in class.

Despite its advantages, the teacher-centered approach has numerous drawbacks. Lattimer (2015) noted that students in a teacher-centered environment are more focused on obeying the classroom rules than they are on the subject matter. In this context, communication largely revolves around the teacher directing questions to the students, the curriculum is based on rigid guidelines and textbook content, and the assessment focuses on students' completion of tasks. Thus, students in these teacher-centered settings complete assignments out of obligation rather than due to personal interest (Lattimer, 2015). In this respect, Freire (2005) argued that the teacher-centered approach creates a conflict between teachers and students, which ultimately results in an oppressed society. Consequently, the approach is often prevalent in non-democratic contexts (Freire, 2005).

Moreover, many researchers hold that the teacher-centered approach hinders the development of critical thinking and problem-solving skills because it does not encourage students to explore, discover, and construct their understanding of the material. Also, the nature of the approach is characterized by excessive control over students, which can discourage their curiosity and motivation (Altun, 2023; Carrabba & Farmer, 2018; Freire, 2005). Additionally, the approach relies on uniform teaching methods, which makes it less inclusive and less sensitive to students' needs, interests, and different learning styles (Altun, 2023).

Many adult education scholars (e.g., Conti, 2004; Knowles, 1970; Merriam & Caffarella, 1999; Weimer, 2002) have highlighted the limitations of the teacher-centered approach for adult learners. They argued that the teacher-centered approach is particularly unsuitable for adult learners because it relies on passive teaching methods, which often fail to yield effective learning outcomes for most adults.

In Libya, researchers have consistently advised against using the teacher-centered approach in English language teaching. They claimed that teacher-centered English language teaching limits students' chances of practicing their skills, expressing their opinions, and actively participating in learning. Moreover, the approach does not connect theoretical knowledge with practical application, which makes it challenging for students

to use the language for real and practical life purposes (Abosnan, 2016; Ahmed, 2013; Alfnish et al., 1998, as cited in Elferjani, 2015; Arabsheibani & Manfor, 2007; Azzouz & Taleb, 2020; El Mezughi, 2021; Elramli, 2023; Omar, 2019; Omar, 2020; Orafi et al., 2021). The following section explores common teacher-centered English language teaching methods and how they have been perceived in the Libyan EFL setting.

2.1.2 Teacher-Centered Methods of English Language Teaching

Understanding methods of language teaching and learning is crucial in any discussion in the field of foreign language teaching (El Mezughi, 2021). The previous section described the concept of teacher-centered teaching, its characteristics, advantages, and disadvantages. This section examines some English language teaching methods associated with the teacher-centered approach. These are: the grammar-translation method, the direct method, and the audio-lingual method. These methods are generally considered among the most prevalent methods for teaching English (Omar, 2014). Moreover, they are widely used by Libyan EFL teachers (Elabbar, 2011). It is worth noting that some Libyan EFL teachers may adapt and interpret these teaching methods in their own ways. This means that some teachers use them in combination, while others focus on just one (Elabbar, 2011). The following sections summarize the key characteristics of these three teacher-centered teaching methods and discuss how they have been used and perceived in EFL teaching in the Libyan context.

2.1.2.1 Grammar Translation Method (GTM)

The grammar-translation method (GTM) is a traditional foreign language teaching method developed in the late eighteenth century. GTM has several key features. First, it reflects precisely as its name suggests, which means that central to this method are grammar and translation practices. Particularly, grammar points are explained by the teacher using the students' native language and by providing sentences in the target language that illustrate these points. After that, students are asked to translate these sentences from the target language back into their first language and vice versa (Harmer, 2014). Thus, the first language is used by the teacher and the students. The teacher uses the first language as the medium of instruction to facilitate explanations of new concepts and to compare the target

language with the student's native language (Richards & Rogers, 2014). In addition, students' mastery of grammatical rules is assessed by their accuracy in translation exercises (Cook, 2003).

Furthermore, in GTM, vocabulary is taught by the teacher using the students' native language and by using bilingual lists and dictionary exercises. It is important to note that within the framework of the GTM, language learning is viewed mainly as a process of memorizing the rules and vocabulary presented by the teacher. Another characteristic of the GTM is that reading and writing are emphasized, whereas minimal attention is given to speaking and listening skills (Richards & Rogers, 2014). In this method, students' achievement is mainly determined by the precise application of grammar and vocabulary, rather than by the ability to communicate effectively (Cook, 2003).

The GTM has faced considerable criticism for several reasons. First, scholars noted that the method emphasized grammar and vocabulary learning in a decontextualized manner, without giving attention to developing the communicative aspects of the target language (Morris, 1965, as cited in El Mezughi, 2021; Omar, 2019). In addition, GTM courses have often been perceived negatively by students, who disliked memorizing extensive lists of grammar rules, vocabulary, and the translations of literary texts (Richards & Rogers, 2014). Furthermore, the GTM has been criticized for lacking a supporting theoretical framework that justifies its principles or situates it properly within the fields of linguistics, psychology, or educational theory (Richards & Rogers, 2014). Despite the criticism, the GTM places minimal demands on teachers. Therefore, it received wide recognition, particularly in contexts where the aim is to teach literary texts rather than develop speaking skills (Richards & Rogers, 2014).

In Libya, numerous researchers have reported the widespread use of the GTM for teaching EFL in Libyan schools and universities. They attributed this to the fact that learning EFL in Libya is generally viewed as acquiring grammatical rules and vocabulary. Furthermore, the grammar translation method is used for teaching and learning English in Libya because it is consistent with the educational culture in Libya, which is characterized by teacher-

centered teaching and disciplined and quiet classrooms (Abosnan, 2016; Latiwish, 2003; Omar, 2014; Reza et al., 2007, as cited in Elabbar, 2011; Shihiba, 2011).

Nonetheless, several Libyan EFL researchers have reported negative perceptions of the GTM. Abosnan (2016) stressed that the GTM relies heavily on the teacher and fails to provide genuine opportunities for students to engage in independent practice. Furthermore, Omar (2014) emphasized that the GTM is among the key causes for EFL learners' unsatisfactory English language learning outcomes because it emphasizes language knowledge rather than language use. This fact has been highlighted in Omar's (2019) study on the negative impact of the grammar translation method on Libyan EFL students' communicative skills. This study found that GTM has proven ineffective in enabling English language learners to communicate effectively. More recently, El Mezughi (2021) warned against using the GTM and noted that it limits students' ability to apply their English knowledge in real communicative contexts.

2.1.2.2 Direct Method (DM)

The period around the middle of the nineteenth century witnessed a notable increase in communication among Europeans. As a result, there was a critical need to develop oral proficiency in foreign languages. On the other hand, the dominant GTM at the time was deficient in this area because, as previously discussed, this method gave less importance to the teaching of communicative skills at the expense of teaching reading and writing. Consequently, the effectiveness of GTM was questioned, and ultimately, the method was rejected (Richard & Rogers, 2014).

In response to the shortcomings of GTM, various language teaching specialists across Germany, England, France, and other parts of Europe considered creating specific methods to improve modern language teaching (Richard & Rogers, 2014). Respectively, the Direct Method, or DM, was developed at the end of the nineteenth century (Harmer, 2014).

There are several principles that characterize the DM. The first key principle of the DM is the exclusive use of the target language by teachers and students in the classroom. Second, this method relies on the inductive teaching of grammar, meaning that students are encouraged to discover grammatical rules independently and through exposure to the target language. Third, the teacher employs various techniques for teaching vocabulary. That is, concrete vocabulary is taught through actual objects, pictures, and demonstrations, while abstract vocabulary is taught through connecting words to ideas. Finally, central to the DM is the inclusion of speaking and listening skills in the curriculum. At the same time, there is a strong emphasis on correct pronunciation and grammar (Harmer, 2014; Richards & Rogers, 2014). According to Richards and Rogers (2014), the DM proved its efficiency in some private European language schools where native-speaking teachers were available, and because students were motivated to learn the language.

However, implementing the DM in public education was more challenging and drew attention to several shortcomings of the method. First, the DM assumed that natural first language acquisition is similar to classroom foreign language learning. Nonetheless, the reality of the classroom highlighted notable discrepancies between the two processes. Second, the DM lacked solid grounds in applied linguistic theory. Third, the DM was impractical to implement because it required native teachers or teachers to possess native-like fluency. Also, it relied more on the teacher's skill than on the textbook. On the contrary, finding teachers with these characteristics and expertise was not always easily achievable. Finally, the DM was criticized for its strict adherence to using the first language, while in some cases, the occasional use of the first language for explaining can be more effective and less time-consuming. As a result of these shortcomings, the DM did not achieve wide recognition (Richards & Rogers, 2014).

Research concerning the DM in the Libyan EFL teaching context is limited. Latiwish (2003) claimed that Libyan EFL teachers attempted to implement the DM by promoting greater use of the target language in their classrooms, especially in advanced-level courses. On the other hand, Alrahwy (2008), as cited in Aloreibi & Carey (2017), pointed out that the DM did not gain traction in Libya due to the dominance of the GTM.

Sawani (2009) outlined the challenges of applying the DM in Libyan universities. These include: overcrowded classrooms; the fact that Libyan students are accustomed to a teacher-centered approach; the teaching materials selected by many EFL teachers focus on grammatical structures rather than classroom interaction and target language use; Libyan cultural background often favor weak student-teacher interaction and limited use of the target language; and for cultural and religious consideration, Libyan male teachers prefer to avoid engaging with female students. All of these factors were inconsistent with the principles and interactive nature of the DM.

On the other hand, Cook (2003) argued that the DM brought about a significant shift in language teaching, but it was not entirely different from its predecessor. Cook (2003) observed that many features of the grammar-translation approach continued, including teachers' explanations and assessments of grammar rules. Additionally, the language continued to be segmented into specific components, such as vocabulary and pronunciation practice. This indicates that "Teachers, then, had to do much as they had done before, but without recourse to either first language explanation or translation" (Cook, 2003, p.34). Thus, this method has consistently been classified among the other teacher-centered methods of English language teaching: grammar-translation and audio-lingual methods (Alshibany, 2018; Elabbar, 2011; Omar, 2014).

2.1.2.3 Audio Lingual Method (ALM)

The widespread recognition gained by behaviorist language acquisition theories in the 1920s and 1930s resulted in the evolution of the direct Method in the United States into the Audiolingual Method (ALM) (Harmer, 2014). The American government implemented the ALM in order to teach foreign languages to its military and to enhance the army's ability to communicate with native speakers in occupied nations (Omar, 2014).

ALM is defined by specific characteristics. First, ALM is based on the behaviorist theory's stimulus-response-reinforcement model. This model aims to instill good language learning habits through a continuous process of mimicry, repetition, and positive reinforcement. Particularly, the teacher provides structured drills (stimulus) and

encourages students to imitate and repeat correct utterances (response). The teacher gives positive feedback (reinforcement), such as praise or acknowledgment, to reinforce students' practices. In this context, the teacher endorses students' correct responses and discourages their mistakes. Thus, accuracy is a fundamental value within the ALM; the main aim is to form correct learning habits and eliminate learners' errors (Harmer, 2014).

In addition, ALM is based on a structuralist language learning view. This view postulates that effective language acquisition involves learning the language's fundamental components and understanding the rules that connect them, progressing from phonemes to morphemes, words, phrases, and sentences (Liu & Shu, 2007, as cited in Elabbar, 2011). Finally, the ALM teaches each language skill separately (i.e., listening, speaking, reading, and writing) and emphasizes speaking and listening skills more than reading and writing (Liu & Shu, 2007, as cited in Elabbar, 2011).

The ALM was criticized for many reasons. First, the method's language and learning theoretical basis were questioned and flawed (Richards & Rogers, 2014). Second, the nature of structured exercises used in the ALM prevented students from engaging with language in meaningful ways (Harmer, 2014). Thus, although the ALM mainly aimed to develop communication skills, practitioners noted that students often struggled to apply the skills learned through the Audio-Lingual Method to real-life communication outside the classroom (Richards & Rogers, 2014). Finally, many students reported unfavorable attitudes towards learning through the ALM and perceived it as ineffective (Richards & Rogers, 2014).

This criticism of ALM emerged in the 1960s and was primarily influenced by the changes made in American linguistic theory under the influence of linguist Noam Chomsky. Chomsky challenged the behaviorist theory of language learning on which the ALM was based. Mainly, Chomsky rejected the notion that language is acquired through imitation and habit formation. Conversely, he postulated that humans are born with innate abilities for language acquisition, which involve knowledge of complex abstract rules. This knowledge, rather than imitations, enables individuals to innovate and create new

sentences in the language. Chomsky's ideas revolutionized American linguistics by drawing the attention of linguists and psychologists to the cognitive processes that underlie language learning (Richards & Rogers, 2014).

Nevertheless, the ALM was widely used for EFL teaching in Libya (Elabbar, 2011). This is because many Libyan EFL university teachers and students often favored learning through drilling, memorization, and repetition of grammatical patterns, words, and reading passages (Imssalem, 2001, as cited in Elabbar, 2011). Sawani (2009) observed that the method's reliance on drilling made it convenient for teachers to use, especially in managing large classes. On the other hand, Alshibany (2018) heavily criticized the ALM and considered it ineffective for teaching EFL in Libya. Alshibany (2018) maintained that teachers using this method have reported its failure to deliver the expected outcomes for acquiring a target language. Therefore, it was essential to implement alternative EFL teaching methods that provide meaningful opportunities for learners to communicate effectively in the target language (Alshibany, 2018).

Notably, a recent study by Mohamed (2022) examined the teaching approaches employed by Libyan EFL teachers at a primary school and found that rather than using a single teaching method, the teachers combined various methods, including the GTM, DM, and the ALM. In this respect, it is worth noting that Omar (2014) attributed the failure of Libyan students to learn English successfully in part to the use of these teacher-centered methods (i.e., GTM, DM, and ALM). Omar (2014) explained that these traditional methods focus on theoretical language knowledge, but they fail to prepare students to use English practically for communication with native speakers in real-world situations (Omar, 2014). On this basis, Libyan EFL researchers have strongly recommended that EFL teachers replace these methods with learner-centered ones that actively engage learners and endorse practical application of language knowledge (Abushina, 2017; Aloreibi & Carey, 2017; Omar, 2014; Omar, 2019; Omar, 2020).

The previous sections described teacher-centered English language teaching methods: the grammar-translation method, the direct method, and the audio-lingual method. These

methods may differ slightly in their objectives and principles, but they share a common characteristic. The teacher is the primary knowledge provider and the one who is responsible for directing the learning process. On the other hand, students typically have a limited and inactive role; they mainly engage in passive activities such as reception, imitation, and repetition. These observations contribute to the classification of these methods as teacher-centered. Research in the Libyan EFL context reveals contradicting facts regarding the use of these methods. Despite being highly criticized and negatively perceived by Libyan EFL scholars, teacher-centered methods are still used for teaching EFL in Libya. The next section explores the reasons behind this outcome.

2.1.3 Understanding the Prevalence of Teacher-Centered Teaching in Libyan EFL Classrooms

The preceding sections focused on three teacher-centered methods that share a common feature: they highlight the teacher's role as the chief agent in the learning process while minimizing student involvement and participation. Despite the well-documented negative impact of these methods on student learning outcomes, research indicates that they continue to be employed in Libyan EFL classrooms.

Several factors contribute to the widespread use of teacher-centered EFL teaching in Libya. A primary reason is English teachers' lack of adequate training and qualifications in contemporary methods, which forces teachers to adopt teacher-centered methods (Abushina, 2017; Omar, 2014). Abushina (2017) highlighted that Libyan university teachers are often required to teach without prior professional guidance or institutional support. Adding further complications to this situation is the dominant top-down management approach followed in Libyan universities, where administrators assign subjects to teachers without considering whether they qualify to teach it or need to be trained first. As a result, teachers often face pressure to perform efficiently even when they lack the necessary knowledge or skill (Elabbar, 2011).

Furthermore, the prevalence of teacher-centered teaching in Libya can be explained from a cultural and social perspective. El Mezughi (2021) claimed that the educational culture

of a country is shaped by the traditions of its society. Elabbar (2011) argued that Libyan EFL teachers' practices are influenced by their cultural backgrounds. In other words, they employ the teaching practices they have previously experienced as students in their schools or universities. Moreover, Libyan EFL teachers prefer to manage all classroom tasks themselves and minimize student involvement in activities or interactions, which reflects a shared cultural belief among teachers and students that such an approach is effective for teaching and learning EFL (Elabbar, 2011).

This point is further echoed by Orafi et al. (2021), who noted that in the Libyan educational culture, teachers are frequently viewed as the main source of knowledge responsible for delivering information to students. Consequently, students often view their role as passive reception; they sit quietly and memorize what is taught by the teacher (Orafi et al., 2021).

Similarly, Abukhattala (2018) claimed that teachers in Libyan schools follow the teacher-centered approach because they are expected to follow cultural and societal norms. Particularly, in Libyan culture and society, teachers are considered a role model for shaping their students' values. Similarly, due to a sense of respect, Libyan students often view their teacher as a guide and mentor. As a result, there is a tendency among students in Libyan schools to adopt passive or receptive roles in typical teacher-centered classrooms.

The spread of teacher-centered teaching in Libyan EFL classrooms can also be explained in terms of the instability of the Libyan education system, which stems from various issues, including economic factors, ineffective teaching practices, an inconsistent curriculum, and organizational structures within schools and universities (Elabbar, 2019). Also, the country's political matters, such as civil conflict, have negatively impacted the education system. This has resulted in the establishment of two separate ministries of education for eastern and western Libya. For decades, Libyan education has been shaped by political, cultural, and administrative factors, which have led to complex challenges in the education sector (Elabbar, 2019).

In response to these challenges, it has been argued that there is a crucial need for improving English language education in Libya. Comprehensive research is essential to gain a complete understanding of the current teaching practices and the underlying challenges and to develop a solid framework for enhancing students' proficiency in English through the application of learner-centered teaching (Abushina, 2017; AlManafi et al., 2023; Alshibany, 2018; El Mezughi, 2021; Elramli, 2023; Mohamed, 2016; Omar, 2018; Zraga, 2018).

To conclude, while teacher-centered methods are still employed in Libya due to various social, cultural, and political factors, their limitations are constantly pointed out by Libyan EFL researchers who continue to call for further research in this area and urge teachers to shift toward learner-centered teaching.

The next section ends the first part of this literature review. It explores the historical conceptual transition from traditional teacher-centered English language teaching to learner-centered approaches, which took place through the evolution of the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach.

2.1.4 The Evolution of Communicative Language Teaching

As previously mentioned, conventional teacher-centered English language teaching methods, such as grammar-translation, direct, and audio-lingual, were used extensively until the 1960s. However, these methods led to undesirable and poor language learning outcomes. They focused on English language rules and vocabulary without enabling learners to use this knowledge to communicate effectively outside of the classroom. These outcomes drew attention to the urgent need for an alternative solution to address these language inadequacies (Nunan, 2013).

In 1960, Noam Chomsky pioneered a considerable change in linguistic theories. Chomsky challenged the view that language acquisition was only a result of habit formation and posited that humans have an inborn capacity for language learning. This argument

positioned learners as active participants in the learning process rather than passive imitators of controlled language input (Calvo, 2007).

With that, the need for alternative teaching approaches became more prominent. Nunan (2013) acknowledged that it was crucial to develop a new language learning approach, which enables learners to understand that languages comprise more than abstract grammatical rules and extensive vocabulary lists; it involves knowing how to use different linguistic forms to convey different meanings. This approach was communicative language teaching (CLT), which emphasizes active language use and involves learners in cooperative learning tasks using language and supported by their teachers and specially designed learning materials. It is worth noting that Nunan (2013) maintained that CLT is better understood as a collection of approaches rather than a single method.

Particularly, CLT was developed in the early 1970s by specialists from the Council of Europe (Richards & Rogers, 2014). The primary objective of CLT was to enhance a learner's communicative competence, a concept derived from Noam Chomsky's earlier notions of competence and performance from the 1960s. Originally, Chomsky distinguished between competence and performance, noting that competence refers to a speaker's implicit knowledge of language structure, while performance describes actual language use in specific contexts. Dell Hymes, a prominent American Linguist, built upon Chomsky's ideas and introduced communicative competence, which encompasses linguistic knowledge as well as the psychological, cultural, and social rules that govern effective communication (Hedge, 2000, as cited in Elabbar, 2011). Communicative competence is crucial for all individuals learning a language because it describes the ability to receive, understand, and produce comprehensible messages (Hymes, 1972, as cited in Algwil, 2023).

Central to CLT is the shift from the focus on the structure of language to concentrating on the functional use of language. In particular, CLT places equal importance on language rules and language use for communicative purposes and highlights the importance of knowing when and how to express ideas effectively. For example, in the communicative

language teaching context, teachers teach students how to perform functions like inviting and apologizing, and at the same time, they ensure that they understand grammatical structures like the past perfect and the second conditional. Another significant aspect that distinguishes CLT from traditional methods is the belief that, since language is a means of communication, students should engage in meaning-focused communicative tasks to allow language learning to occur naturally (Harmer, 2014).

The CLT approach has transformed classroom practices and teachers' roles significantly. In previous teaching approaches, the teacher was the central focus in the classroom. However, in the communicative teaching approach, the teacher's role has shifted to a facilitator, and learning has become more learner-centered (Altaieb, 2013, as cited in El Mezughi, 2021). Therefore, with CLT, learners have become the center of the language learning process, and their needs, interests, and experiences have been given considerable attention. Moreover, interaction among learners has been highly endorsed within this approach (Howatt, 1984, Nunan, 1999 as cited in Wang, 2007). In this respect, it is argued that the learner-centered teaching approach entered English language teaching following the emergence of communicative language teaching from Europe in the early 1970s (Howatt, 1984, as cited in Wang, 2007; Nunan, 2013).

Communicative language teaching has garnered the attention of Libyan researchers and practitioners, who viewed it positively and made numerous attempts to implement it (Orafi & Borg, 2009). This is evident in the focus on communicative language teaching curricula and their integration into the Libyan EFL school system since 2000 (See Chapter 1, Section 1.6.4). On the other hand, although the current curricula used in EFL classrooms in Libyan schools are communicative, they are not effectively taught using the communicative approach (Orafi et al., 2021). Several factors contribute to this issue, including the lack of tools and resources and inadequate teachers' skills and training to apply the communicative approach effectively (Wheida, 2023). In addition, limited time to cover the syllabus, large class sizes, and cultural norms regarding mixed-gender interactions in Libya have rendered the application of communicative activities ineffective (Algwil, 2023).

Nonetheless, Libyan EFL researchers continue to emphasize the effectiveness of implementing CLT and suggest steps to facilitate this implementation. For example, Aloreibi and Carey (2017) advised the Libyan Ministry of Education to provide professional development programs for teachers aimed at educating teachers about CLT and how to implement it. Moreover, Algwil (2023) maintained that teachers must be mindful of the principles, benefits, techniques, and activities of communicative language teaching. Furthermore, the challenges of applying the communicative teaching approach must be addressed to improve the educational process.

In conclusion, this section described the historical development of communicative language teaching. Additionally, it explained the connection between communicative language teaching and learner-centered language teaching by highlighting that the former has significantly influenced the evolution of the latter. Finally, this section established that the communicative language teaching approach has not been effectively implemented in the Libyan EFL context despite the continuous recommendations and appeals for its application.

2.1.5 Summary of Part One

Teacher-centered teaching is an instructional approach characterized by a predominant teacher role and restricted student involvement. While this approach has advantages and disadvantages, there is a consensus that it often leads to poor learning outcomes, particularly in English language learning. This is mainly because language learning requires active student involvement and interaction with the language rather than a passive role.

There are three prevalent teacher-centered methods of English language teaching, each characterized by specific features. Despite their limitations, these methods continue to be used in Libyan EFL classrooms due to various contextual factors, including inadequate teacher training and cultural considerations. The communicative language teaching approach, which emerged in the 1970s, marked a significant shift in teaching practices and played a crucial role in developing learner-centered approaches in language education.

CLT has been positively perceived in the Libyan EFL context, and communicative curricula have been introduced in Libyan EFL classrooms. However, its effective implementation has faced similar contextual challenges.

Nevertheless, Libyan EFL researchers continue to emphasize the need for improved teaching practices by shifting from teacher-centered to learner-centered approaches and conducting further research in this area. Consequently, this study aims to explore the applicability of the learner-centered teaching approach by looking into the extent of its application and how it is perceived among Libyan EFL teachers.

The focus now shifts to the second part of this literature review, which examines learner-centered teaching.

2.2 Part Two: Learner-Centered Teaching

The second part of this literature review focuses on learner-centered teaching. First, it addresses the concept in a general sense by describing its key characteristics, advantages, and challenges. Following this broad overview, the discussion narrows its focus to explore learner-centered teaching specifically in the context of English language teaching. This involves describing its main features, advantages, extent of application, and associated perceptions and challenges in various international and local contexts.

2.2.1 Defining Learner-Centered Teaching

This section explains what is meant by learner-centered teaching. It begins by introducing other terms commonly used to describe this approach. Then, it defines learner-centered teaching, describes its key characteristics, and addresses any potential confusion surrounding the concept.

Before defining learner-centered teaching (LCT), it is essential to outline the similar terms that are often used interchangeably. O'Neill and McMahon (2005) noted that terms such as *child-centered education*, *child-centered pedagogy*, *child-centered teaching*, *child-*

centered learning, learner-centered approach, student-centered teaching, student-centered learning, learner-centeredness, and student-centered have all been used interchangeably to describe learner-centered teaching.

Chung and Walsh (2000) claimed that the term “*learner-centered teaching*” has more than 40 distinct meanings. However, *learner-centered teaching* and *student-centered teaching* are commonly used to refer to older learners, whereas *child-centered teaching* is used for younger ones. On the other hand, Lambert and McCombs (1997), as cited in Shah (2020), noted that *learner-centered teaching* has become more common and appropriate in all contexts because it covers a broader range of learners. For this study, the terms “*learner-centered teaching*”, “*learner-centeredness*”, “*student-centered teaching*”, and “*learner-centered approach*” are used interchangeably.

Learner-centered teaching has been extensively defined and explored in educational literature. One of the most widely cited definitions is provided by McCombs and Whistler (1997). Drawing from the work of the American Psychological Association’s Presidential Task Force on Psychology in Education, they defined learner-centered teaching as follows:

The perspective that couples a focus on individual learners (their heredity, experiences, perspectives, backgrounds, talents, interests, capacities, and needs) with a focus on learning (the best available knowledge about learning and how it occurs and about teaching practices that are most effective in promoting the highest levels of motivation, learning, and achievement for all learners). (As cited in Reigeluth et al., 2016, p.8)

Similarly, a close review of other common definitions of learner-centered teaching in the literature highlights a common agreement among scholars that this approach involves active student involvement and attention to students’ interests, needs, backgrounds, and

abilities. Within this framework, the teacher's role shifts from being the primary director of the educational process to acting as a facilitator of students' independent and collaborative learning. Thus, teachers in a learner-centered teaching environment guide students in developing their skills and foster an engaging and supportive learning environment (Brown, 2003; Collins & O'Brien, 2003; Twigg & Doucette, 1992).

McCown et al. (1996) noted that learner-centeredness is more than a mere approach to teaching and learning; it represents a philosophy that shapes teaching and learning practices. This philosophy describes how teachers convey knowledge, engage with students, plan their courses, design learning activities and assessment strategies, set goals, and predict their students' achievements.

On the other hand, Nunan (2013) described learner-centeredness as a hierarchical model. He explained that the initial stage of learner-centeredness involves informing learners of and familiarizing them with the learning objectives, material, and curriculum content. He noted that this step has a positive and large impact on students' motivation and curiosity for learning. The second level of learner-centeredness includes actively involving learners in setting learning goals and selecting content. However, the practicality and desirability of implementing this level, along with subsequent levels on the continuum, heavily rely on the specific context and circumstances of the teaching situation. In the next stage, students would be encouraged to generate their goals and create content. Finally, the last level describes the stage where students can connect and apply what they have learned practically beyond the classroom.

Moreover, learner-centered teaching is characterized by specific features that define its approach. According to Lea et al. (2003), the characteristics of learner-centered teaching include: promoting active and deep learning over passive learning; assigning increased responsibility to students; endorsing learner autonomy; establishing a collaborative and respectful relationship between the teacher and the learner; and adopting a reflective approach to the teaching and learning process for both the teacher and the learner.

The European Students' Union has similarly outlined elements that constitute learner-centeredness. These include: students' participation in deciding the curriculum content, teaching methods, and evaluation techniques; monitoring learners' progress through constant feedback mechanism; assigning committees to assess the quality of educational institutions; embracing and building on students' prior learning; encouraging group work and the use of projects, implementing various forms of assessment, research, and information technology; cooperating between librarians and teachers; and adopting of innovative teaching approaches (Attard et al., 2010).

Çubukçu (2012) listed several characteristics of a student-centered teaching program that include: using tasks that raise students' interests in the content; organizing content and activities around matters relevant to the students; creating clear and equal opportunities for students to improve and advance their learning skills; encouraging students' expressions of ideas; using challenging learning activities; and emphasizing collaborative activities.

Cubukcu (2012) added that students in a learner-centered environment must take responsibility for their learning and knowledge discovery. Also, the teaching materials should enable students to relate to their experiences and involve problem-based activities. Additionally, students must be given enough time to process the new information and connect it to real-world applications. Furthermore, students should be given sufficient time for communication, learning, synthesis, observation, and application of new knowledge to social life, work, family, and society.

Moreover, a meta-analysis by Bremner (2021) examined 326 academic journal articles published between 2010 and 2019 to identify the definitions associated with learner-centered teaching. The findings of the meta-analysis revealed six distinct characteristics of learner-centeredness.

Firstly, *active participation* emerged as the most prominent characteristic of learner-centeredness, which was mentioned in 87 % of the definitions analyzed in the meta-

analysis. This characteristic describes students' engagement in practical and hands-on learning activities that include individual learning and collaborative interactions with others.

Secondly, *adapting to learner needs* was identified in 64 % of the definitions. It refers to adjusting the learning experience following the learners' needs, including their affective needs.

Furthermore, *autonomy* emerged as the third characteristic, reported in 60% of the definitions. It represents students' self-regulated learning both within the classroom and beyond, and the development of effective learning strategies that will benefit students' future learning.

The fourth characteristic, *relevant skills*, was present in 57 % of the definitions. It suggests the applicability of new knowledge and skills in real-world situations, and the development of advanced skills such as critical thinking.

The fifth characteristic, *power sharing*, was identified in 47 % of the definitions. It indicates that learners can have a collaborative relationship with their teacher, which enables them to decide and contribute to content selection and their overall learning.

Lastly, *formative assessment* was mentioned in 19 % of the definitions. It describes learner assessment as developmental, which aims to provide feedback that supports learners' learning and growth, not merely to assign grades.

It can be observed that there is a common agreement across the various definitions and characteristics of learner-centered teaching. Mainly, learner-centered teaching promotes active learning and addresses students' interests, needs, and prior knowledge. Nonetheless, it is important to note that there is often confusion surrounding the learner-centered approach.

For example, learner-centered teaching is commonly misinterpreted as undermining teacher authority and assigning complete responsibility and control to students from the beginning (Nunan, 2013). However, the teacher's role is crucial in learner-centered classrooms; the effective implementation of the approach requires teachers with a high level of skill and expertise. That is to say, teachers who employ this approach must make informed decisions based on the individual needs of their students, which underscores the teacher's critical part in this process (Nunan, 2013). Moreover, learner-centered teaching does not mean learners can easily direct their learning without guidance. Rather, learners need a considerable amount of time to develop the ability to make good choices regarding their learning preferences and methods. This developmental stage may only occur towards the end of a course (Nunan, 2013).

In the same respect, it has been argued that there are two interpretations of learner-centeredness: a strong version and a weak one. The strong version of learner-centeredness encourages learners' contribution in content selection, learning, and assessment methods from the early stages of learning (Nunan, 2013; Ur, 2001, as cited in Calvo, 2007). On the other hand, the weak version supports a gradual approach to developing and increasing learners' responsibility (Nunan, 2013). In addition, the weak version of learner-centeredness involves acknowledging and valuing learners' requests (although not necessarily fulfilling them), decreasing teacher-centered talk, and promoting greater learner engagement (Ur, 2001, as cited in Calvo, 2007). This distinction highlights the varying degrees of learner involvement allowed within learner-centered teaching frameworks and explains the confusion surrounding this concept.

Finally, Nunan (2013) firmly underscores the importance of recognizing that there are different levels of learner-centeredness, which are influenced by contextual factors, such as the educational aims and the characteristics of the learners. These factors determine the suitable degree of learner-centeredness in a given situation (Nunan, 2013). The next section outlines the advantages associated with the learner-centered teaching approach.

2.2.2 Advantages of Learner-Centered Teaching

Recently, the world has witnessed significant economic and technological advancements that have greatly reshaped the educational landscape. These developments have raised standards and expectations in unprecedented ways. In the current competitive job market, having a degree alone no longer guarantees employment. Employers are increasingly seeking individuals with technical and crucial soft skills. Qualities such as flexibility, adaptability, and effective communication have become essential in distinguishing successful candidates from others (Robinson, 2001, as cited in Olifer, 2020).

Moreover, accessing an overwhelming amount of information through various resources, such as online platforms, has become very easy in the twenty-first century. Given this reality, adding more information to students' minds is no longer sufficient. Instead, there is an urgent need to cultivate their critical thinking skills, which help them distinguish what is important and what is not, and to synthesize information to form a solid understanding of the world. Nonetheless, educational institutions often overlook these objectives (Harari, 2018).

Given these considerations, implementing a learner-centered teaching approach has become a crucial necessity. It is argued that learner-centered teaching outperforms teacher-centered instruction in several aspects vital for students' academic achievement. For example, this approach is believed to lead to short-term mastery of content, a deeper understanding, and long-term retention of information and knowledge. In addition, learner-centered teaching fosters learners' critical thinking and problem-solving skills, promotes a positive attitude towards the subject, enhances their confidence in their knowledge and skills, and encourages their autonomy (Felder & Brent, 2016; Weimer, 2002). Moreover, learner-centered teaching has been associated with increased student motivation and participation in class activities. This latter advantage, in turn, develops mutual respect among students and fosters more interaction with the material (Lattimer, 2015).

In the same respect, Jacobs et al. (2016) cited a study by cognitive psychologists Sternberg and Zhang in 2014, which found that traditional teacher-centered methods often resulted in superficial and short-term learning. Their research emphasized that to achieve a deeper understanding of the material, students must be actively involved in building their knowledge. Moreover, they noted that not only does the learner-centered approach lead to immediate academic success, but it also results in lifelong learning and the development of essential lifelong learning skills, such as critical thinking, accepting diversity, and collaborating with others. Finally, the researchers highlighted that these skills lead to benefits on the individual and societal levels (Jacobs et al., 2016). Although learner-centered teaching offers numerous advantages, it also presents several challenges, which are discussed in the next section.

2.2.3 Challenges of Learner-Centered Teaching

This section discusses the obstacles teachers may face when adopting learner-centered teaching and suggests some potential strategies for overcoming these difficulties. According to O'Sullivan (2004), implementing learner-centered education is a complex process that requires skillful teachers and a supportive environment with sufficient space, resources, and smaller class sizes. Likewise, Felder and Brent (2006) outlined several challenges for applying learner-centered teaching, which can stem from students and teachers. Firstly, students accustomed to previous passive learning experiences in which knowledge is consistently obtained from teachers may reject and be challenged by new approaches that require active participation. If this resistance is not addressed with proper teacher guidance and support, it could lead to negative learning outcomes and rejection of the approach (Felder & Brent, 2006).

On the other hand, student resistance can represent a challenge for teachers when implementing the approach. Felder and Brent (2006) reported this concern by faculty members who fear aggressive attitudes from students who reject this teaching approach. Correspondingly, Felder and Brent (2006) recommended that teachers educate students about the benefits of learner-centered teaching to raise their awareness and motivation about the value of this type of learning.

Moreover, teachers expressed concerns that it is not easy to encourage some students to engage in cooperative learning experiences, especially students who prefer to work individually. Accordingly, Felder and Brent (2006) recommend that teachers increase the frequency of collaborative learning activities so that students get used to them. In addition, teachers should clarify and underscore the advantages of teamwork for learners' future employability and demonstrate that this approach leads to greater academic achievement. Finally, Felder and Brent (2006) reported that teachers worry that employing active learning activities will affect their ability to cover the textbook content. As a solution, Felder and Brent suggest that teachers assign some work for students to complete at home, while exploiting class time to work on important and active learning exercises (Felder & Brent, 2006).

Furthermore, other factors affect teachers' willingness to adopt learner-centered approaches, such as the need for additional preparation time and institutional support. Moreover, teachers may be less open to change due to their deep-rooted beliefs about teaching and learning, which govern their classroom practices (Hoidn, 2016, as cited in Hoidn & Reusser, 2021). Another reason is that instructors may feel discouraged from exploring new teaching practices because this requires acquiring teaching skills that they do not already possess (Hoidn & Reusser, 2021).

Moreover, some argue that the learner-centered approach may not be culturally appropriate for application in developing nations, where a teacher-centered method has traditionally been followed (Sakata, 2023; Wang, 2007). Implementing learner-centered education in these contexts can face challenges due to teachers' resistance and a lack of essential skills. Additionally, the cultural background in these areas often prefers a teacher-centered approach. The situation can become even more complicated in these contexts due to limited critical resources. Finally, the significant gap between learner-centered theory and the actual classroom practices in these regions may lead teachers to adopt a hybrid model of learner-centered education that incorporates both teacher-centered and learner-centered methods as a more contextually suitable alternative to a fully learner-centered approach (Sakata, 2023; Wang, 2007).

In conclusion, Felder and Brent (2006) acknowledged that employing the learner-centered approach is often accompanied by complications and challenges. They advised teachers to be mindful of these difficulties and how to address them, which requires patience, confidence, and effort from the teacher. However, the researchers pointed out that the academic gains of learner-centered teaching, such as enhanced student learning, improved self-perception, and positive attitudes towards the subjects, are ultimately rewarding (Felder & Brent, 2006).

The previous sections described learner-centered teaching in general terms without focusing on any specific subject area. The following sections examine this concept specifically within the context of English language instruction, which is the main focus of this study.

2.2.4 Learner-Centered English Language Teaching

As previously noted (See Section 2.1.3), the learner-centered approach entered English language teaching after the evolution of the Communicative Language Teaching approach. While the Communicative Language Teaching approach encompasses numerous principles, a central one is learner-centered teaching. Learner-centered English language teaching gained wide recognition because traditional, teacher-centered methods proved ineffective for English language students. These methods' exclusive and extensive focus on memorizing grammatical rules and vocabulary hindered students' ability to apply their knowledge in practical and communicative contexts (Nunan, 2013).

Respectively, the learner-centered approach has been explored broadly in English language teaching. The work of prominent scholars such as Nunan, Jones, and Tudor is frequently referenced in this field. Nunan (1999) explained the main features of a learner-centered English language teaching approach. First, the learner-centered language teaching approach relies on authentic materials in the classroom, which are used both as language input and as a learning resource to foster genuine communication in the target language. Second, it promotes inductive learning, where learners are encouraged to discover language patterns independently through meaningful and guiding activities.

Third, it heavily relies on collaborative methods, such as working in pairs or groups to engage learners in interactive and purposeful experiences. Lastly, Nunan (1999) highlighted that the learner-centered English language teaching approach is adaptable to various contexts, even in settings where teacher-centered instruction was previously the norm.

Moreover, Jones (2007) presented a description for implementing a learner-centered English language teaching approach, which addresses the four main language skills: reading, listening, writing, and speaking.

For example, concerning reading skills, Jones (2007) recommended that students read texts before class to allow more efficient use of classroom time. During class, teachers can facilitate comprehension of previously read texts by engaging students in interactive discussions where they share insights and reflect on their understanding of the material. Similarly, for listening skills, Jones (2007) suggested minimizing individual listening tasks, such as listening to tapes in isolation in the classroom. Instead, class time should be devoted to interactive pair or group work that involves discussions and students' exchange of perspectives about the material.

As for writing skills, Jones (2007) noted that class activities should be dedicated to discussions that stimulate brainstorming and idea mapping. On the other hand, actual writing assignments, such as essays, should be completed as homework. Finally, Jones (2007) maintained that speaking activities should focus on lively interactions such as discussions, role-plays, problem-solving tasks, and collaborative pair or group work.

Likewise, Tudor (1992; 1993), as cited in Wang (2007) and Tudor (1996), identified some key aspects that characterize learner-centered English language teaching. Central to these is the emphasis on learners' active involvement in their language learning and in guided discovery activities that are consistent with their interests and needs (Tudor, 1992, as cited in Wang, 2007; Tudor, 1996). Moreover, Tudor was in favor of allowing learners to decide what they learn, how they learn it, and how they prefer to be evaluated (Tudor,

1996). Finally, Tudor noted that a key principle of learner-centered classrooms is promoting students' self-directed learning skills (Tudor, 1993, as cited in Wang, 2007).

Thus, parallel to the description of learner-centered teaching in a general sense (see Section 2.2.1), the discussion of learner-centered English language teaching involves similar perspectives on the features and application of the approach. Mainly, it emphasizes learners' responsibility, active involvement, and collaboration while considering their interests, needs, and experiences. Correspondingly, there is controversy about the appropriate degree of learner-centeredness that is suitable for a given educational English language teaching context (Nunan & Lamb, 1996). As was discussed previously (see Section 2.2.1), it is important to consider the specific academic context in which one operates (i.e., the distinct needs and characteristics of each learning environment) to determine the appropriate level of learner-centeredness (Nunan, 2013; Tudor, 1996). This specifies that implementing learner-centered English language teaching entails flexibility and a consideration of contextual factors. The next section explores the advantages of learner-centered English language teaching.

2.2.5 Advantages of Learner-Centered English Language Teaching

The impact of learner-centered teaching on English language learning has garnered considerable attention from researchers who conducted numerous studies to explore this area. Jones (2007) claimed that it is widely acknowledged that a learner-centered teaching environment significantly contributes to improving learners' English language proficiency.

In addition, studies conducted in various contexts have revealed numerous benefits associated with learner-centered English language teaching. For example, Mermelstein's (2015) study in Taiwan found more preference for the learner-centered approach among EFL university students than the teacher-centered one. Moreover, Kassem's (2019) study in a university in Saudi Arabia found that learner-centered teaching positively influenced students' affective factors and academic achievements. Another study in Saudi Arabia by

Althubaiti and Alqurashi (2022) reported increased student interaction in learner-centered classrooms.

Furthermore, Du's (2021) study in a Chinese EFL setting revealed that learner-centered teaching enhanced student engagement, learning strategies, and academic performance. Similarly, Yaqubi et al. (2022) found improved language proficiency and skills among EFL students studying in a learner-centered classroom in Afghanistan. Also, a study by Mohamed (2022) in Sudan revealed academic, psychological, and social benefits of learner-centered teaching. Specifically, the study illustrated that the approach improved students' language competence, motivation, self-esteem, and social skills.

In addition to benefiting learners, the learner-centered approach has advantages for teachers. Calvo (2007) highlighted that the approach is gaining popularity in language teaching and is increasingly favored by teachers over traditional teaching methods. In particular, teachers who are willing to develop professionally and explore innovative approaches commonly find the learner-centered approach more engaging, effective, and rewarding than traditional teaching methods, despite the additional time and effort it may demand.

In brief, research findings from several different contexts confirm the academic rewards of learner-centered English language teaching. In this respect, it is important to revisit Nunan's (2013) statement that the application of learner-centered teaching can differ significantly from one context to another depending on circumstantial factors. The subsequent section examines the application of learner-centered English language teaching in different international and local settings.

2.2.6 Investigating Learner-Centered English Language Teaching-Related Studies

This section provides an overview of previous investigations into learner-centered teaching applications and related perceptions across various global and local ESL and EFL settings, including South Africa, China, Saudi Arabia, Mexico, Algeria, and Libya. It is

important to note that the majority of studies mentioned in this section mainly focused on examining learner-centered teaching from the teachers' perceptions.

Teachers' perceptions refer to their underlying beliefs regarding the teaching and learning process (Orafi et al., 2021). These influence how they view the learner, the classroom, and the learning material (Kagan, 1992), as well as their behavior in the classroom (Orafi et al., 2021). Due to the importance of teachers' perceptions, they have been an important research topic.

Some studies (e.g., Smith, 1996) found a strong consistency between teachers' perceptions and their teaching practices. That is to say, teachers who considered grammar an important learning goal emphasized grammar teaching in their classroom practices and the development of learning tasks. On the other hand, other studies (e.g., Hiep, 2007) found inconsistencies between teachers' perceptions and their actual classroom practices. Particularly, Hiep's (2007) study found that although some teachers' perceptions aligned with the principles of the communicative language teaching approach, their teaching practices did not involve the implementation of its principles due to contextual limitations in their environment.

Despite the mixed findings of previous research on teachers' perceptions, Breen et al. (2001) emphasized that any change in the educational process, including the promotion of new teaching approaches or techniques, must take into account and align with teachers' underlying beliefs. Given the importance of teachers' perceptions and their impact on the educational process (Orafi et al., 2021), it was considered crucial to examine them in this study and to focus on them in its review of the literature related to learner-centered teaching.

Van Aswegen and Dreye (2004) examined ESL university teachers' perceptions concerning the learner-centered approach. The research was conducted in South Africa and consisted of all 5 teachers teaching the English Subject at the Faculty of Education Sciences, Potchefstroom University. Using three data collection tools (i.e.,

questionnaires, interviews, and observations), the investigation revealed that teachers primarily followed a teacher-centered approach, mainly because they were obligated to cover the curriculum, and due to a lack of sufficient time and training to implement learner-centered teaching. Also, students' passive learning attitudes complicated the implementation of learner-centered teaching in this setting.

Moreover, Wang's (2007) study explored the application and perceptions of learner-centered teaching among Chinese primary-level EFL teachers. The study involved a questionnaire survey of 1000 primary EFL teachers, 18 classroom observations of teachers' practices, and teacher interviews. The findings illustrated that both the teachers' beliefs and practices demonstrated a combination of learner-centered and teacher-centered teaching. Furthermore, the study outlined various factors that prevented the full application of learner-centered teaching in this setting, such as prescribed textbooks, overcrowded classrooms, inadequate resources, restricted class time, heavy workloads, students' young age, and teachers' lack of capabilities. The study highlighted that the learner-centered approach was inconsistent with Chinese culture and proposed that its application requires adaptation to the Chinese EFL context, teachers' views, and contextual factors.

Furthermore, Ahmad (2016) explored learner-centered English language teaching at the University of Bisha, Saudi Arabia. The study involved 10 English language teachers and all students within the English Language Department using a questionnaire and observations as research tools. The outcomes revealed a lack of awareness among the teachers of the learner-centered approach. In addition, various challenges were identified in implementing the approach, which were caused by students, teachers, and the educational system. The most prominent of which was students' lack of motivation. Next was the teachers' unfamiliarity with the approach. Deep-rooted learning habits and a lack of knowledge about language acquisition processes among the participants also hindered the adoption of learner-centered approaches. Finally, systemic issues such as inflexible assessments, large classrooms, and rigid syllabus requirements were identified as barriers to implementing the learner-centered approach.

Moreover, Bremner (2019) examined 5 Mexican EFL teachers' beliefs and practices concerning learner-centered teaching at different points in their careers. The research utilized semi-structured interviews and a written timeline activity as the primary data collection methods. Initially, all five teachers were in favor of teacher-centered beliefs and practices. However, with time, they gradually recognized the effectiveness of learner-centered approaches. Nonetheless, they did not apply the learner-centered approach due to several challenges within their work environments. Some limitations were related to the administration policy (e.g., prescribed textbooks), which they had to adhere to. Other limitations were linked to the teachers, while some were attributed to the students' attitude towards the approach. In response to these constraints, the teachers adopted a mixed teacher-centered and learner-centered approach. This study raised questions about the cultural contextual-suitability of the learner-centered approach in various settings.

In Algeria, Badjadi (2020) used a survey and interviews with 128 language instructors affiliated with Ouargla University to investigate learner-centered English language teaching. The results showed that despite holding positive views of learner-centered practices, the teachers still used traditional teacher-centered teaching. This outcome was attributed to contextual constraints, such as the time required to cover the curriculum and the demands that discovery-based learning places on both students and teachers. Accordingly, the study underlined the importance of considering a gradual approach to implementing learner-centered teaching in educational settings.

The evidence obtained from studies across diverse contexts, such as South Africa, China, Saudi Arabia, Mexico, and Algeria, leads to two key conclusions. The first is the dominant use of teacher-centered teaching methods due to various contextual constraints. The second is the presence of contexts where both teacher-centered and learner-centered approaches are deemed more appropriate.

On the other hand, there is a notable lack of similar research specifically examining teachers' application of and perspectives on learner-centered English language teaching in Libya, particularly in the higher education context. One of the related Libyan studies,

although not in the higher education sector, is Shihiba's (2011) research, which examined 334 Libyan EFL teachers' perceptions of the learner-centered approach and its implementation in secondary schools. The study used a mixed-methods design, including surveys and interviews. The results indicated that the teachers associated the approach with 14 common concepts (e.g., student-centered learning, independent learning, facilitation, active learning, communication, and interaction). However, some teachers misinterpreted the learner-centered approach by viewing it as unstructured learning and empowering learners at the expense of diminishing teachers' authority (Shihiba, 2011).

Similarly, Shihiba's (2011) study highlighted barriers to learner-centered teaching in Libyan secondary schools, including a deficiency in teacher training, restricted resources, large class sizes, the examination system, and teachers' weak language proficiency. Additionally, students did not understand how to engage in learner-centered teaching, whereas teachers and inspectors were more focused on examinations and assessments than on the learning process. Notably, the majority of teacher participants expressed positive attitudes towards applying the learner-centered approach for English teaching in the Libyan context and acknowledged its academic values. Respectively, the study noted a significant potential for adopting learner-centered teaching in Libya.

Moreover, Abushina (2017) observed EFL university instructors' teaching practices at Elmergheb University in Libya. The research was conducted in two phases. The first phase involved using a questionnaire with 332 students, interviews with 12 lecturers, interviews with 12 students, and a pre-intervention teaching performance questionnaire with 7 lecturers and 49 students. The second phase involved staff training and preparation with 6 lecturers, a video recording of 6 lecturers, and a post-intervention questionnaire with 6 lecturers and 84 students. The findings revealed weaknesses in the quality of teaching and teachers' heavy dependence on traditional teacher-centered teaching.

However, Abushina's (2017) study indicated that Libyan universities could successfully introduce learner-centered teaching because, similar to Shihiba's (2011) findings, the teachers valued learner-centered teaching and were willing to implement it. The research

strongly recommended a gradual shift from teacher-centered to learner-centered teaching and highlighted to the need for sufficient time and support.

In addition, Masaud (2023) assessed the applicability of learner-centered English language teaching in higher education by looking into factors that impact the learning environment. The research sample comprised 100 students and 6 teachers from two (unspecified) Libyan universities, using a questionnaire and interviews, respectively.

The analysis of both students' and teachers' responses revealed that the predominant teaching style in these universities was teacher-centered. Likewise, similar obstacles were reported, such as large class sizes, insufficient facilities, a shortage of staff, and the universities' prioritization of exams over active learning and engagement with the material. Despite these obstacles, students and teachers endorsed learner-centered teaching and its learning advantages (Masaud, 2023).

Masaud (2023) strongly warned against applying teacher-centered teaching and emphasized its negative effects on students' development. Simultaneously, he strongly urged Libyan universities to shift to learner-centered teaching and noted that this shift should be implemented carefully and in stages.

In conclusion, the review of existing Libyan studies reveals a notable lack of recent research in the higher education context that explores the feasibility of learner-centered teaching through examining current teachers' learner-centered practices and perceptions. Nonetheless, it is important to note that Libyan researchers have consistently and strongly underscored the efficacy of learner-centered English language teaching and encouraged its implementation (Abushina, 2017; Elabbar, 2011; El Mezughi, 2021; Elramli, 2023; Masaud, 2023; Omar, 2014; Omar, 2019; Orafi et al., 2021; Shihiba, 2011). This highlights the need for further investigation into the application of this approach.

2.2.7 Summary of Part Two

The second part of this literature review focused on defining, characterizing, and identifying the advantages and challenges associated with learner-centered teaching generally and within English language teaching. The learner-centered teaching approach promotes students' active involvement and participation in their learning, and their opinions, preferences, and backgrounds. While there is a consensus on the key characteristics of learner-centered teaching, disagreements often arise regarding the degree of learner-centeredness that should be encouraged. In this respect, it has been suggested that the appropriate level of learner-centeredness should be determined based on the specific contextual circumstances and needs of each learning environment.

The need for learner-centered teaching is constantly increasing due to its role in developing skills essential for success in the current century. However, implementing this approach can be challenging due to several issues related to institutional systems, teachers, and students. In English language teaching, learner-centered principles share the same characteristics as those found in broader learner-centered teaching (e.g., dynamic learner contribution). The advantages of applying this approach in ELT are significant, particularly as it is linked to improved language proficiency and learning outcomes.

Despite a common awareness of and agreement on the benefits of learner-centered teaching, there is a noteworthy lack of consistent application in diverse contexts due to comparable contextual challenges. In some settings, learner-centered approaches were mixed with teacher-centered methods because this approach was more culturally and contextually suitable. Lastly, research from diverse contexts has highlighted the effectiveness and importance of promoting learner-centered teaching and called for further investigation that offers context-specific insights. Therefore, this study aims to contribute to the literature by thoroughly exploring this topic in the Faculty of Languages at Benghazi University.

2.3 Part Three: Historical and Theoretical Perspectives

The third and final part of this literature review explores different historical and theoretical perspectives on learner-centered teaching to identify its roots and relevance within various frameworks. Moreover, this part of the review highlights and examines the theoretical framework adopted for this study: the theory of andragogy.

2.3.1 Historical Progression of Learner-Centered Teaching

The examination of the history of learner-centered teaching demonstrates that it has long been acknowledged and valued by academics. Early educators and ancient philosophers emphasized the role of the learner, encouraged learner autonomy and independence, and shifted the focus of instruction from the teacher to the student (Shah, 2020).

Among the earliest influential educators who greatly contributed to learner-centered education were the Chinese philosopher Confucius (551-479 B.C.) and the Greek philosopher Socrates (469-399 B.C.). These philosophers emphasized individuals' continuous character and self-improvement, which reflects these philosophers' value for lifelong learning. Moreover, their educational philosophies encouraged learners' success both at the individual level and their contributions at the societal level (Shah, 2020).

Learner-centered teaching is also connected to Plato's Socratic dialogues (427-348 B.C.) (Entwistle, 1970). These dialogues demonstrate learner-centeredness through the teacher's strategic use of questioning to elicit the students' ideas based on their previous knowledge (Entwistle, 2012). These dialogues resemble what is now referred to as scaffolding, where a more knowledgeable person facilitates and brings out the learner's latent knowledge. According to this view, the teacher raises the learner's awareness of their current knowledge, mistakes, and limitations, whereas the learner is responsible for their learning progress (Perkinson, 1980).

Furthermore, learner-centered teaching was influenced by the contributions of Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778). His book, *Emile*, published in 1762, is often regarded as the first comprehensive presentation of learner-centered ideas (Darling, 1994). In *Emile*,

Rousseau focuses on the learner, represented as *Emile*, and his learning interests, while the teacher's main objective was to nurture Emile's curiosity and cater to his learning needs and abilities (Hoidn & Reusser, 2021).

In the same respect, Pestalozzi (1746-1827) argued that education should mainly focus on meeting the learner's needs and considering their mental, physical, and intellectual abilities (Pestalozzi, 1898). At the same time, Pestalozzi underscored the teacher's role and advocated for a strict disciplinary approach within the classroom (Heafford, 1967, as cited in Shah, 2020).

On the other hand, Chung and Walsh (2000) asserted that Froebel (1782-1852) was the first to introduce the concept of learner-centered education. Drawing inspiration from Rousseau and Pestalozzi, Froebel believed that education must be consistent with the learner's natural developmental stages, needs, and interests, and should promote learners' contribution to their societies. Darling (1994) noted that Froebel's views were widely well perceived in the European and American educational systems during the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

The principles of learner-centered teaching were also evident in the views of Arab philosophers, such as Khalil Jubran (1883-1931), who believed that knowledge lies within each learner and requires a skilled teacher to bring it forth (Al-Maktri, 2002, as cited in Ahmad, 2016). Jubran's opinions on teaching are illustrated in his book, *The Prophet*, in which he emphasized that a teacher's role is not to convey knowledge to students, but rather to guide them in discovering and building their own understanding (Al-Khazraji, Abdullah & Eng, 2013).

Therefore, the roots of learner-centered teaching extend far back in history. There has long been a recognition that learners are active participants in the learning process, rather than merely passive recipients of knowledge. Early scholars recognized the importance of engaging learners in educational experiences and attending to their interests and developmental needs. This examination reveals that learner-centered teaching is not a

contemporary concept but rather one with a longstanding history. The next section examines the place of learner-centered teaching in various theoretical frameworks.

2.3.2 Theoretical Foundation of Learner-Centered Teaching

Learner-centered education served as the foundation for developing several influential theories, including progressive education, experiential learning theory, humanistic learning theory, constructivist theory, and andragogy (Hoidn & Reusser, 2021). Aside from andragogy, which forms the theoretical base of this study, outlining these theories in this literature review aims to describe the theoretical basis for learner-centered teaching and demonstrate its significance within these frameworks.

2.3.2.1 Progressive Education and Experiential Learning

Learner-centered teaching is frequently associated with John Dewey's views on progressive education, which emerged in the United States during the first half of the 20th century (Hoidn & Reusser, 2021). Dewey is a prominent American philosopher, psychologist, and educator (Gutek, 2013), who is well-known for his significant contributions to educational theory and philosophy (Knowles et al., 2020). Rejecting traditional teacher-centered education, Dewey established progressive education, which focuses on how children learn and emphasizes personalized, collaborative, interactive, and experiential learning that aligns with children's developmental stages (Dewey, 1938, as cited in Williams, 2017).

Dewey's progressive education philosophy prioritizes the learner over the curriculum, which means the curriculum is structured according to learners' needs, differences, interests, and natural growth progression (Dewey, 1956). Moreover, it views the classroom as a social environment where learners can collaborate, problem-solve, and learn together (Flinders & Thornton, 2013, as cited in Willaim, 2017). Additionally, it highlighted a strong connection between effective learning and experience. According to this view, individuals grow and learn as they interact with the world, discover, practice, and build understandings (Dewey, 1956).

Dewey's book, *Experience and Education*, reflects his emphasis on experiential learning. The book highlights that education should not revolve around learners passively receiving information and settling for explanations presented by others. Rather, students should engage in real-world experiences where they discover knowledge independently (Dewey, 1956). It is important to note that the principles of experiential learning in the book *Experience and Education* were established by Dewey and other prominent theorists like Kurt Lewin and Jean Piaget (Hoidn & Reusser, 2021).

In addition, David Kolb highly influenced the development of experiential learning theory (as cited in Hoidn & Reusser, 2021), which he defined as “the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience. Knowledge results from the combination of grasping and transforming experience” (as cited in Kolb et al., 2014, p.2). Kolb maintained that experiential learning theory helps form a coherent understanding of how humans grow and learn (Kolb et al., 2014).

In conclusion, progressive education views learning as a learner-centered process wherein learners create and build knowledge through their experiences and interactions with others in their environment. Students' real-life experiences, what they gain from them, and how they reflect on them are the center of focus of experiential theories of human learning and development (Hoiden & Reusser, 2021).

2.3.2.2 Humanistic Theory

Learner-centered teaching has grounds in the humanistic perspective on education, which developed under the influence of Maslow and Rogers, two prominent psychologists in adult therapy and re-education (Calvo, 2007; Conti, 2004; Knowles et al., 2020). Particularly, the humanistic learning theory developed in the United States during the 1950s and 1960s in response to the predominant educational theories at the time such as behaviorism (Wang, 2024).

The humanists rejected the teacher-centered approach and the transmission of knowledge from the teacher to the learner. Alternatively, they postulated that learning is an internal

and independent process entirely governed by the learner. Within this framework, the learner has internal motivation for learning what they perceive as meaningful and relevant, and learning takes place through engaging and interacting with their environment. On the other hand, the teacher's role in the humanistic framework is that of a facilitator of learning, responsible for cultivating learners' independent learning skills, which they need in their future learning endeavors. The teacher employs this role through building a trusting and supportive learning relationship with learners (Hoidn & Reusser, 2021; Knowles et al., 2020).

The humanistic learning theory places significant importance on the learner as a whole person and their feelings, needs, interests, and experiences. Furthermore, it argues that a safe and encouraging learning environment by teachers is key to successful self-development and growth (Knowles et al., 2020). Humanists posit that safety and security drive individuals to interact with their surroundings and make choices driven by personal interest rather than fear or pressure (Maslow, 1972, as cited in Knowles et al., 2020).

In summary, the humanist perspective views student-centered learning as a personalized journey that involves the entire individual and is influenced by teachers' supportive role (Hoidn & Reusser, 2021). Finally, humanists view personal growth as an ongoing journey, rather than a process focused on immediate outcomes (Knowles et al., 2020).

2.3.2.3 Constructivist Theory

It is a common belief that learner-centered teaching is rooted in constructivist theory (Hoidn & Reusser, 2021; McCombs & Whistler, 1997; Pillay, 2002, as cited in Liu et al., 2006; Weimer, 2002). Constructivism developed in the second half of the 20th century, mainly by Jean Piaget and Lev Vygotsky, and was focused on children's learning and development. It challenged traditional teacher-centered teaching and positioned learners as active constructors of meaning rather than passive recipients of information (Harasim, 2017).

Constructivism outlined two distinct yet complementary perspectives on how individuals acquire knowledge: (1) cognitive or individual constructivism by Piaget, which explored how individuals' learning develops through biological developmental stages, and (2) social constructivism by Vygotsky, which ties learning to the role of social interactions and cultural contexts (Harasim, 2017; Kalina & Powell, 2009).

Although constructivism has two views (individual and social), both postulate that knowledge is internally constructed but influenced by society and culture. That is, knowledge exists in the minds of individuals, but those individuals are shaped by their social and cultural contexts because people initially develop knowledge in the presence of others who can impact their experiences (Tobin & Tippins, 1993). The two perspectives of constructivism are discussed in the following sections.

2.3.2.3.1 Cognitive Constructivism

Cognitive constructivism was advanced by Jean Piaget, a Swiss philosopher and psychologist, as a response to the prevailing notion that learning is a receptive process that relies on external sources (Hoiden & Reusser, 2021; Kalina & Powell, 2009). The cognitive constructivist perspective argued that knowledge does not develop passively. Conversely, it requires dynamic engagement and interaction with the environment in which individuals construct their understanding of various phenomena (Piaget, 1953, as cited in Kalina & Powell, 2009). This process involves a cycle of adding new information to existing knowledge (i.e., assimilation), and adjusting existing information or creating new ones when new information conflicts with the current understanding (i.e., accommodation) (Piaget, 1972, 1985, as cited in Hoidn & Reusser, 2021).

The constructivist perspective was initially developed focusing on child development. Within this framework, Piaget introduced the concept of readiness for learning, which refers to the child's capacity to learn at various stages during childhood based on biological growth (Kalina & Powell, 2009; Wilhelm et al., 2001). Piaget maintained that teaching effectiveness relies on the child's developmental readiness to assimilate and accommodate new information (Selley, 1999).

The implication of Piaget's cognitive constructivist theory on the teaching process is that teachers should acknowledge learners' individual learning needs and the differences in their speed of learning. This, in turn, necessitates observing students and understanding their challenges. For instance, some students may quickly grasp the material while others struggle. Piaget believed that recognizing students' developmental stages, identifying areas of potential difficulty, and teaching according to students' abilities can significantly facilitate and improve learning (Kalina & Powell, 2009).

2.3.2.3.2 Social Constructivism

Social constructivism was developed by Russian psychologist Lev Vygotsky, who emphasized the role of social and cultural contexts in cognitive development and the learning process (Hoidn & Reusser, 2021; Kalina & Powell, 2009). Vygotsky's perspective drew on Piaget's concept of the child as an active learner; both Piaget and Vygotsky argued that successful learning requires active learner involvement (Verenikina, 2004). Nonetheless, in contrast to Piaget's focus on the individual learner, Vygotsky viewed learning as a social and interactive process (Cameron, 2001). It is worth noting that Vygotsky lived at the beginning of the twentieth century, but his writings were not translated significantly until the 1960s. Since the 1980s, his theories have greatly impacted educational practices in various parts of the world (Gibbons, 2015).

Several principles characterize Vygotsky's social constructivist theory. Mainly, Vygotsky highlighted the role of society in learning. He argued that skills (e.g., problem-solving) develop socially first (i.e., when the child interacts with the social environment) before they appear on the individual level (Vygotsky, 1978, as cited in Bozkurt, 2017). In the same respect, Vygotsky emphasized the importance of interaction in the educational process and maintained that effective learning occurs through dynamic exchanges between teachers and learners, as well as among the learners themselves. Within the same framework, Vygotsky underlined the role of collaboration between the teacher and learners, and between learners, noting that in addition to benefiting from their teacher, students' relationship with their peers results in students bringing unique contributions to each other and deeper internalization of knowledge (Kalina & Powell, 2009). Vygotsky

believed that individuals can tackle any learning challenge with the support of the teacher and peers, and urged teachers to continuously provide collaborative learning opportunities for students (Akpan et al., 2020).

Furthermore, valuing cultural differences, Vygotsky recommended that teachers and students embrace diversity within the classrooms, whether in terms of the variety in ethnic backgrounds, identities, or biological differences. He believed that this diversity adds value to students' experiences (Woolfolk, 2004, as cited in Kalina & Powell, 2009).

Additionally, Vygotsky (1978), as cited in Pathan et al. (2018), established that language is a primary tool that allows children to expand their thinking and learning. He believed children develop cognitive abilities through collaborative dialogues with more knowledgeable individuals, such as parents or teachers, who help them understand and internalize complex concepts (Kalina & Powell, 2009; Wilhelm et al., 2001).

Moreover, central to Vygotsky's theory is the zones of development (Kalina & Powell, 2009; Wilhelm et al., 2001), in which Vygotsky distinguishes between two key levels of an individual's progress:

1. The zone of proximal development (ZPD) refers to tasks that are beyond a child's current capabilities, which they can accomplish with the help of a teacher, peers, and the learning environment. These tasks fall within the ZPD (Wilhelm et al., 2001).
2. The zone of actual development (ZAD) describes tasks that a child can perform independently or when a teacher assigns a task that students can accomplish autonomously. In this case, the task falls within the ZAD, meaning that the child or students have already learned and mastered the necessary skills for that task (Wilhelm et al., 2001).

Scaffolding is an important principle incorporated into Vygotsky's concept of ZPD (Vygotsky, 1962, as cited in Kalina & Powell, 2009). The Scaffolding notion was first coined by Wood, Bruner, and Ross in 1976 to refer to the assistance given to students to help them tackle new challenges while developing the necessary skills and knowledge to tackle similar tasks independently in the future (Gibbons, 2015). In particular, the teacher assists students with tasks that are initially beyond their capabilities. Gradually, the teacher would minimize the amount of their support and intentionally allow the students to take more responsibility and control. As students become more skilled, they can master the tasks independently (Bruner, 1986 as cited in Humphrey et al., 2016).

Vygotsky argued that, through guided practice (i.e., with teacher and peers), the students acquire strategies and language for task completion, which become part of their problem-solving skills. This enables the student to complete similar future tasks and apply knowledge to new situations (Wilhelm et al., 2001). In this respect, Vygotsky underscored the role of the environment (i.e., teachers and peers) in facilitating student learning by bridging the gap between what is already known and what needs to be learned, rather than leaving the learner to figure things out independently (Wood, 1998).

Gibbons (2015) claimed that scaffolding aims to build students' skills and knowledge to apply them for future learning purposes, as Vygotsky in Gibbons (2015, p. 16) stated, "what a child can do with support today, she or he can do alone tomorrow". Figure 1 below illustrates the complementary nature of scaffolding and zone of proximal development, as articulated by Feez (1998) in Humphrey et al. (2016, p.22).

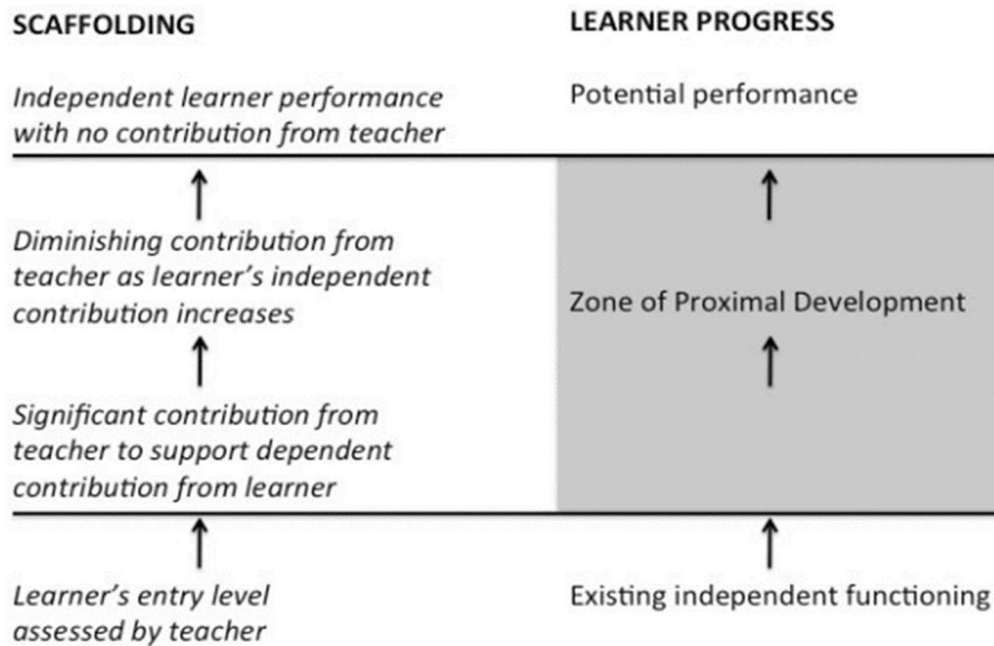


Figure 1: The Relationship between Scaffolding and Zone of Proximal Development

Figure 1 above illustrates how scaffolding contributes to learners' progress, starting from teacher-supported learning at the beginning level and moving toward independent performance. As the learner gains independence, the teacher's support decreases, consistent with Vygotsky's zone of proximal development, which represents the space where learning is scaffolded between existing independent functioning and potential performance (Feez, 1998, as cited in Humphrey et al., 2016, p.22).

When comparing Vygotsky's social constructivism with Piaget's cognitive constructivism, it can be observed that the cognitive constructivist theory mainly highlights the individual learner's active engagement with the world around them. On the other hand, the socio-constructivist theory emphasizes the importance of interaction and engagement in learning tasks within a social context (Wilhelm et al. 2001). Moreover, Piaget and Vygotsky differed in their views concerning child development. Piaget suggested that children progress through stages based on their age and readiness. Conversely, Vygotsky argued that a child's mental growth is not limited by biological

factors such as age. Instead, it is influenced by the level of support offered by a more knowledgeable individual, whether a teacher or more experienced peers (Wilhelm et al., 2001). Accordingly, Vygotsky encouraged teachers to initiate new learning steps even when seemingly challenging, whereas Piaget urged teachers to wait for the student to demonstrate mastery before introducing new concepts (Gibbons, 2015).

In conclusion, Vygotsky's social constructivist theory provided an inclusive framework for understanding cognitive development through interconnected principles: society, interaction, collaborative learning, culture, language, zones of development, and scaffolding (Kalina & Powell, 2009). In this respect, it is important to note that Wilhelm et al. (2001) strongly argued that Vygotsky's theory is neither strictly teacher-centered nor learner-centered. Rather, they considered it a teacher/learner-centered theory, which requires equal responsibility and effort from the teachers and learners.

To conclude, the historical and theoretical insights on learner-centered teaching collectively draw attention to the value of placing the learner at the heart of the educational process. Although there are minor variations in emphasis and perspectives, scholars commonly agree that traditional teacher-centered teaching is ineffective and needs to be replaced with learner-centered frameworks.

Dewey's progressive education philosophy underscored the importance of active, collaborative, and experiential learning. Similarly, humanistic theorists like Maslow and Rogers focused on learners' holistic and continuous development within a supporting and encouraging learning environment. The constructivist theory valued learners' active knowledge construction. Within constructivism, Piaget emphasized the individual learner's gradual development through biological stages, while Vygotsky highlighted the role of socially-supported learning. Finally, these theories mutually reinforce that effective teaching must be flexible, adaptive, inclusive, and centered on the learner's active engagement.

The attention now shifts towards examining the theory that serves as the theoretical framework for this study, namely, the theory of andragogy.

2.3.3 Theoretical Framework of the Study: Theory of Andragogy

The previous discussion demonstrated that learner-centered teaching is rooted in various theoretical perspectives, which strongly endorse considering it as the main and most effective teaching approach. This section introduces the theoretical framework of this study, the theory of andragogy. Andragogy is another learner-centered theory, which was developed with a specific focus on adult learners. The selection of andragogy as the guiding framework for this study was based on its exclusive focus on adult learners. This study concentrates on learner-centered English language teaching at the university level, where the students are adults. This fact makes andragogy particularly relevant for exploration and application in this context.

In the earlier discussion at the beginning of this chapter, it was noted that it was important to explain the teacher-centered approach before delving into learner-centered teaching. The current discussion highlights learner-centered teaching as viewed through the framework of andragogy. Therefore, it is vital to clarify that andragogy, in this sense, pertains to learner-centered teaching, and its contrasting concept is pedagogy, which, in turn, refers to teacher-centered teaching (Knowles et al., 2020; Lele, 2020; Marshak, 1983). In the same respect, the present discussion begins with pedagogy to set the stage for understanding andragogy.

Mainly, this section begins by defining pedagogy and its key principles. This is followed by an account of the historical development of the field of Adult Education, which led to the development of andragogy. Subsequently, the focus shifts to a thorough discussion of the theory of andragogy and its underlying principles. Finally, the debate specifically focuses on andragogy in English language teaching, which represents the primary focus of this research.

2.3.3.1 Pedagogy

In order to comprehend the roots of andragogy, it is vital to understand the concept of pedagogy and how these two concepts are applied in the education of children and adults (Finger & Asún, 2001; Lele, 2020). The term *pedagogy* originated from the Greek words “paid” and “agogus”, which mean “child” and “leader of” to describe “the art and science of teaching children” (Knowles et al., 2020, p.40). The pedagogical educational framework is based on a learning and teaching philosophy that developed between the seventh and twelfth centuries and was first implemented within the European monastic and cathedral schools to teach young male students (Knowles et al., 2005).

According to Ozuah (2005), pedagogy describes the teaching of children or individuals who are dependent on others. It is a teacher-centered approach, where the teacher assumes full responsibility for determining the content, method, and time of learning (Ozuah, 2005). Before World War I, pedagogy was the only prevailing teaching model, which means that adults in that period were taught using a similar approach to that used for teaching children (Knowles et al., 2020). Ozuah (2005) and Knowles et al. (2020) outlined the learning assumptions on which pedagogy is based as follows:

1. The need to know. Learners need to recognize that their success relies upon the extent of their adherence to the content presented and taught by the teacher. However, they do not need to understand the relevance of the content to their lives.
2. The learner’s self-concept. The teacher views and treats the learner as a dependent individual. Correspondingly, the learner develops and adopts a dependent self-concept and plays the role of a passive recipient of knowledge, who needs guidance from their teachers.
3. The role of experience. The learner’s experience is overlooked and is not effectively used as a learning resource. On the other hand, more importance is

given to the experience of the teacher and the textbook writer. Consequently, the pedagogical model relies on transmittal methods such as lectures.

4. Readiness to learn. The teacher assumes responsibility for determining learners' readiness for learning. The teacher makes this decision based on the content that learners must learn to pass or get promoted.
5. Orientation to learning. Learning revolves around subject-specific knowledge. The structure and content of these subjects form the basis for organizing learning experiences.
6. Motivation. Learners' motivation for learning is often driven by external rewards, such as grades, evaluations, and parents' expectations (pp. 41-42)

Thus, pedagogy, which was originally intended as a children's teaching approach but came to be applied for teaching adults, assigns complete authority to teachers to decide key decisions, such as selections of learning content, methods, timing, and evaluation. On the other hand, the learner's role in this framework is highly passive and dependent on the teacher (Knowles et al., 2020). Before the early 1920s, the pedagogical model was predominantly used by adult educators as their guiding framework. However, the discrepancies between pedagogy's principles and the inherent traits of adult learners soon rendered the pedagogical model ineffective (Loeng, 2023). Particularly, adult learners demonstrated their discontent and refusal of teacher-centered strategies such as lectures, drills, note memorizing, and examinations (Holmes & Abington-Cooper, 2000; Knowles, 1980, as cited in Loeng, 2023) which ultimately led a large number of them to withdraw from educational institutions (Loeng, 2023).

As a result, after World War I, significant efforts were made to establish educational programs specifically for adult learners (Knowles et al., 2005). In 1926, Lindeman argued in his book *The Meaning of Adult Education* that pedagogy was inadequate for teaching adults. In the same respect, Lindeman postulated that for adult learning to be effective,

adults must be involved in deciding what, how, and when to learn (as cited in Leong, 2023). At roughly the same time, the pedagogical philosophy was considerably attacked by Dewey's progressive education approach (Leong, 2023). Elias and Merriam (1995) stated that progressive education valued the learner's active contribution to learning and transformed teaching methods by incorporating active inquiry, problem-solving, and social and collaborative skills. Notably, the ideas of Dewey and Lindeman liberated the learner, changed the aspects of society and culture, and ultimately, they greatly influenced adult educators (Elias & Merriam, 2005).

2.3.3.2 The Historical Progression of Adult Education

Before discussing adult education, it is important to define what is meant by *adults*. Knowles (1980) defined adults based on two criteria: psychological and social. The psychological definition is related to the individual's self-perception. Knowles asserted that "a person is an adult to the extent that the individual perceives herself or himself to be essentially responsible for her or his own life" (Knowles, 1980, p. 24). The social definition describes the individual's performance of adult roles within the cultural context. Knowles believed that "a person is an adult to the extent that the individual is performing social roles typically assigned by our culture to those it considers to be adults—the role of worker, spouse, parent, responsible citizen, soldier, and the like" (Knowles, 1980, p. 24).

In the same respect, Kim and Creighton (2000) defined adult students as those in higher education, workforce preparation classes, job training, and those participating in the instruction of adult basic skills or self-enrichment programs. As for *adult education*, Merriam and Brockett (1997) described it as the educational activities that are specifically designed to organize learning among individuals who are classified as adults based on their age and social roles.

Adult education has a long-standing history, which is demonstrated by the fact that some of the great ancient educators were adult teachers, including Confucius, Aristotle, Socrates, and Plato (Knowles et al., 2005). These same teachers perceived learning as an

active and dynamic process, rather than merely a passive reception of the teachers' transmitted content. This fact illustrates that the notion of learner-centeredness has also been established for an extended period (Knowles et al., 2020). Despite the historical importance placed on educating adults, limited attention has been given to how adults learn (Knowles et al., 2005; Merriam, 2017). In other words, it was not until recently that a cohesive framework of adult learning was established. This framework was based on the unique characteristics of adult learners. This evolution has shaped the understanding and application of andragogical principles, learner-centered approaches, and constructivist principles in the classroom (Knowles et al., 2005).

According to Knowles et al. (2011), the systematic study of adult education evolved with the establishment of the American Association for Adult Education (AAAE) in 1926. The Carnegie Corporation of New York provided substantial funding for research and publications, which involved two distinct approaches of inquiry: the scientific and the artistic or intuitive/reflective.

The scientific approach was initiated by Edward L. Thorndike and aimed to obtain new knowledge through experimental investigation. Specifically, Thorndike focused on the scientific study of adults' learning capabilities rather than the learning process. On the other hand, the artistic approach, pioneered by Eduard C. Lindeman, aimed to discover new information by relying on intuition and analyzing past experiences. In particular, it focused on the learning process or *how* adults learn and was influenced by John Dewey's educational philosophy. The field of adult education has been significantly shaped by these two streams, which provided it with scientific and philosophical foundations (Knowles et al., 2020). According to Knowles et al. (2011), it was Lindeman who established the basis for a systematic theory concerning adult learning.

Lindeman (1926) argued against the limitations of traditional education and established that adults approach learning with a variety of perceptions, backgrounds, and aims. Accordingly, he underscored the value of a specially designed adult education approach that is adaptable and responsive to adult learners' needs, interests, and skill requirements.

Lindeman (1926) established several fundamental assumptions regarding adult learners, which formed the foundation of adult learning theory. These assumptions have been supported by further research and are considered central in the field (Knowles et al., 2011). They include the following:

1. Adults are motivated to learn when they develop certain needs and interests that they believe learning will fulfill. Consequently, adults' needs and interests should be the starting point for organizing adult learning activities.
2. Adults approach learning with a practical life-centered perspective, which makes it more effective to focus education on life situations rather than subject matters.
3. Experience is a valuable resource for adult learning. Accordingly, adult education must incorporate and highlight learners' experiences.
4. Adults have a deep desire for autonomy and self-direction. Consequently, the teacher should foster a collaborative relationship with adults, rather than simply conveying information and judging how learners adhere to it.
5. Adults can differ considerably from one another. This highlights the need for adult education to accommodate variations in learning styles, pace of learning, and setting.

It is worth noting that Lindeman's classification of education was not solely based on age. Rather, he was more focused on the differences between adult and "conventional" education. This implies that his assumptions can apply to young individuals (Knowles et al., 2011). Lindeman introduced the concept of adult education as early as 1926. Nonetheless, the field remained largely unexplored until recently (Merriam & Bierema, 2013).

2.3.3.3 Andragogy: A Theory of Adult Learning

Lindeman's work, *The Meaning of Adult Education*, and particularly his assumptions regarding adult education, greatly inspired and influenced Malcom Knowles (Knowles, 1989), who is recognized as a leading figure in the field of adult learning theory (Nunan, 2013). Knowles built on Lindeman's work and advanced the concept of *andragogy* in 1959, which he ultimately transformed into a comprehensive theory of adult learning (Ozuah, 2005).

Andragogy is an adult learning theory with a long and rich development and evolution history (Chan, 2010; Nunan, 2013). The term was first introduced by Alexander Kapp, a German educationalist, in 1833 (Howard, 1993; Knowles et al., 2020), but it was only introduced in America in the early 1970s (Knowles et al., 2020). Henschke (2016) noted that Knowles' views of andragogy were largely influenced by his extensive knowledge in adult education and his practical experience as a university instructor in different parts of the world. Knowles further expanded his ideas on andragogy in his publication *The Modern Practice of Adult Education: Andragogy vs. Pedagogy* (Henschke, 2016). Furthermore, Knowles's book, *The Adult Learner: A Neglected Species*, has significantly influenced adult education (Nunan, 2013).

Knowles (1980) defined andragogy as "the art and science of helping adults learn" as opposed to pedagogy, "the art and science of helping children learn" (p.43). Knowles emphasized that adult learners have unique characteristics that necessitate a different approach to teaching and learning compared to that employed for children (Merriam, 2001). Knowles presented the andragogy theory through a series of assumptions in 1970 (Chan, 2010; Dantus, 2021; Henschke, 2016), which played a critical role in establishing a solid foundation for andragogy within the United States. Initially, andragogy introduced four assumptions (numbers 2-5; Knowles, 1975, 1978, 1980, as cited in Knowles et al., 2011). In 1984, assumption number 6, which pertains to motivation to learn, was incorporated (Knowles, 1984, as cited in Knowles et al., 2011), and more recently, assumption number 1, concerning the need to know, was added (Knowles, 1989, 1990, as

cited in Knowles et al., 2011). The principles of the andragogical model encompass the following:

1. The need to know. Adult learners must understand the purpose behind learning before they begin the learning process. This knowledge can determine the time and effort that adult learners will invest in the learning process. Teachers should take responsibility for helping learners recognize their “need to know”. One way to achieve this is by explaining to learners the value of learning in enhancing their skills and lives. Alternatively, and more effectively, teachers can include real or simulated experiences that allow learners to see the gap between their present level and their goals. Such methods include performance reviews, job rotations, exposure to role models, and diagnostic assessments (Knowles et al., 2020).

In discussing new perspectives on andragogy, Knowles et al. (2020) specified three areas adults need to know before learning: the method, content, and objective of learning. That is to say, adult learners need to be involved with their teachers in planning these areas. However, Knowles et al. (2020) emphasized that contextual factors may determine the extent of this involvement.

2. The learners’ self-concept. Adult learners have a naturally strong sense of responsibility for their lives and decisions. They want to be acknowledged as capable individuals and resist situations where others impose their will on them. However, when they are within the educational setting, they often adopt a dependent mindset due to their previous learning experiences, which involved this type of learning. This fact creates an internal conflict between adults’ desire to be self-directed and their familiarity with dependent learning. This conflict has led many adults to withdraw from adult education programs. To address this issue, educators can design learning experiences that facilitate

adult learners' transition from dependent to self-directed learners (Knowles et al., 2020).

Self-directed learning can have different interpretations. First, it can refer to the act of self-teaching, whereby an individual takes complete charge of teaching themselves a particular subject (Brookfield, 1986, as cited in Knowles et al., 2020). Second, self-directed learning can refer to personal autonomy, which refers to the learner's freedom of choice and control over the learning goals and the learning process (Candy, 1991, as cited in Knowles et al., 2020). These two interpretations of self-directed learning can overlap. A learner can be autonomous and choose to learn in a teacher-centered environment because it is more suitable for them. At the same time, choosing to engage in a self-teaching course does not indicate that the learner is autonomous. This is because the learner may have to comply with the requirements set by the course's supervising teacher.

It is important to note that an adult learner may choose not to be self-directed and still be autonomous. This decision does not indicate that they are dependent. On the contrary, it reveals that they have personal autonomy and they can choose the suitable approach for them. Therefore, there is a consensus among learning specialists that the most crucial aspect of self-directed learning is building an individual's personal autonomy and the capacity to make sound decisions in accordance with contextual factors and different learning needs (Knowles et al., 2020).

3. The role of the learners' experiences. Adults bring experiences to the learning process that are significantly greater than children's experiences. This fact has three implications for the learning process. First, it indicates that there will be more marked differences among any group of adults than between children. This is because adults have a variety of backgrounds, learning styles, motivations, needs, interests, and goals. This fact reinforces the need for adult

education to endorse personalized teaching and learning to accommodate these differences (Knowles et al., 2020).

Second, adult learners' experiences can be valuable resources for learning. Therefore, adult education should incorporate techniques that build on learners' experiences, such as group discussions, simulation exercises, problem-solving activities, case studies, and hands-on methods (Knowles et al., 2020).

Third, due to past experiences, adults have developed fixed habits and ways of thinking. As a result, they may be inflexible and less accepting of change. Adult educators can address this problem by using strategies to embrace learners' habits while encouraging them to consider new approaches and perspectives. Examples of useful techniques include sensitivity training, values clarification, and meditation (Knowles et al., 2020).

Additionally, there is another benefit to emphasizing adult learners' experiences, which is their self-identity. Young children typically build their self-identity from external factors, such as their family and educational institutions. As they grow, they begin to define themselves based on their personal experiences. On the other hand, adults' self-identity is shaped by their previous experiences. This implies that adult education should value these learners' experiences. Otherwise, adults can feel that they are undervalued (Knowles et al., 2020).

4. **Readiness to Learn.** Children are mainly motivated to learn what helps them advance from one stage of development to the next. Research reveals that the same applies to adults. Adults go through phases of growth with corresponding learning requirements and willingness. In other words, adults become ready to learn content if it corresponds with their developmental life stages. When applied to learning, this means that the teaching efficiency

depends on adults' readiness to learn specific content (Knowles, 1980; Knowles et al., 2020). For instance, a graduate student would be more receptive and ready to learn about marriage than a high school student. It is important to note that the *readiness to learn* principle applies to any area of specialization, which makes it highly relevant across different learning experiences. (Knowles et al., 2020).

Knowles (1975) highlighted that there are prevalent misalignments between many educational programs and students' learning readiness. He argued that, for example, a new medical student would benefit from direct experiences and interactions with patients and doctors in hospitals before studying subjects like pathology, anatomy, and biochemistry. Knowles maintained that readiness does not always develop naturally and suggested ways to promote it, such as showing learners examples of exceptional performance and offering career counseling. Finally, Knowles advised teachers to assess students' levels at the beginning of the course and to monitor their progress to be mindful of the changes they encounter and their evolving needs (Knowles et al., 2020).

5. Orientation to Learning. Adults and children have inherently different perceptions about learning because they view time differently. Children are typically more future-oriented; they see education as a way to gather knowledge and skills for future purposes. In contrast, adults are more present-oriented; they approach learning with a more immediate application in mind. In other words, they need education to address current challenges and problem-solving abilities (Knowles, 1980).

Knowles (1975) stated that this difference in orientation has important implications for the design of educational programs and curricula. If learners are subject-centered, then the curriculum should be organized based on the logical sequence of the topics included in the subject matter. For example, the first-year curriculum of social work students can start with basic knowledge

about the field. The second year can focus on theoretical aspects of the field, whereas the third year would concentrate on developing practical skills and experience in the field.

However, adults are typically more problem- and task-centered, which makes them more attracted to learning that helps them solve problems or complete tasks presented in real-life situations (Knowles et al., 2020). Thus, they might view the first two years mentioned in the example above as monotonous steps they must go through to get to the more relevant content in the third year. Alternatively, these adults would be more engaged in a curriculum organized around real-world problems that social work addresses. This could involve tackling different but sequential challenges each year. In this case, the learning sequence would move from field experience to theory, foundational knowledge, skill practice, and then back to field application (Knowles, 1975).

Knowles (1975) reported substantial improvements in students' attitudes after he reorganized the graduate program in adult education at Boston University to focus on problem areas. The students approached problem-centered units with much more enthusiasm compared to subject-centered units. Their engagement was notable to the level that other professors complained about their students being too busy with his assignments to keep up with their courses. Remarkably, Knowles noted that he never assigned required reading in his teaching career!

6. Motivation. Adults can be motivated by external factors such as better job opportunities, promotions, and higher salaries. However, the most powerful stimuli for adults are internal pressures, such as the desire for increased self-esteem and a better overall quality of life (Knowles et al., 2020). In a study conducted by Tough (1979, as cited in Knowles et al., 2020), it was found that all typical adults have the motivation to learn and improve. However, they are often faced by factors that decrease or obstruct this motivation, such as

negative self-concept as a student, limited access to opportunities or resources, time constraints, and programs that do not align with adult learning principles.

In this respect, Knowles et al. (2020) linked adult students' internal motivation to the other adult learning principles of andragogy: the need to know, the learner's self-concept, the role of the learner's experiences, readiness to learn, and orientation for learning. That is to say that the application of andragogy's five principles results in fostering students' internal motivation. For example, the first principle (i.e., need to know) is directly linked to the sixth (i.e., motivation) in that adult learners are motivated to learn when they recognize the purpose of learning (Knowles et al., 2020).

Several conclusions can be made about andragogy's principles. First, these principles greatly align with other prominent learning theories. For example, the principle of *the role of the learner's experience* is consistent with experiential learning theory, as both emphasize the importance of learning through the learner's own experiences. In a similar but not completely identical sense, andragogy's *readiness to learn* principle is consistent with Piaget's cognitive constructivist approach. Both perspectives underline that the effectiveness of learning depends on learners' readiness to learning.

Nonetheless, andragogy's principle defines readiness in terms of developmental learning needs, while Piaget highlights readiness through biological development. In another sense, andragogy's *readiness to learn* principles aligns with Vygotsky's social constructivist view on learning readiness. Particularly, Knowles et al. (2020) maintained that readiness does not develop naturally but can be promoted and reinforced by the teacher. Likewise, Vygotsky held that the development of children is not strictly tied to a specific age. Instead, it relies on the suitable assistance offered by individuals with more knowledge, like teachers or more experienced peers.

Furthermore, there is consistency between the theory of andragogy and humanistic theory; both endorse self-directed learning and the individual learner's contribution to their

learning process. According to Knowles (1989, 1990 in Knowles et al., 2005) and other scholars (Darkenwald & Merriam, 1982; Grace, 1996; in Knowles et al., 2005; Merriam & Brockett, 1997), andragogy is solidly based on humanistic and pragmatic philosophies. They explained that, similar to andragogy, Maslow and Rogers' humanistic views emphasize individuals' reaching their full potential. Moreover, the pragmatic viewpoint, influenced by Dewey and Lindeman, values individuals' acquisition of new knowledge independently through experience (Merriam & Brockett, 1997).

Andragogy was widely embraced and acknowledged in Europe and the United States, which led to the establishment of andragogy faculties that offered adult education doctoral programs at various universities. Furthermore, the term was widely applicable in diverse fields such as social work education, religious education, undergraduate and graduate education, as well as management training. The implementation of andragogy has yielded positive outcomes in adult education programs, teacher training, and adult learning experiences as a whole (Knowles et al., 2011).

The primary objective of andragogy's principles is to enhance the learning experiences of adult learners and make them more efficient. Their main emphasis is on the practical aspects of the learning process. This makes them highly applicable to various adult learning situations (Knowles et al., 2020). Additionally, andragogy is very flexible; it does not restrict its integration with other theories that address the objectives and aims of adult education (Knowles et al., 2005).

It is important to point out that the principles of Knowles's andragogical model have been modified over the years. For example, Knowles initially proposed four core assumptions about adult learners, which were then expanded to six principles. This fact demonstrates the model's strength and acknowledgment of the complex and changing nature of the learning process, which cannot be strictly tied to a single model. (Knowles et al., 2020). Furthermore, it is worth noting that at the beginning, Knowles established andragogy in opposition to pedagogy and suggested that pedagogy was suitable for children and andragogy for adults (Knowles, 1980). However, he later modified his views in

subsequent works (1979, 1980, 1987, as cited in Clardy, 2005) to propose that both methods are possible and can be used with either children or adults, depending on the circumstances.

Notably, Knowles eventually abstained from labeling andragogy as a theory of adult learning. Instead, he regarded it as a conceptual framework that involves teacher-directed pedagogy at one end and student-directed learning (andragogy) at the other. This evolution in Knowles' perspective reflects a more flexible understanding of the applicability of andragogy and pedagogy in different learning contexts (Merriam, 2017). Thus, the true strength of the model lies in its recognition that learning is a complex, context-dependent process and that andragogy works best when adapted to the unique characteristics of learners and specific learning situations (Knowles et al., 2020).

While andragogy offers valuable insights into adult learning, various scholars and practitioners have raised concerns regarding its applicability in diverse settings. The next section examines andragogy's limitations and the contexts in which it may fall short.

2.3.3.4 Criticism of Andragogy

Despite andragogy's wide recognition and success, academics pointed out limitations regarding its assumptions, methodological basis, and universal applicability.

First, andragogy was criticized for focusing solely on the learner as an individual and undermining the relationship between adult education and society (Grace, 1996, as cited in Knowles et al., 2020). Second, andragogy was flawed for describing the learner merely in psychological terms without considering social, political, economic, and historical influences. In other words, andragogy failed to position the learning process within a contextual framework (Heaney, 1996; Tisdell, 1995, as cited in Sandlin, 2005).

Furthermore, andragogy has faced criticism for being culturally biased and lacking applicability across diverse contexts. That is to say, some consider andragogy a Westernized concept, which does not universally apply to all adult learners (Flannery,

1994, as cited in Dantus, 2021). Conversely, adult learners from non-Western cultures have learning practices and values that differ from those in Western cultures (Duff, 2019; Flannery, 1994; Lee, 2003, as cited in Dantus, 2021).

For example, the culture of the West, on which andragogy was based, strongly emphasizes individuality and self-directed learning (Lee, 2003; and Peltz, 2018, as cited in Dantus, 2021). However, these concepts are not prevalent in many non-Western cultural contexts, such as Buddhism, Islam, Hinduism, and Confucianism. These cultures value the group over the individual and prefer a teacher-centered approach (Peltz, 2018, as cited in Dantus, 2021). Individuals within these frameworks often define themselves in terms of their relationship to others and are expected to contribute positively to society (Peltz, 2018, in Dantus, 2021).

On the other hand, Merriam (2001) focused on the degree to which the andragogical assumptions are representative of adult learners and highlighted that the traits identified by Knowles are not universally applicable to all adults. For instance, certain adults may prefer to rely on instructors for guidance, whereas some children demonstrate independent and self-directed learning. Additionally, in specific contexts, children may have access to a broader array of experiences than some adults do (Merriam, 2001).

Furthermore, Holton et al. (2001) in Dantus (2021) criticized Knowles for emphasizing the flexibility of andragogy without offering a systematic framework of factors to consider when assessing which assumptions are valid in a specific situation. In other words, he assigned the responsibility to each instructor to evaluate these factors.

In response to these criticisms, Knowles et al. (2020) emphasized the complexity and evolving nature of the learning process. They argued that it is crucial to consider the characteristics of learners and the context when applying the andragogical principles. Respectively, they asserted that the andragogical principles can be highly adjusted to fit diverse situations. Also, Knowles et al. (2020) authorized the integration of other educational theories with andragogy to make it suitable for different educational contexts.

In conclusion, despite the criticism, the principles of andragogy have created a remarkable impact on adult education and workplace training (Feur & Gerber, 1988, in Knowles et al., 2020). Brookfield (1986 in Knowles et al., 2020) regarded andragogy as the most widely embraced concept in the education and training of adults. Moreover, the principles of andragogy are commonly used by adult educators and those new to the field as guidelines for teaching adult learners (Knowles et al., 2020).

In line with the objective of this study, the next section explores the relevance of andragogy within the field of English language teaching.

2.3.3.5 Andragogy and Language Teaching

In his book *Learner-Centered English Language Education: The Selected Works of David Nunan* (2013), Nunan examined the theoretical foundations of learner-centered language teaching. He began the discussion with a specific focus on the theory of andragogy and highlighted its significance in adult education and its recent and important integration into adult language learning.

In addition to Knowles, Brundage and MacKeracher (1980), as cited in Nunan (2013), were two other experts in adult learning theory who have made influential contributions to language teaching. Their book, *Adult Learning Principles and Their Application to Program Planning*, is an important source of reference in the language teaching field. Brundage and MacKeracher have identified the following principles of adult learning:

1. Adults thrive in learning environments that value their experiences and use them as learning resources.
2. Adults learn more effectively when they are allowed to contribute to setting their own objectives. This process aligns with adult learners' preference for an independent mindset.

3. Adults have pre-established cognitive styles, which refer to their preferred methods for perceiving and processing information.
4. Adults' perceptions shape how they respond to and interpret information, regardless of the teacher's approach to presenting the information.
5. Adults integrate their pre-existing self-identities and feelings into the learning process, which affects how they engage with new knowledge.
6. Adults are internally motivated to learn; they are driven by personal growth rather than by meeting external expectations set by others, such as assessments.
7. Adults who have the capacity to organize their learning and approach it through different strategies tend to learn more effectively.
8. Adults succeed more when the learning content directly links to their prior knowledge, immediate needs, and lives in general.
9. Adults learn most effectively when new knowledge is presented through a variety of methods and topics and is reinforced by regular repetitions (Brundage & MacKeracher, 1980, as cited in Nunan, 2013, p.17).

The principles of adult learning outlined by Brundage and MacKeracher (1980), demonstrate that adults approach learning heavily influenced by their previous learning experiences, their immediate goals, and future ambitions (as cited in Nunan, 2013). While adult learners may vary in their attitudes, learning styles, and perceptions, it is generally recognized that they benefit from a learner-centered approach that is relevant to their immediate needs and experiences (Nunan, 2013).

A noteworthy observation is that Brundage and MacKeracher's adult learning principles are similar to Knowles's andragogy principles. Both perspectives underscore the need for

an approach that values learners' self-concept, learners' contribution to learning, and addresses learners' interests and backgrounds.

Brindley (1984) also endorsed the integration of andragogical principles in teaching the English language. He believed that adult learners should not be viewed as mere passive recipients of information that is previously set and imposed by educational authorities. Rather, adults' roles should be those of active ones. In addition, adults' rich experiences should be greatly valued and used to enhance the learning process.

Regarding the application of andragogy in English language teaching, Syamsuddin and Jimi (2018) assessed the impact of applying the principles of andragogy on the motivation and proficiency of adult English-speaking students in Indonesia. The findings revealed that the application of andragogy's principles by teachers largely enhanced the students' English proficiency and was positively perceived by the students, as opposed to the application of the teacher-centered approach. Moreover, Acosta et al. (2023) reported positive language learning outcomes following the implementation of andragogy in the teaching of the English language in Ecuador.

As previously established, one of the objectives of this study was to assess the extent to which English language teachers apply andragogical principles of adult learning. In this respect, the researcher has reviewed existing studies that had a similar aim to this one. To achieve their aim, these studies used Conti's (2004) Principles of Adult Learning Scale (PALS), which was similarly used in this study, as will be explained in Chapter 3. Before exploring this review, it is essential to explain briefly what PALS is and what it measures.

PALS is a tool that measures the extent to which educators support or apply learner-centered teaching. It consists of seven factors that measure practices related to adult learner-centered teaching. These include: Learner-centered Activities, Personalizing Instruction, Relating to Experience, Assessing Student Needs, Climate Building, Participation in the Learning Process, and Flexibility for Personal Development (Conti, 2004). The average score on the PALS is 146. Scores close to or above this average point

reveal a tendency towards a learner-centered teaching approach. Conversely, scores below this average signify a preference for the teacher-centered approach (Conti, 2004). Furthermore, high scores in each factor indicate support of learner-centered teaching strategies associated with that factor, while lower factor scores designate a preference for teacher-centered teaching approaches (Conti, 2004).

It is important to establish that PALS is regarded as an effective tool for assessing the application of andragogical (learner-centered) versus pedagogical (teacher-centered) principles (Knowles et al., 2020). Consequently, this instrument has been used to evaluate the implementation of andragogy within the studies included in this review, as well as in the present one.

Conti (1985b) examined teaching styles in an adult basic education program in Southern Texas using PALS. The study included 29 teachers (8 teaching GED preparation and 14 teaching ESL). The findings revealed that the teachers' average score on the PALS was 130.05, which indicated a strong preference for teacher-centered instruction.

In addition, Kovačević (2011) aimed to categorize teaching styles along a spectrum that ranges from highly pedagogical to highly andragogical approaches using PALS. The study involved a total of 70 English teachers of different nationalities. These educators were involved in teaching adults at voluntary language institutions in Istanbul. The findings of the study revealed that the teaching approaches employed by most English teachers were predominantly pedagogical, teacher-centered practices. This was evident in PALS Factors' assessment regarding facilitating learner-centered activities, personalizing instruction, assessing student needs, involving them in the learning process, and fostering their personal development, which correspond to Factors 1, 2, 4, 5, and 6.

Kovačević (2011) concluded the study by recommending the application of andragogy in English language teaching and recommending that English language teachers undertake teacher training programs to familiarize themselves with the andragogical principles. In addition, the researcher believed that these programs should enable teachers to make

appropriate choices and adapt their teaching methods by shifting between andragogical and pedagogical models based on the needs of their teaching setting. Furthermore, Kovačević called for further examination into adult English teachers' underlying beliefs to provide deeper insights into the results and conclusions drawn in this study and explain the teachers' preferences between andragogical and pedagogical approaches.

Moreover, a study by Wang and Storey (2015) investigated the extent to which andragogy is implemented as a teaching approach in China. The researchers hypothesized that andragogy might not be implemented, given that Chinese educators have traditionally adhered to and been accustomed to the pedagogical approach. To address the aims of their study, the researchers used Conti's PALS, with modifications to fit the specific Chinese teaching settings.

PALS was distributed to 160 English teachers at eight universities of foreign languages in China. The results demonstrated some elements of adult education in teachers' practices, such as *personalizing instruction*, *drawing on personal experiences*, and *assessing student needs*. On the other hand, it was found that the teachers had low scores on Factor 1, Factor 2, Factor 6, and Factor 7, which indicated a lack of learner-centered activities and a preference for traditional knowledge transmission. Moreover, the results showed that Chinese English teachers favored traditional testing methods and memorization as an effective teaching technique. Additionally, the teachers did not support learners' involvement in curricular and lesson planning. Overall, they saw themselves as knowledge providers rather than facilitators, and their teaching approach was primarily teacher-centered.

Wang and Storey (2015) concluded that various factors challenge the implementation of andragogy in China. These include the country's cultural, political, and social background, which emphasizes traditional teacher-centered methods and contradicts the andragogical principles. Nonetheless, the researchers strongly recommended the application of andragogy theory in the Chinese context. Moreover, the researchers noted that further research is needed to understand the reasons behind Chinese teachers' resistance to this

teaching approach. More specifically, the researchers emphasized that quantitative analysis by itself fails to address numerous questions suggested by this research. They stressed that qualitative research, when combined with interviews and comprehensive observations, has the potential to provide answers to several inquiries arising from this study.

Furthermore, Lele (2020) investigated teaching styles, adopting andragogy as the theoretical framework, and using PALS with 67 adult education instructors in the Commonwealth of Virginia. Out of these instructors, 25 were English language instructors, while the remaining instructors taught other courses. The findings revealed that the overall PALS score for ESL teachers was 136.2, which indicates that their teaching style is teacher-centered. Upon further examination of the seven factors of PALS, it was found that ESL teachers scored below the standard mean in all components except for factor 3 (Relating to Experience), where they exceeded the norm with a score of 22.76. This analysis further confirms that the teachers' teaching practices were strongly teacher-centered (Lele, 2020).

Respectively, Lele (2020) strongly recommended the application of the andragogical principles in the teaching of adult learners. Moreover, Lele (2020) urged future researchers to employ a mixed-methods approach to complement the quantitative findings of her study and to investigate the reasons behind the teachers' selection of a particular teaching style.

More recently, López and Odón (2024) examined the relationship between English teachers' application of andragogy's principles and students' language proficiency at a higher education setting in Ecuador, employing a mixed-methods research design. In the first stage, PALS and a language proficiency test were administered to 552 students. The PALS mean score was found to be 103.67, indicating the teachers' adoption of a teacher-centered teaching approach. In addition, students' English language level was identified as ranging from low to very low, which the researchers attributed to the prevailing traditional teacher-centered approach.

Subsequently, the quantitative stage was followed by a qualitative stage involving interviews with 10 higher education teachers to examine their perceptions of andragogy's principles. Findings from the interviews revealed a lack of knowledge and application among the teachers of andragogy's adult learning principles (López & Odón, 2024). Respectively, the study emphasized the value of implementing andragogy's learner-centered principles in language teaching and learning, linking them to improved language learning outcomes. Additionally, the study urged future researchers to focus on practical strategies for applying andragogy in language classrooms (López & Odón, 2024).

In conclusion, the researcher's review of existing literature reveals limited implementation of andragogy in English language teaching. Additionally, the majority of available studies predominantly employ quantitative methodological approaches, which limit the in-depth understanding of the research findings. Notably, to the researcher's knowledge, the Libyan English as a Foreign Language (EFL) context appears noticeably underexplored in this area, which presents a compelling research opportunity.

Therefore, based on the researcher's review of the literature as well as recommendations from Kovačević (2011), Wang and Storey (2015), Lele (2020), Purwati et al. (2022), and López and Odón (2024), there is a need for further research that examines the application of learner-centered English language teaching through the lens of andragogy. More specifically, what is needed in this investigation is a comprehensive research approach to provide a thorough understanding of the current status of andragogy implementation in the English language teaching context and to propose recommendations for the effective application of this approach.

2.3.3 Summary of Part Three

The third part of this literature review focused on the historical and theoretical foundations of learner-centered teaching. The section began by highlighting that learner-centered teaching has deep historical and theoretical roots, as evidenced by the insights of early educators and theorists who emphasized the importance of engaging students as active participants rather than passive recipients. The discussion then drew on progressive,

humanistic, and constructivist theories, including the ideas of Dewey, Maslow, Rogers, Piaget, and Vygotsky, to illustrate how traditional teacher-centered methods have been challenged in favor of learner-centered approaches. Although each theoretical perspective varies slightly in its focus, they all endorse learner-centered teaching.

The discussion then shifted to andragogy, the theoretical framework of this study, which is built on six core assumptions: the need to know, learners' self-concept, the role of experiences, readiness to learn, orientation to learning, and motivation. While acknowledging some criticisms of andragogy, such as its Western cultural bias and limited applicability across diverse contexts, it was noted that andragogy has had a great and enduring positive influence on adult education. More importantly, andragogy is highly flexible and permits its adaptation to various contextual factors to address context-specific challenges (Knowles et al., 2020).

After that, the focus narrowed to exploring the application of andragogy in English language teaching. The literature review indicated a notable gap in understanding the application of andragogy in English language instruction, particularly within the Libyan context. Based on these observations and the strong emphasis by researchers on the effectiveness of learner-centered andragogical principles in English language teaching and the need for further research (Kovačević, 2011; Lele, 2020; López & Odón, 2024; Purwati et al., 2022; Wang & Storey, 2015), this study seeks to address this gap by investigating the application of learner-centered English language teaching through an andragogical lens in Libya and by employing a mixed-methods approach to obtain and offer a comprehensive understanding of this topic.

2.4 Summary of Chapter

This chapter aimed to offer a comprehensive examination of the literature surrounding the concept of learner-centered teaching. The researcher adopted a broad perspective initially before narrowing the focus to the specific objectives of this study. Accordingly, the chapter was divided into three parts.

The first part of the chapter began by discussing the contrasting counterpart of learner-centered teaching, which is teacher-centered teaching. These two approaches are frequently discussed in opposition to each other in the literature. Therefore, presenting teacher-centered teaching first was essential for clarifying the differences between the two approaches and for explaining their relevance in the Libyan context. Following this, the first part of this review explored the shift from teacher-centered to learner-centered approaches within English language teaching, particularly through the development of communicative language teaching. In conclusion, this part highlighted that Libyan researchers strongly advocate for the implementation of learner-centered teaching and emphasize the need for further research in this area.

Subsequently, the second part of this chapter introduced learner-centered teaching, initially in a broad sense before specifically discussing its application within English language teaching. This part highlighted several contextual factors that contribute to the lack of implementation of learner-centered approaches in international settings. Although few studies have focused specifically on the application and perceptions of learner-centered English language teaching in the Libyan context, existing research yielded similar findings. The second part concluded by emphasizing that both international and Libyan researchers recognize the importance and effectiveness of learner-centered English language teaching and advocate for its application and further context-specific exploration of this topic.

The third part of this chapter explored the historical progression and theoretical foundations of learner-centered teaching and concluded with a focused examination of the theoretical framework underpinning this study: andragogy theory. The literature on andragogy in English language teaching underscores its potential benefits within this context. Particularly, researchers have emphasized the necessity of applying andragogy in English language teaching due to its effectiveness, and they have called for more research in this area employing diverse methods to comprehensively address the topic and encourage its effective application. Finally, to the best of the researcher's knowledge,

there was an evident lack of studies in Libya that specifically examine the application of learner-centered English language teaching through the framework of andragogy.

Based on the conclusions drawn from the three parts of this chapter, this research aimed to address a gap in the literature by adopting the theoretical framework of andragogy for investigating learner-centered English language teaching in the Libyan context. The study aimed to examine English language teachers' practices and perceptions in relation to andragogy at the Faculty of Languages at Benghazi University, with the ultimate goal of providing context-specific insights that could improve the teaching and learning process in this context.

Chapter Three: Methodology

3.0 Introduction

This chapter aims to provide a detailed account of the methodology employed in this study. The chapter begins by describing the research scope, setting, and population to establish context for the study. Next, the study methodology is explained in terms of two key aspects: the research strategy and the research approach. Since this research employs a mixed-methods approach that integrates both quantitative and qualitative data, the research process is structured into two distinct stages (quantitative and qualitative). Each stage is discussed in detail, encompassing its design, data collection method, sampling procedure, and data collection and analysis techniques. Finally, aspects such as validity, reliability, trustworthiness, and utility are thoroughly considered.

3.1 Scope of the Study

The scope of the study refers to the specific boundaries within which the research is conducted. In other words, it describes the research domain that determines what is included and excluded. Researchers must identify and be mindful of the research scope to effectively manage what will be investigated and which factors are within the study's range (Simon & Goes, 2013).

This study investigated the learner-centered teaching approach by examining its application and perceptions among English language instructors at the Faculty of Languages, University of Benghazi, Libya. Respectively, the study scope was limited to the English language program within the Faculty of Languages. This excluded other programs, such as Italian or French language programs. Furthermore, the research concentrated specifically on instructors within the English language program, which meant that students were not within the scope of this study.

The specific selection of the English Program over other language programs in the faculty was driven by the study's exclusive focus on English language teaching. Moreover, the

study focused on teachers rather than including students for two reasons. First, although the research is about the learner-centered approach, it is about a teaching rather than a learning approach, which justifies addressing the topic from the teachers' point of view. Second, the aim was to enable the investigation of teachers' practices and perceptions in an inclusive manner without dividing the study's attention into two different dimensions.

3.2 Setting of the Study

The research setting refers to the specific environment in which a study is conducted. This research was conducted in the English Program at the Faculty of Languages, University of Benghazi, during the academic year 2024-2025.

The University of Benghazi was founded in 1955, shortly after the country's independence, and was the first university established in the country. It is located in eastern Libya in the city of Benghazi, which is the second-largest city. The University of Benghazi was originally named the University of Libya, and it started with a single Faculty of Arts and Education, which included an English language Department (Elferjani, 2015; University of Benghazi, n.d.-a).

Over time, the University of Benghazi grew substantially and added more faculties. Additionally, it largely influenced the establishment of public and private higher education institutions throughout Libya. Currently, the University of Benghazi comprises 24 faculties that offer a wide range of academic programs (University of Benghazi, n.d.-a). However, this research specifically concentrates on English language teaching within the Faculty of Languages at the University of Benghazi.

The Faculty of Languages was established in 1987 and comprised departments of Arabic, English, and French. The English language department had a Language Branch and a Translation Branch. After the first batch of students graduated, the Faculty of Languages was closed, and the departments were reincorporated into the Faculty of Arts. In 2007, a decision was made to re-establish the Faculty of Languages, along with the Faculty of Physical Education and the Faculty of Media. However, only the Faculty of Media was

activated in 2009. In 2017, the Council of the Faculty of Arts approved the reactivation of the Faculty of Languages, and in 2018, the University Council approved its activation. In 2019, Resolution (263) was issued, and a dean was appointed for the Faculty of Languages. Later in 2019, Resolution (834) was issued to separate the Faculty of Languages from the Faculty of Arts (University of Benghazi, n.d.-b).

Currently, the English language major is offered across three faculties within Benghazi University in Benghazi city: The Faculty of Arts, the Faculty of Education, and the Faculty of Languages. Each of these faculties operates with its distinct system and curriculum. The English Program at the Faculty of Languages consists of five departments: English Language Department, Translation Department, Theoretical Linguistics Department, Applied Linguistics Department, and Literature Department. Moreover, the English Program at the Faculty of Languages consists of an eight-semester system, in which each semester's duration is 12 weeks.

During the first two semesters, all students joining the program study general subjects designed to build foundational skills. These subjects include Listening and Speaking, Reading and Writing, Grammar, Vocabulary, and Dictionary Skills. In addition, the Arabic Language is taught in the first semester, and Psychology is taught (in Arabic) in the second semester. After completing the first two semesters, students can choose to specialize in one of the five departments mentioned above. Within these specializations, students continue to develop their language skills while studying the specific subjects of their chosen field. Upon completing their studies in the English Program, students are awarded a Bachelor's degree. In addition to the Bachelor's degree, the English Program at the Faculty of Languages also offers Master's and Doctoral degrees.

Faculty members at Libyan universities, including Benghazi University, are required to hold either a Master's or a Ph.D. from institutions accredited by the Ministry of Higher Education (Elferjani, 2015). There are three categories of teaching staff: full-time lecturers, part-time lecturers, and teaching assistants. The responsibilities of the faculty lecturers encompass various tasks, including teaching, conducting research, supervising

research projects, and invigilation. Finally, the curriculum used in the English Program within the faculty is determined by a committee of professors from the faculty, who are selected and overseen by the dean. Lecturers must adhere to the curriculum set by the faculty.

The selection of the English Program at the Faculty of Languages as the research setting was logical due to the researcher's direct involvement (i.e., being a lecturer at the faculty), observed problems, and lack of existing research in this specific context. As a direct observer, the researcher identified deficiencies in students' English language proficiency and learning outcomes, which highlighted the need for a closer examination of teaching practices.

3.3 Population of the Study

The population of a study is a group of individuals who have common characteristics and live in a specific environment or belong to a particular institution (Martínez-Mesa et al., 2016). It is important to determine and clarify the study population to frame the research questions and address them precisely (Martínez-Mesa et al., 2016).

The population of this study consisted of English language instructors at the Faculty of Languages at Benghazi University. The estimated number of this population was 53 instructors who hold a variety of academic qualifications, including Master's and Doctoral degrees, and have different years of teaching experience.

3.4 Methodology of the Study

Research methodology can be defined as the scientific study of how research is conducted. It describes the steps taken to answer the research questions and the rationale behind the choices made during these steps, such as the research approach and methods. Therefore, discussing research methodology involves outlining the methods used and the reasoning behind their selection in the study. This process contributes to the evaluation of research results by the researcher and others (Kothari, 2004).

It is important to explain the relationships among the concepts involved in the methodology to clarify the research plan followed by the researcher. In this respect, it is crucial to establish that the methodological framework of this study is informed by the framework proposed by Creswell (2009), Creswell and Creswell (2018), and insights from Yin (2003, 2014), which is described in Figure 2 below. This framework involves two main aspects: (1) the selection of the research strategy and (2) the selection of the research approach. The decision regarding the research approach involves considering three elements: philosophical worldviews, research design, and specific research methods.

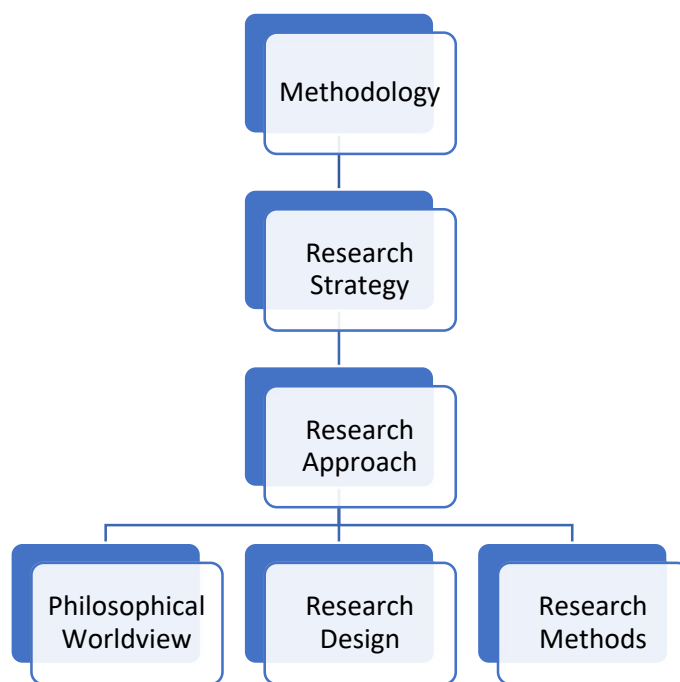


Figure 2: General Methodological Framework

The above framework was the basis and guide for this study's methodology. As illustrated, the first decision regarding the methodology was about selecting the most suitable research strategy. Following that, the research approach was chosen, considering three components: philosophical worldview, research design, and research methods. The subsequent sections elaborate on these methodological aspects of this study and the rationale behind each of the decisions made.

3.4.1 Research Strategy

The research strategy is one means by which researchers effectively address their research questions and aims of their study (Saunders et al., 2009, as cited in Elferjani, 2015). Yin (2009) identified five primary research strategies: experimentation, surveys, archival analysis, historical research, and case studies. For this study, a case study strategy was selected to examine learner-centered teaching at the Faculty of Languages at Benghazi University.

A case study is a research strategy that involves an in-depth investigation of a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, relying on multiple techniques and research methods. Case studies are particularly efficient and practical for studying individuals, programs, systems, and events in organizational settings. Respectively, they are often commonly utilized across various disciplines such as business, education, psychology, and economics (Yin, 2003,2009, 2014).

This study aimed to investigate the applicability of the learner-centered approach at the Faculty of Languages. Consequently, a case study was deemed the most suitable research strategy to examine the instructors' teaching approaches and perceptions within their real work context to obtain rich and insightful conclusions. In other words, given that teaching is shaped by contextual factors, adopting a case study research strategy in this study facilitated the understanding of instructors' behavior and underlying assumptions within their specific educational setting. Furthermore, the flexibility of the case study permitted the use of a combination of research methods to achieve these aims.

Furthermore, Yin (2003) outlined three conditions for using a case study as a research strategy. The first condition is the type of research question; case study research is most appropriate when the researcher aims to answer "how", "what," and "why" questions. The second and third conditions relate to the researcher's control over events and the focus on contemporary events. If the researcher is interested in studying contemporary events without manipulating events, then case study research is considered an appropriate strategy.

These conditions are highly relevant to the present study, which, first, explores the extent to which learner-centered teaching is practiced by English language instructors, which pertains to the (what) question. Second, it investigates the instructors' perceptions of the approach (i.e., how they perceive it), which is linked to and explains instructors' practices (i.e., why they apply certain teaching practices). Thus, the second aim of this study pertains to the (how) and (why) questions. Additionally, the investigation is conducted within a contemporary context, without influencing any events. These factors collectively support the appropriateness of adopting a case study as the research strategy.

Moreover, Yin (2014) noted that a case study can take on different forms: (1) descriptive, which describes a phenomenon within its real-world context, (2) explanatory, which identifies factors that can explain a specific phenomenon, and (3) exploratory, which explores a phenomenon and identifies new research questions that can be further investigated in future studies. This study can be considered to encompass all three types of case studies. First, it seeks to **explore** the application of learner-centered teaching. Second, it aims to **describe** learner-centered teaching from the point of view of the instructors. Finally, it **explains** the factors that influence the instructors' practices based on their perceptions.

3.4.2 Research Approach

The research approach is a comprehensive plan that covers broad and specific decisions regarding the research. The core decision involves determining which approach is most appropriate for studying a certain topic. There are three types of research approaches: quantitative, qualitative, and mixed-methods (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). For this study, a mixed-methods research approach was selected. Mixed-methods research approach integrates quantitative and qualitative research methods to collect and analyze data. It benefits from the strengths of each technique and avoids the limitations of either one alone (Creswell, 2009; Creswell, 2014).

The mixed methods research approach was selected in this study to examine the application and perceptions of learner-centered English language teaching, particularly

through the lens of andragogy theory. The decision to choose this research approach was mainly based on addressing gaps in both international and Libyan contexts regarding the examination of andragogy in English language teaching (See Chapter 2, Section 2.3.3.5). Prior international research on the application of andragogy in English language teaching is limited and mostly relies on quantitative research. In Libya, to the researcher's knowledge, there is a gap in studies that examine andragogy in English language teaching. Accordingly, this research aimed to fill the gap found on an international scale as well as in Libya by comprehensively exploring andragogy in ELT using a mixed-methods research approach.

Moreover, mixed-methods research was selected because it offers several advantages. First, mixed-method research enhances the validity and trustworthiness of the study by employing and combining quantitative and qualitative data to improve the understanding of the research issue (Carter et al., 2014). Second, it is flexible because it allows researchers to adapt their methods in accordance with the research question and the data collected. This, in turn, enables researchers to obtain more insights and information when necessary (Enosh et al., 2014). Third, by integrating the strengths of both quantitative and qualitative methods, mixed-methods research permits the generalization of the results (Saville, 2012).

Finally, the selection of a research approach is often influenced by three crucial factors, as highlighted by Creswell and Creswell (2018):

1. Philosophical worldviews.
2. Research design.
3. Research methods.

These three aspects are explored in detail in the following sections.

3.4.2.1 Philosophical Worldview (Paradigm/ Epistemology/ Ontology)

The first factor that determines the choice of research approach is the philosophical worldview, which refers to the set of beliefs and principles that influence the researcher's

choice of research methods and data analysis (Creswell, 2009; Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Lather, 1986). It is important to note that while Creswell (2009) employed the term *worldviews*, other scholars used alternative terms such as *paradigms* (Lincoln & Guba, 2000; Mertens, 1998, as cited in Creswell, 2009) and *epistemologies* and *ontologies* (Crotty, 1998, as cited in Creswell, 2009). For this study, the terms “*philosophical worldview*” and “*paradigm*” are used interchangeably.

There are various philosophical worldviews or research paradigms, including positivism, post-positivism, constructivism, the participatory paradigm, and pragmatism (Guba & Lincoln, 2005). This study was guided by the pragmatic paradigm, which involves using both qualitative and quantitative methodologies interchangeably in a single research and creates a strong correlation between the two (Clark & Creswell, 2008). The choice of research paradigm is often based on the nature of the study, the scope, the specific research questions, and the overall objectives of the research (Easterby-Smith et al., 2004; and Hussey & Hussey, 1997, as cited in Elferjani, 2015).

As established previously (see Section 3.4.1), the nature of this research is a case study. Notably, case study research is among the commonly employed strategies within the pragmatic research paradigm because it relies on utilizing mixed methods and techniques to address research questions (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017). Moreover, this case study aimed to address what, how, and why questions to investigate learner-centered teaching at the Faculty of Languages. To achieve these aims and gain an adequate understanding of the phenomenon under examination, the researcher considered it important to approach it from more than one angle and use more than a single research method. The pragmatic paradigm suits the aims of this study because its proponents postulated that to obtain genuine research insights, researchers should employ various research methods and approaches to study a specific phenomenon and examine participants’ behavior and underlying beliefs (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017).

Furthermore, a common practice among pragmatists is abductive reasoning, where the deductive outcomes of a quantitative method are utilized as inputs for the inductive

objectives of a qualitative approach sequentially (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009). This means that the findings from a quantitative study can help shape the direction and focus of a qualitative study in a sequential and integrated manner. This is specifically what this research involved, as will be explored in the next section (see Section 3.4.2.2); the findings and outcomes of the first stage were linked to and elaborated on by the second stage.

Therefore, the pragmatic paradigm was deemed the most appropriate for this study due to its consistency with the nature of this research, its questions, and its objectives. It allowed for mixing qualitative and quantitative methods to gather inclusive and complementary data on teachers' practices and perceptions. The ultimate rationale behind this decision was to enhance the depth of the findings and allow the researcher to capture the intricacies of how teachers perceive and practice learner-centered teaching.

3.4.2.2 Research Design

The second component to consider regarding the research approach is the research design. Within qualitative, quantitative, or mixed methods research approaches, there are types of research design that researchers must select and follow (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Research designs are specific forms of qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods strategies that guide the procedures in a research study (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). These strategies offer a framework for conducting research and guide researchers in making informed decisions about the most appropriate methods to use (Creswell, 2009). According to Creswell (2009), there are three general strategies or methodologies in mixed methods design: sequential, concurrent, and transformative.

Creswell and Creswell (2018) analyzed these three designs into six variations: sequential explanatory design, sequential exploratory design, sequential transformative design, concurrent triangulation design, concurrent embedded design, and concurrent transformative design. Each design has a unique approach to integrating quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis, and its selection should be carefully based on the research problem.

For this study, the research problem necessitated first exploring the extent of learner-centered teaching application, then exploring teachers' assumptions, which guide and explain their practices. To that end, the researcher decided to use a quantitative approach and then complement it with a qualitative one. Thus, the sequential explanatory research design was considered the most suitable. The sequential explanatory design is a two-phase process that involves both quantitative and qualitative data. In the first phase, quantitative data are collected and analyzed to generate initial results. These results then guide the design of the second phase, which involves qualitative research methods. The qualitative phase, in turn, helps explain and elaborate on the quantitative findings (Wisdom & Creswell, 2013).

In addition, Creswell (2009) pointed out that there are important aspects to consider when using mixed-methods research design, such as the weight given to the two types of data, the mixing and timing of the data, and the theoretical framework that guides the data collection and analysis. Accordingly, it is important to clarify that the quantitative and qualitative data of this study were given equal weight and importance. Moreover, the data mixing took place when information from the second phase was used to elaborate on the findings of the first stage and in the interpretation of the entire findings of this study. Finally, the overall process for data collection and analysis for both types of data in this research was framed within the theoretical framework of andragogy.

3.4.2.3 Research Methods

The third component in the research approach framework is research methods. Research methods are the tools of data collection, analysis, and interpretation that researchers select for their studies. These can be prearranged to gather specific information, such as a questionnaire or an observation. Conversely, research methods may involve visiting research sites, observing behaviors without preset questions, or conducting open-ended interviews that allow participants to discuss topics freely (Creswell, 2009). Some research projects employ both quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis methods, wherein the data obtained from one instrument are supplemented with and followed by another (Creswell, 2009).

For this research, two methods were employed. For the quantitative research, a survey was used, which was complemented and followed by interviews employed in the qualitative stage. As for the methods of data analysis, the quantitative data were analyzed statistically using SPSS software, while the qualitative data were analyzed using thematic analysis, as will be discussed in the subsequent sections of this chapter.

Hence, the philosophical worldview (pragmatic), research designs (sequential explanatory), and research methods (survey, interviews) collectively shaped the research approach for this study.

Finally, it is important to re-emphasize that the overall methodological framework for this study was informed by Creswell (2009), Creswell and Creswell (2018), and Yin (2003, 2014). This involved selecting a research strategy and a research approach (including its three elements). The methodological framework of this study is summarized in Figure 3 below.

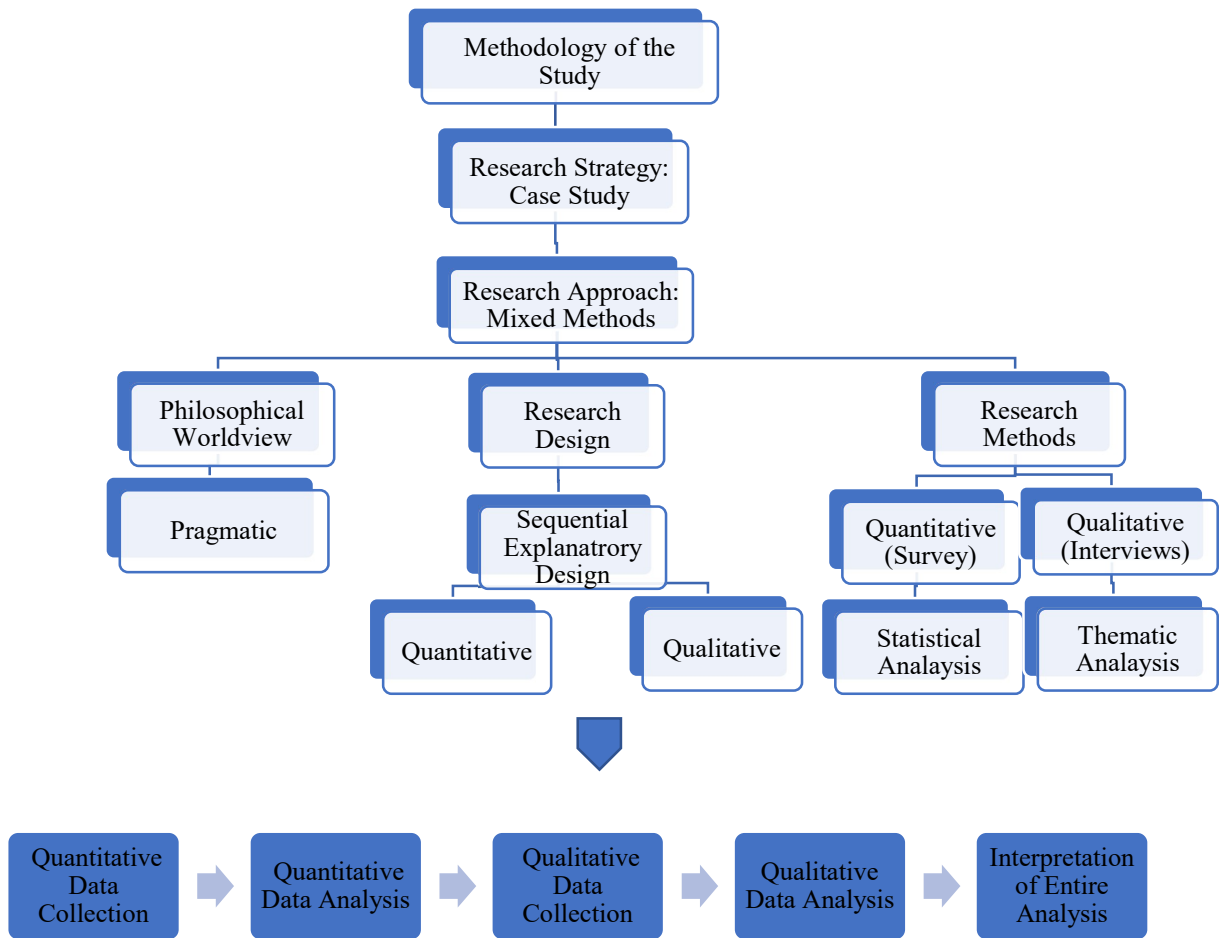


Figure 3: Methodological Framework of the Study

As illustrated in the figure above, the selected strategy for this research was a case study, and the research approach was a mixed-method one, driven by a pragmatic philosophical worldview, and based on a sequential explanatory research design, and quantitative and qualitative research methods. Within the sequential explanatory design, quantitative data collection and analysis were conducted before qualitative data collection and analysis. Both of which were later interpreted holistically. The figure also illustrates the specific types of research methods used. In particular, the quantitative method was a survey, and was analyzed statistically. On the other hand, the qualitative method involved interviews analyzed using thematic analysis.

3.5 Research Stages

As stated previously, this was a case study research that followed a sequential explanatory mixed-method research design, involving quantitative and qualitative research. Accordingly, the research was conducted in two stages, with the first being quantitative, while the second was qualitative research. These two stages are described below with details regarding each research type, data collection tool, sampling techniques, and data collection and analysis procedures. Aspects related to the validity, reliability, trustworthiness, and utility are also discussed.

3.5.1 First Stage: Quantitative Research

This section focuses on the first stage of this research, which involved a quantitative approach. The section begins by restating the first research question and explaining the aims of the first stage, the approach used, and the rationale behind selecting this approach. After that, the following sections describe the specific design of the quantitative research, the tool used, how the tool relates to this study's theoretical framework, and the tool's validity and reliability. Also, the sampling process, data collection, and analysis procedures are described.

The first research question in this study was:

1. To what extent is learner-centered teaching currently implemented by English language instructors at the Faculty of Languages at the University of Benghazi?

The first stage in this study aimed to answer the first research question using quantitative research. Quantitative research is commonly employed to test objective theories by analyzing the relationship between quantifiable variables. These variables are measured using instruments that rely on numerical data that can be analyzed statistically. Researchers often opt for quantitative research when they aim to test theories deductively, minimize bias, and consider the generalizability and replicability of their findings (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Additionally, quantitative research can be used to gather

non-quantitative information by using tools that transform it into quantitative data to allow for statistical analysis. Due to its versatile use, quantitative research is considered highly flexible (Sukamolson, 2007). Quantitative approaches are also practical and useful for analyzing large populations and generalizing findings from a specific sample to broader populations (Swanson & Holton, 2005).

As previously established, the theory of andragogy guided this study's inquiry (i.e., the research questions and interpretation). This indicates that the first research question mentioned above is particularly aimed at examining the extent to which English language teachers at the Faculty of Languages apply andragogy's learner-centered teaching practices. To answer this question, the researcher needed to reach a broad audience to form a holistic picture of the instructors' practices at the faculty. Thus, it was suitable to choose a quantitative approach due to its practicality in approaching a large number of participants. Moreover, in this process, it was efficient to consider measuring certain variables (i.e., teaching practices) and their impact on the application of the theory as a whole in an objective sense. Thus, quantitative research was deemed suitable because it enabled the statistical measurement of teaching practices related to andragogy's principles, which enabled the researcher to obtain precise information while minimizing bias.

3.5.1.1 Quantitative Research Method: Survey Design

To gather information about the teaching practices of English language instructors, which is the aim of the first research question, a survey research design was chosen. Survey research is a method for collecting data about the characteristics, opinions, attitudes, emotions, or knowledge of a specific group of individuals (Creswell, 2009). This design aligned well with the aims of the current study, as it allowed for the systematic assembling and analysis of data from English language instructors regarding their teaching practices.

Moreover, this design was selected for its advantages. That is, using surveys enables researchers to identify characteristics of a large population by studying a small group of individuals. This allows researchers to draw meaningful conclusions efficiently in terms

of time and effort. Furthermore, by carefully selecting a representative sample, researchers can generalize findings to a larger population (Babbie, 1990; Fowler, 2002, as cited in Creswell, 2009).

It is important to point out that there are two types of survey design: cross-sectional and longitudinal. This study used a cross-sectional survey design, which gathers data from different subjects at one point. In other words, it provides a picture of the study population's characteristics, attitudes, or behaviours at the moment of the study (Cohen et al., 2017).

A cross-sectional survey design was chosen for this study due to its several benefits. Firstly, they allow for the economical collection of information in terms of time and cost, which makes them a practical choice for researchers with limited resources, just as the case with the researcher in this study. Additionally, in cross-sectional surveys, participants are only involved once. This fact minimizes control effects and reduces the potential for bias or external influences. Moreover, participants are often more willing to participate in cross-sectional surveys because they require a single participation (Cohen et al., 2017).

The specific data collection instrument that was used within this study's survey was a questionnaire, which is described in more detail in the next section.

3.5.1.1.1 Survey Instrument (Questionnaire): Principles of Adult Learning Scale (PALS)

It was mentioned in the previous section that the quantitative phase of this research involved using a survey design in which a questionnaire was used as the instrument. This questionnaire was the Principles of Adult Learning Scales (PALS), which was developed by Gary Conti (1978) during his doctoral program to help adult instructors assess their teaching styles in terms of two categories: teacher-centered or learner-centered styles (see Appendix A for PALS). In particular, PALS was established to measure the extent to which adult instructors support and apply adult learner-centered teaching principles (Conti, 1978).

The PALS was created based on the theoretical insights of influential adult educators who advocated for learner-centered teaching and learning. Specifically, the PALS components were formed by translating these adult educators' theoretical perspectives into practical classroom practices that resemble adult educators' real-life experiences (Conti,1978, 1982).

As noted earlier, this study was guided by the framework of andragogy, and the first question aimed to identify the degree to which English language instructors at the Faculty of Languages practiced learner-centered teaching as conceptualized by andragogy theory. Accordingly, PALS was used in the first stage of this research to address the first question for the three reasons. First, Knowles et al. (2020) noted that “PALS can be considered one of the best instruments in the field from a psychometric quality perspective. Even though it was not created as a way to directly measure andragogy, it measures teaching methodologies that are closely associated with the principles of the theory.” (p. 298)

Second, other researchers have confirmed that PALS components are grounded in the philosophical foundation of the andragogical model and learner-centered teaching methods (Lee, 2005; Merriam & Bierema, 2013). Lastly, PALS has been used in previous studies that examined English language teaching and learning through the lens of andragogy theory (e.g., Kovačević,2011; Lele, 2020; López & Odón, 2024; Wang & Storey, 2015). All these factors supported the selection of PALS to guide the first-question inquiry.

The PALS instrument can be used both independently for self-assessment and for assessment conducted by others, such as in this study, where PALS was used to assess the teaching practices of English language instructors at the Faculty of Languages. Designed to be completed within 10-15 minutes, PALS consists of 44 positive and negative items that require instructors to indicate the frequency with which they engage in the actions described in each item. The PALS uses a 6-point Likert-type scale ranging from “Always” to “Never” to assess both positive and negative items. For positive items, the scoring system assigns numerical values from 5 for “Always” to 0 for “Never”. Conversely,

negative items are scored in reverse, with 0 for “Always” up to 5 for “Never”. If an item is left blank, a neutral value of 2.5 is given (Conti, 2004). To calculate the total score on PALS, the values for each response are summed and compared to the established norm score for the instrument, as outlined by Conti (2004).

The total scores obtained on the PALS range from 0 to 220. The mean score is 146, with a standard deviation of 20. Participants’ scores are interpreted by comparing them to the mean score for the instrument (i.e., 146). By comparing a score to 146, one can assess the overall teaching style and the level of commitment to that style. Scores above 146 suggest a preference for the learner-centered approach described in adult education, while lower scores indicate support for the teacher-centered approach (Conti, 2004).

Moreover, standard deviations are used to determine the position of scores on a standard, bell-shaped curve. The majority of scores will fall within one standard deviation of the mean, which means they will range from 126 to 166. Moving closer to these scores signifies an increased commitment to a specific teaching style. Scores that deviate by 20 to 40 points from the mean fall within the second standard deviation and indicate strong and consistent support for a particular teaching style. On the other hand, scores that deviate by at least 40 points from the mean fall within the third standard deviation and indicate an extreme commitment to a style (Conti, 2004). The mean and standard deviation of the PALS total score are shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics of the PALS Total Score

Number of Items	Mean	Standard Deviation
44	146	20

Note. These scores are adopted from (Conti, 2004, p. 79).

Table 1 above shows the mean and standard deviation of the PALS total score on the 44 items. Particularly, the table indicates that the total score on the PALS 44 items has a mean

of 146 and a standard deviation of 20. As previously established, participants' total score on PALS 44 items is contrasted with the PALS mean of 146 to identify their teaching style.

Furthermore, PALS is divided into seven factors that make up PALS. Each factor consists of a group of items that influence the assessment of the overall teaching style (i.e., the total score on PALS described above). The naming of these factors reflects learner-centered practices as described in adult education literature. Higher scores in each factor indicate support for the learner-centered practices associated with that factor. On the other hand, lower scores suggest a preference for a teacher-centered approach. To calculate the scores for each factor, the points assigned to each item within the factor are added together (Conti, 2004).

It's essential to point out that out of the seven factors of PALS, only Factors One and Seven describe teacher-centered practices. On the other hand, Factors Two, Three, Four, Five, and Six signify learner-centered teaching practices. However, achieving high scores across all seven PALS factors reflects support for the learner-centered principles linked to those factors. Conversely, low scores on any factor imply a tendency towards a teacher-centered approach (Conti, 2004).

The following is an outline of the seven factors, including their names, items comprised, the range of scores, the mean scores, and their description:

Factor One: Learner-Centered Activities. This factor consists of twelve negative items: 2, 4, 11, 12, 13, 15, 19, 21, 29, 30, 38, and 40, which describe teacher-centered practices. The range of scores for this factor is 0 to 60, where the mean score is 38. Scoring low in this factor indicates that the teacher exercises control over the classroom by employing conventional classroom management techniques such as disciplinary actions. In this context, the teacher adheres to a uniform teaching approach and does not consider the differences in students' learning styles. Also, the teacher evaluates the student using formal examinations and compares the student against external benchmarks. On the other

hand, scoring high in this factor specifies the teacher's rejection of the described teacher-centered behaviors and a preference for learner-centered practices such as encouraging students' involvement in learning and evaluating them using informal evaluation techniques (Conti, 2004).

Factor Two: Personalizing Instruction. This factor consists of a total of nine items, with three being negative and six being positive. The specific items are numbered as follows: 3, 9, 17, 24, 32, 35, 37, 41, and 42. The range of scores for this factor is 0 to 45, with a mean score of 31. Scoring high on this factor suggests that the teacher uses several techniques to personalize the learning experience according to students' needs, aims, and capabilities. Within this framework, the instruction is designed to be self-paced, which allows students to progress at their own speed and in a collaborative rather than a competitive environment. Scoring low on this factor indicates the absence of these personalized learner-centered teaching practices (Conti, 2004).

Factor Three: Relating to Experience. This factor contains six positive items: 14, 31, 34, 39, 43, and 44, for which the range of scores is 0 to 30, with an average score of 21. Achieving high scores on these elements indicates that the teacher's teaching approach considers the students' previous experiences and relates them to the new knowledge. In addition, the learning activities are designed based on real-life challenges that students face on a daily basis to make them more meaningful. Scoring low on this factor signifies that the teacher does not apply the outlined learner-centered principles (Conti, 2004).

Factor Four: Assessing Student Needs. This factor comprises four positive items: 5, 8, 23, and 25. The range of scores for the factor is 0 to 20, with an average score of 14. A high score on this factor indicates that the teacher assesses students' needs and considers how they align with students' current achievement levels. Within this context, teachers use personalized counseling sessions to monitor students' progress and identify strategies for helping students set short and long-term goals. Scoring low on this factor indicates a lack of these teaching practices (Conti, 2004).

Factor Five: Climate Building. This factor consists of four positive items: 18, 20, 22, and 28. The range of scores for this factor is 0 to 20, with a mean score of 16. Scoring high on this factor indicates that the teacher establishes a friendly and informal classroom atmosphere that encourages students' dialogue and interactions. Within this setting, students are motivated to experiment, explore aspects of their self-concept, enhance problem-solving abilities, and cultivate interpersonal skills. Students are encouraged to take risks and failures is considered as valuable feedback mechanisms that guide future learning goals. Scoring low on this factor specifies the absence of such a learning environment (Conti, 2004).

Factor Six: Participation in the Learning Process. This factor comprises four positive items: 1, 10, 15, and 36. The range of scores is 0 to 20, where the average score is 13. Scoring high on Factor 6 suggests that the teacher allows students to participate in their learning by being involved in decisions regarding the choice of the learning content and the criteria for assessing their performance. Scoring low on this factor indicates that the teacher does not promote the practices associated with students' participation in the learning process (Conti, 2004).

Factor Seven: Flexibility for Personal Development. This factor includes five negative items, specifically 6, 7, 26, 27, and 33. The range of scores for this factor is 0 to 25, with a mean score of 13. Scoring low on Factor 7 implies that the teacher adopts the role of knowledge provider rather than facilitator. In this context, the teacher establishes objectives for the students at the beginning of the program, which remain fixed regardless of the students' growing needs. Also, there are restrictions on the topics discussed in the classroom; sensitive issues related to students' self-concept are avoided. Maintaining discipline in the classroom is important. Conversely, scoring highly on this factor indicates that the teacher rejects this inflexibility and insensitivity towards the student. Alternatively, the teacher prioritizes students' needs and goals and adapts the classroom environment and curriculum accordingly. Within this setting, students have more freedom to discuss issues related to their self-concept and future (Conti, 2004).

As previously stated, the scores for each factor of PALS are determined by adding up the value of the responses for each item within the factor. Subsequently, the mean values of these scores are contrasted with the normative mean value scores of PALS Factors provided in Table 2 below (Conti, 2004: 91).

Table 2

Descriptive Statistics of PALS Seven Factors Scores

Factor	Mean	Standard Deviation
1	38	8.3
2	31	6.8
3	21	4.9
4	14	3.6
5	16	3.0
6	13	3.5
7	13	3.9

Note. These scores are adopted from (Conti, 2004, p. 79).

Table 2 above shows the seven factors of PALS with their corresponding mean and standard deviation scores adopted from Conti (2004, p.91). These provide a reference for comparing participants' mean scores on each of the seven factors of PALS.

This section describes this study's quantitative research instrument (i.e., PALS) and explains the rationale behind its selection. It was established that PALS was selected mainly based on the premise that it effectively measures principles related to the theory of andragogy. After describing PALS and its seven factors, the researcher considered it necessary to investigate the connection between PALS's seven factors and the six principles of andragogy theory further. This analysis aims to determine the efficiency of PALS for measuring andragogy's constructs in this study. This is the aim of the next section.

3.5.1.1.1 Comparing PALS Factors with Andragogy's Principles

This section examines the relationship between the seven factors of PALS and the six principles of andragogy theory. Although it was already established that PALS can accurately measure andragogy's principle (Knowles et al., 2020), the researcher of this study considered this comparison crucial to ensure that participants' responses to PALS reflect their teaching practices concerning andragogy theory. This comparison was based on the researcher's own observation and analysis of the PALS seven factors and andragogy's six principles.

To begin with, PALS factors and the principles of andragogy both focus on adult education and acknowledge adult learners' unique characteristics and needs.

Second, there are the following prominent similarities between the PALS factors and andragogy principles:

1. PALS Factor One, *Learner-Centered Activities*, and Factor Six, *Participation in the Learning Process*, align with andragogy's first principle, the *Need to Know*, and the second principle, *Learner's Self-Concept*. Together, they advocate for encouraging self-directed learning among adult learners and emphasize the importance of learners' overall involvement in learning and in decisions regarding their learning process.
2. PALS Factor Two, *Personalizing Instruction*, and Factor Four, *Assessing Students' Needs*, are consistent with andragogy's first principle, the *Need to Know*, and the fourth principle, *Readiness to Learn*. Collectively, they stress the importance of adapting education to individual learners' needs and helping them identify the gap between their needs and present achievement levels.
3. PALS Factor Three, *Relating to Experience*, corresponds with andragogy's third principle, the *Role of Learners' Experiences*, and the fifth principle, *Orientation to Learning*. Synchronously, they emphasize learners' prior knowledge and

experiences and encourage connecting them to new learning. Also, they highlight the value of practical and hands-on learning activities.

It came to the researcher's observation that the PALS instrument does not explicitly assess teachers' approach to motivating their learners, which is andragogy's sixth principle. Nevertheless, Knowles et al. (2020) had already established that adult learners are more likely to be motivated when the learning environment endorses andragogy's assumptions, such as learner autonomy, experience-based learning, and real-life relevant content, and so on. From this standpoint, it can be concluded that the motivation principle in andragogy is implicitly assessed through the seven PALS factors, because these factors collectively assess the other five principles of andragogy.

In conclusion, the above comparison between PALS and andragogy reveals a great overlap between the two and apparent similarities between their underlying assumptions. Accordingly, the researcher of this study confirms the assertions made by Knowles et al. (2020) that PALS can effectively measure teachers' practices concerning andragogy. On this basis, the researcher used PALS as an initial step to form a general picture of English language instructors' learner-centered practices in light of andragogy. Despite the conclusion drawn from this section, which validates the use of PALS in this study, it was important to examine PALS' overall validity and reliability as a measurement tool. This is explored in more detail in the next section.

3.5.1.1.1.2 Validity and Reliability of PALS

The efficiency of a research instrument is primarily determined by its validity. In this sense, validity refers to the instrument's ability to assess the phenomena under examination accurately and produce trustworthy outcomes (Blumberg et al., 2005; Robson, 2011). Thus, to ensure the strength of research, it is vital to confirm that the methods used can precisely measure the targeted constructs. This is particularly important when the tool used is a questionnaire (Pallant, 2011).

Validity is a complex concept that involves three types. The first type is content validity, which measures the extent to which the instrument signifies the area of study that is under exploration. The second is construct validity, which examines the degree to which the instrument measures the study's targeted theoretical constructs (Cronbach & Meehl, 1955). The third is criterion-related validity, which assesses the extent to which the measurements derived from an instrument correspond with a pre-established criterion. This type of validity is commonly evaluated through the correlation coefficient (Drost, 2011).

The validity of the PALS instrument had been established in terms of the three types of content validity, construct validity, and criterion-related validity (Conti, 1982). First, the content validity of PALS was assessed in a process of field testing involving adult education teachers in Illinois. The aim was to check whether the teachers' scores on PALS items reflected their actual teaching styles. The relationship between PALS questions and the teachers' scores was evaluated using Pearson correlations, a statistical measure of the linear relationship between two sets of scores. Respectively, a positive correlation between the PALS items and participants' scores (Conti, 1982). In other words, PALS questions were proven to effectively reflect the knowledge and skills of learner-centered adult education principles that they were designed to measure.

Second, the construct validity of PALS was verified by a committee of ten adult education professors with extensive knowledge and experience in the field. Specifically, the committee assessed the structure of every component in PALS to check its consistency with adult education's learner-centered principles (Conti, 1985b). Following this analysis, the professors testified that PALS components were congruent with these principles, which confirmed PALS's construct validity (Conti, 1982).

Finally, criterion-related validity was tested by comparing PALS with the Flanders Interaction Analysis Categories (FIAC). FIAC assesses constructs similar to PALS, which relate to the initiation of responsive and interactive behaviors in the classroom. The results revealed strong correlations between PALS and FIAC. These findings provide evidence

for the alignment between PALS and FIAC and the criterion-related validity of PALS (Conti, 1978,1979, as cited in Conti, 1985b).

According to Lele (2020), in addition to confirming the validity of PALS during its development, PALS's validity was proven further in a separate study conducted by Yoshida, Conti, Yamauchi, and Iwasaki in 2014. In this study, PALS was translated into Japanese, and its items were validated in terms of content, construct, and criterion (Lele, 2020).

Despite the previous establishment of the content validity of PALS (Conti, 1982, 1985b), it was crucial to verify that the questionnaire content was appropriate for the particular context of this study. Therefore, as a preliminary step before data collection, the researcher asked two experienced English language professors from Benghazi University to review the content of PALS. These professors confirmed the suitability of PALS for this study, without making any changes.

Another important issue in this discussion relates to the concept of reliability. Reliability describes the degree to which an instrument produces consistent measurements or scores when conducted repeatedly across different contexts and among various participants (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994). Reliability is important in research methods because it confirms whether the results obtained from a research tool reflect dependable outcomes and not merely random outcomes (DeVellis, 2016).

Researchers can employ a variety of statistical tests to measure the reliability of their instruments. The reliability of PALS was initially established through the test-retest method, which assesses the internal consistency of measurements over different times. This process involved administering PALS to 23 adult basic education practitioners in Chicago. Then, the same form of PALS was re-administered with the same group after 7 days. Subsequently, the participants' scores on the two tests were compared using Pearson correlation. The results yielded a reliability coefficient of 0.92 for the sample group (Conti, 1982). In this respect, it is important to note that the acceptable range of values for

alpha (i.e., reliability) ranges from 0.70 to 0.95 (e.g., Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994). Thus, this result (i.e., 0.92) supported the reliability of PALS in producing consistent scores across the two instances. Furthermore, PALS's reliability was tested in other studies across different contexts, and it was reported to be dependable (Lele, 2020).

Nonetheless, it is worth noting that the reliability of research instruments needs to be verified each time they are administered, especially if the tool is used with a different sample in a different context. That is to say, assessing the reliability of a research tool with the specific study sample is crucial to ensure that it is dependable for use with this sample (Gliem & Gliem, 2003). Cronbach's alpha is one of the most common and objective methods for measuring the reliability of research results (Tavakol & Dennick, 2011). Respectively, to check the reliability of PALS use with this study's sample, Cronbach's alpha was measured (See Chapter 4 for the reliability test results).

Finally, the fact that PALS has been employed in several studies (e.g., Conti, 1985; Lele, 2020; Liu et al., 2006; Miglietti & Strange, 1998; Wilson, 1994) at different times and in various contexts contributes to its classification as a validated and reliable instrument for assessing the variables under examination (i.e., adult learning principles) in this specific research environment.

3.5.1.2 Quantitative Research Sampling

The research population is the entire group of individuals or items that are the focus of the study and to which the research findings and conclusions are intended to be generalized. A sample, on the other hand, is any subgroup of the population that accurately represents all the different characteristics of the population (Dawson & Trapp, 2004). In quantitative research, a good sample precisely reflects the larger population, and selecting it requires a systematic process and careful consideration dependent on the specific needs and circumstances of the study (Gay et al., 2009).

The population of this study consisted of 53 English language teachers who teach across the five departments in the English Program at the Faculty of Languages. Gay et al. (2009)

proposed that in quantitative research that involves smaller populations of 100 or fewer, it is generally unnecessary to sample. In other words, it is more efficient to involve the entire population. Thus, in the first stage of this investigation, the aim was to survey the entire population (i.e., 53 instructors). Consequently, all teachers within the English Program were contacted via WhatsApp to request their participation in the survey. However, only 48 participants agreed to take part.

Nevertheless, for a population size of 53 (i.e., the number of instructors in the English Language Program at Benghazi University), the ideal sample size is approximately 48 participants (Krejcie & Morgan, 1970). Thus, it can be safely considered that the sample of the quantitative stage of this research was representative of the population. This, in turn, ensured that the study findings were statistically significant. Table 3 below summarizes the characteristics of the survey participants in this study by including the total number of participants, the gender breakdown, and the years of teaching experience for each group.

Table 3

Characteristics of Survey Participants

Characteristics	Number	Percentage
Total Participants	48	100%
Gender		
Female	43	89.6%
Male	5	10.4%
Years of Teaching Experience		
More than 10 Years	25	52.1%
5-10 Years	8	16.7%
2-5 Years	12	25%
Less than 2 Years	3	6.3%

As illustrated in Table 3 above, the sample for the survey consisted of 48 English language instructors from the Faculty of Languages at Benghazi University in Libya. Among them, 43 were females, and 5 were males. Moreover, these instructors had various years of teaching experience at the faculty. That is, 25 instructors had over ten years of teaching experience, 8 had between 5-10 years, 12 had between 2-5 years, and only 3 had less than two years of experience. The percentages help to illustrate the relative proportions of each category within the overall sample. It shows that the majority of participants (89.6%) were females. Also, the majority of participants (52%) had more than 10 years of teaching experience.

3.5.1.3 Quantitative Research Procedure and Data Collection

As an initial step before data collection, the researcher requested and obtained authorization for the investigation from the dean of the Faculty of Languages at the University of Benghazi. It is noteworthy that Conti granted consent to practitioners and researchers for the development and application of the PALS instrument (Conti, 2004, p. 91).

Upon obtaining approval to initiate the investigation, a decision was made by the researcher to administer PALS online for three reasons. First, it is easier and more economical to reach a bigger audience online than otherwise. Second, it is argued that collecting data online ensures the safety of data from potential loss and makes it easier to analyze later (Baron & Healey, 2002; Carbonaro & Bainbridge, 2000, as cited in Lefever et al., 2007). Third, the researcher considered it more convenient for the participants to conduct PALS online.

Thus, PALS was transformed to an online format, and Google Forum was used as the platform for the administration process. Moreover, an information sheet was included with the online questionnaire. The information sheet consisted of two parts. The first part included an introduction to the research and study objectives, a brief overview of PALS, the purpose and structure of the questionnaire, and a reassurance to the participants regarding the confidentiality of their responses. Moreover, the participants were requested

to provide their consent to participate in the study. The second part of the information sheet involved a set of personal information required from the participants. This included their name, gender, and years of teaching experience (see Appendix B for the PALS Information Sheet). The personal information was requested to select participants for the qualitative phase.

The questionnaire link and the information sheet were shared through WhatsApp with all English language instructors on the faculty (i.e., 53). Following this step, the data collection process lasted for six weeks, during which a reminder message was sent after three weeks to prompt non-respondents to respond. Finally, 48 responses were received.

3.5.1.4 Quantitative Research Data Analysis

The quantitative data for this study, which were obtained from PALS, were analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) 21. SPSS is a software commonly used for statistical analysis in various fields, including education. Particularly, it facilitates the efficient organization and examination of complex datasets and offers a wide range of statistical tests. The selection of SPSS as the tool for data analysis of this study was based on its strong statistical features and user-friendly nature. Additionally, SPSS is well-known for its precision and accuracy in statistical analyses, which contributes to the overall strength and reliability of research findings (Wellman, 1998).

In this study, the data analysis was conducted using SPSS and adhering to the guidelines outlined by Conti (2004) for scoring the items (see Section 3.5.1.1.1). According to these guidelines, descriptive statistics (i.e., mean and standard deviation) of participants' responses are needed to measure the general tendency in participants' responses and to compare the participants' obtained mean scores with the norm reference mean score of PALS as a whole and throughout its seven factors.

3.5.2 Second Stage: Qualitative Research

This section describes the second stage of this research, which was based on a qualitative research approach. The section begins by restating the second research question, then explains the aim of the second stage, the research approach used, and the reason for

selecting this approach. After that, this section describes the research method used in this stage, the sampling procedure, and the data collection and analysis procedures, and discusses the trustworthiness, utility, and reliability of the research findings.

The second research question in this study was:

2. What are the instructors' perceptions of learner-centered teaching?

The second stage of this study aimed to answer the second research question using a qualitative approach. Qualitative research is commonly employed when the purpose is to obtain an in-depth understanding of individuals' experiences and perspectives by exploring their realities (Flick et al., 2004). In other words, it enables researchers to interpret social phenomena and understand how individuals perceive them (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000) through methods such as interviews, diaries, journals, classroom observations, and open-ended questionnaires (Zohrabi, 2013). In essence, it primarily relies on textual rather than numerical data (Punch, 2013).

As noted at the beginning of this chapter, this research aimed to gain a thorough understanding of English language teachers' practices and perspectives on learner-centered teaching, particularly through the lens of andragogy theory. To effectively achieve this aim and address gaps in the existing literature, the researcher adopted a mixed-methods research approach. The design of the mixed-methods research was sequential explanatory, beginning with quantitative data and complemented with qualitative data.

The first stage of this study was quantitative and assessed teachers' application of andragogy's learner-centered principles statistically (see Section 3.5.1). The second stage of the study employed a qualitative research approach to confirm and elaborate on the findings of the first stage. The use of a qualitative research approach permitted the researcher to explore how English language instructors perceived the learner-centered andragogy principles, and to discover aspects of the instructors' work environment reality

and the contextual factors that influenced it. Moreover, the literature review revealed a gap in qualitative research examining the application of andragogy in English language teaching, and the need to investigate this area qualitatively (see Section 2.3.3.5). These considerations strengthened the rationale for employing a qualitative approach in this study.

3.5.2.1 Qualitative Research Method: Interviews

The second and qualitative stage of this study utilized interviews as the data collection method. Interviews are a type of data collection method that relies on verbal communication between a researcher and a participant (Mathers et al., 2000). The decision to choose interviews as the qualitative research method for this study was based on their advantages. In particular, through interviews, specifically with open-ended questions, the researcher can obtain exhaustive information from participants' responses, which ultimately results in rich data (Kvale, 1996). Furthermore, interviews help the researcher to understand the contextual factors that affect participants' viewpoints and behavior (Seidman, 2013). These advantages are particularly relevant and consistent with the aims of this case study research, which was to examine teachers' teaching approaches and underlying beliefs in detail and in light of the contextual factors that impact these practices and perceptions.

There are different types of interviews: structured, semi-structured, and unstructured. For this study, semi-structured interviews were employed. Semi-structured interviews involve asking participants a set of predetermined open-ended questions and follow-up questions within a predetermined thematic framework. They are characterized by flexibility in the order in which questions are asked, and they permit the emergence of new ideas during the interview. This approach, in turn, is believed to make participants more at ease with fully expressing themselves. Semi-structured interviews are widely used in qualitative research across various study domains and research fields (Adams, 2015). The researcher aimed to adopt a flexible approach to interviewing the participants in this study to make them more comfortable sharing their opinions and to encourage the emergence of rich

data. Accordingly, semi-structured interviews were considered an appropriate choice that aligned with these objectives.

Primarily, the interviews in this study aimed to confirm the findings obtained from the questionnaire (i.e., PALS) and to elaborate on them. That is to say, while the questionnaire assessed teachers' application of andragogy's learner-centered principles, the interviews aimed to corroborate the results obtained from PALS and to explain the reasons behind those outcomes. In particular, the interview questions aimed to investigate the teachers' perceptions (including their awareness, practices, perspectives, potential for application) regarding learner-centered teaching in general, as well as andragogy's six principles. Thus, the interview questions were constructed in a manner that aligns with these objectives. Moreover, it was considered important to design the majority of the questions in an open-ended format to encourage the participants to share their insights freely (see Appendix C for the interview questions).

First and foremost, it was essential at this stage to consider the content of the interview questions and their efficacy in evaluating the principles associated with andragogy theory. Following Zohrabi's (2013) guidelines for validating the content of qualitative interview questions, the researcher asked experts in the English language teaching and research field to review the interview questions and to check their alignment with the second research question and andragogy's principles. The experts consulted for this purpose were three esteemed English language instructors affiliated with the University of Benghazi. Based on the instructors' feedback, any unclear and ambiguous questions were revised and rephrased. Furthermore, some items were added to improve the consistency between the interview questions and andragogy's principles.

After that, a pilot study was conducted using the interviews. This involved administering the interview questions to three English language instructors from the Faculty of Languages, who were not involved in the study. The pilot study aimed to test the clarity and relevance of the interview questions and to identify any potential problems. The same

format and methods planned for the actual interviews were followed in the pilot interviews.

Based on the instructors' feedback on the pilot study, the interview questions aligned with the second research question and andragogy's principles. However, they suggested simplifying the wording of the questions to make them easier for study participants to understand. For example, one of the questions was: "At the beginning of the term, how do you frame students' expectations regarding the nature, scope, and orientation of the course?" For this question, the instructors suggested using a simpler version, which was "When you meet your students at the beginning of the term, how do you set the stage for what they can expect from the course? Do you touch on any specific objectives?" Accordingly, the researcher modified certain questions to simplify the wording and enhance clarity.

3.5.2.2 Qualitative Research Sampling

As previously stated, the population of this study involved 53 English language instructors working at the Faculty of Languages, Benghazi University. During the qualitative stage of this research, a purposive sample was selected from the study population to invite them to take part in the interviews. Purposive sampling involves selecting research participants intentionally based on specific criteria, such as certain qualities they possess. During purposive sampling, the researcher determines the necessary information they seek to obtain and tries to find individuals with the knowledge or experience to provide the required information (Bernard, 2002; Lewis & Sheppard, 2006; Robinson, 2014).

The purposive sampling technique was considered suitable for this research stage because the researcher needed to obtain information from participants with specific characteristics to provide important insights into the topics under investigation. Specifically, the researcher's selection criteria included participants who had participated in the first stage and who had at least five years of teaching experience at the faculty to ensure they were familiar with the study context.

Moreover, the sample size was carefully considered. According to Braun and Clarke (2006), a recommended number of participants for thematic analysis research projects, such as a doctoral thesis, is between 6 and 15 individuals. In addition to this reference, the researcher considered the concept of data saturation to ensure the sufficiency of the data obtained from the sample. According to Glaser and Strauss (2017), saturation is the point at which information about the topic being studied has been fully covered. Specifically, saturation occurs when no additional data can be found that would contribute to the development of new information concerning the topic under examination. To reach this aim and obtain comprehensive data, the researcher should select groups that provide diverse perspectives. Fusch and Ness (2015) asserted that the failure to achieve saturation negatively impacts the quality of research.

In this study, the researcher initially aimed to conduct interviews with a minimum of 15 to ensure that rich and varied data could be obtained about the phenomenon under study. The researcher contacted several participants (those who met the criteria above) personally and provided them with an information sheet that contained the purpose of the interviews, the inclusion criteria, the interview procedure, and a request to sign a consent form (see Appendix D for the interview information sheet).

Although the researcher initially planned to interview 15 participants, data saturation was reached after interviewing the 10th participant. In other words, the researcher reached a point where no new information emerged, and the information reported by new participants was similar to that of their predecessors. Consequently, the total number of participants was 10. The characteristics of the interview participants are shown in Table 4 below.

Table 4

Characteristics of Interview Participants

Participant	Gender	Years of Teaching Experience at the Faculty
1	Female	8
2	Female	12
3	Female	7
4	Female	6
5	Female	12
6	Female	8
7	Male	6
8	Male	9
9	Female	11
10	Female	8

Table 4 above outlines the characteristics of the ten participants who participated in the interviews. As shown in the table, the total number of participants was 10, including 8 females and two males. The participants' teaching experiences at the faculty ranged from 6 to 12 years.

3.5.2.3 Qualitative Research Procedure and Data Collection

The interviewing process commenced upon receiving approval from the faculty dean. Ethical issues were considered carefully during this process. Ethical considerations are fundamental principles that researchers must adhere to ensure the integrity and credibility of the research and to respect and prevent harm to all individuals involved in the research process (Bryman, 2012). To conform to ethical guidelines and to protect the participants' rights, all individuals involved in the study were required to sign the informed consent form before data collection (see Appendix D for the interview consent form). Additionally, participants were notified that their participation was voluntary and they could withdraw at any time without facing any consequences. Moreover, participants were assured that only the researcher had access to their personal data, names, and recordings,

and that their responses and identities would not affect their academic evaluation or any other aspects of their career.

Once participants' consents were obtained, an interview schedule was arranged. Some interviews were conducted over the phone upon participants' requests, while others were conducted face-to-face. Each interview lasted between 45 and 60 minutes. During this time, the researcher utilized Voice Memos on the iPhone to record the interviews. In order to enhance the credibility of the data, particular attention was given to the way the interviews were conducted. The interviews followed an open-ended, non-directive questioning style (e.g., How do you feel about encouraging learner responsibility?) to encourage participants to express their perspectives on learner-centered teaching freely.

Furthermore, a range of probing strategies was used throughout the interviews to promote depth. These included clarification probes (e.g., asking participants to explain what they meant by certain terms or ideas), elaboration probes (e.g., asking participants to provide examples from actual classroom practices), and reflective probes (e.g., asking why a particular view was held).

In addition, although an interview guide was used to ensure consistency across participants, the interviewer remained flexible and responsive to participants' answers to allow relevant new issues to be explored. Finally, the interview recordings were transcribed promptly by the researcher following the interviews and were saved for future analysis.

3.5.2.4 Qualitative Research Data Analysis

Qualitative data analysis is the systematic process of organizing data to examine it and present findings accurately (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992). There are several methods of qualitative data analysis, but for this study, the interviews conducted at the second stage were analyzed using thematic analysis. Thematic analysis is a process of detecting patterns and themes in qualitative data to draw conclusions and reach findings (Braun & Clarke, 2006). It is considered more of a technique than a methodology because it does not rely

on a specific framework, which, in turn, makes it highly adaptable (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Clarke & Braun, 2013).

The interviews were employed during the second research stage to extend the findings of the first stage by examining the teachers' perceptions of andragogy's learner-centered principles. To analyze the data obtained from the interviews, thematic analysis was employed for three reasons. First, thematic analysis facilitated the researcher's analysis of data in a structured and accessible way without the need for advanced statistical knowledge. Second, this technique enabled the researcher to identify recurring themes and patterns in teachers' perspectives, which allowed the researcher to draw meaningful conclusions about common practices and challenges. Finally, thematic analysis helped the researcher to elicit and generate new ideas and practical recommendations by drawing on teachers' actual needs and encounters.

Braun and Clarke (2012) emphasized that several factors should be considered when using thematic analysis and that it can be viewed through three main spectrums: inductive vs. deductive data coding and analysis, experiential vs. critical orientation to data, and essentialist vs. constructionist theoretical perspective. The researcher's selection of each spectrum affects the assumptions made, what can be said about the data, and how it should be interpreted. For this study, the thematic analysis was inductive and deductive.

Inductive data coding and analysis is a "bottom-up" approach guided by the data, where codes and themes emerge from the content of the data. In contrast, deductive data coding and analysis is a "top-down" approach where the researcher uses pre-existing concepts, ideas, or topics to code and interpret the data (Braun & Clarke, 2012). In reality, these two types are often difficult to separate and are used in combination. However, one approach tends to dominate and prioritizes either participant or data-based meaning or researcher- or theory-based meaning (Braun & Clarke, 2012).

Inductive thematic analysis begins with the participants' voices as the starting point for analysis, which makes it experiential in its orientation and essentialist in its theoretical

framework. This means that participants' experiences and realities are the essence of this type of analysis. Deductive thematic analysis, on the other hand, builds the analysis on pre-established ideas and assumptions that inform the data, which makes it critical in its orientation and constructionist in its theoretical framework. In other words, this analysis is theoretically informed and perceives experiences and realities as socially and contextually constructed. Nonetheless, these classifications are not rigid or mandatory. The most important consideration is to maintain coherence and consistency in the analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2012).

For this study, the researcher's approach to the thematic analysis was based on both inductive and deductive data coding and analysis. Initially, the researcher analyzed the data as it emerged from the participants by focusing on understanding participants' experiences, realities, and underlying beliefs. This is because the researcher wanted to concentrate on obtaining genuine and rich data without being influenced by any pre-established concepts, such as the theoretical framework of the study (i.e., andragogy). However, during the discussion, the researcher categorized the data in light of the andragogy framework to draw conclusions about the applicability of andragogy in the study context, which was the primary aim of this study. The researcher assumed that by employing both inductive and deductive data coding and analysis, she could benefit from the strengths of each and overcome the limitations of either one alone. The ultimate aim was to achieve a more effective analysis of the interview data.

Furthermore, while there are several approaches to thematic analysis, this study followed Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-step method for conducting thematic analysis, which can be carried out flexibly and not necessarily in the same order. The six steps for conducting thematic analysis are explained as follows:

1. The researcher reads the data multiple times to become familiar with it and understand it well. During this process, the researcher records any information that may be used to develop significant codes and themes in the future. This process must be repeated to ensure that no important information is overlooked.

2. The researcher uses the recorded ideas or information to develop codes. Then, these codes are checked with reference to the research questions to check their relevance. Likewise, this process must be repeated multiple times to ensure no important data is ignored.
3. The researcher groups codes together to generate themes that are related to a specific category. These themes help to identify patterns of meaning that exist across the data.
4. The researcher revises themes and compares them with the coded data and the interview data as a whole. Moreover, it could be useful to create a thematic map to enhance the analysis and identify the relationship between themes.
5. The researcher defines and names the themes. At this stage, the researcher creates a narrative to explain the data and their significance to the research question.
6. The researcher writes a report that summarizes the research process and results obtained (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

The data analysis of the interviews in this study revealed four main themes concerning the participants' perceptions of learner-centered teaching. These involved the participants' views of the definitions, application, advantages, and challenges of learner-centered teaching. Within some of these themes, subthemes were also identified. A detailed account of the themes and subthemes is presented in Chapter 4.

3.5.2.5 Qualitative Research Trustworthiness, Utility, and Reliability

Validity and reliability are crucial elements in research, which must be carefully addressed. These aspects were discussed earlier in this chapter as they pertained to the quantitative method (i.e., PALS). However, there are different considerations of validity and reliability in qualitative research. Within qualitative research, validity is defined as the extent to which a researcher employs methods to confirm the precision of the findings

(Creswell, 2014). Zohrabi (2013) emphasized that qualitative research depends on three aspects: trustworthiness, utility, and reliability of the findings. This section discusses these three aspects in relation to this research.

To begin with, the researcher can demonstrate the trustworthiness of the qualitative research findings through various steps, one of which is a technique known as member checks. To apply this technique, researchers present their results and interpretations to the research participants, and the participants affirm whether the findings reflect their views, which they expressed during the interview process (Creswell, 2009; Merriam, 1998). To ensure the credibility of the interview results of this study, the researcher employed member checks with three participants. This process involved sharing the data analysis with the participants and asking them to review, approve, modify, or provide additional insights regarding the extent to which these results represent their perceptions. The participants confirmed the correspondence between the findings and their insights, which supported the trustworthiness of the interview analysis.

As for the concept of *utility*, Lynch (1996), as cited in Zohrabi (2013), defined utility as the level of usefulness that research findings offer to decision makers, such as administrators, managers, and other stakeholders. Respectively, one of the main objectives of this study was to explore the feasibility of implementing learner-centered English language teaching at the Faculty of Languages to provide insights and suggest a mechanism that can be *utilized* to enhance the teaching and learning process in this setting.

The third important aspect to consider in qualitative research, as noted by Zohrabi (2013), was reliability. Qualitative research reliability can be considered in terms of both external and internal reliability. External reliability refers to the consistency, dependability, and capacity to replicate the results obtained from a research study (Nunan, 1992). External reliability in qualitative research can be enhanced by establishing and clarifying five key aspects of the investigation: the status of the researcher, the selection of informants, the social contexts and conditions, the analytical constructs and premises, and the methods used for data collection and analysis. These are defined as follows:

1. *The status of the Researcher* refers to explaining the researcher's social position and role in the research context and his/her relationship to the study participants.
2. *Choice of Informants* involves describing in detail how the research participants were selected to facilitate the replication of research by future researchers.
3. *Social Situations and Conditions* signifies understanding the social environment of research, such as the setting, and the diversity among participants.
4. *Analytic Constructs and Premises* is about defining the research's key terms, constructs, elements of analysis, and underlying assumptions. This process aims to demonstrate the research reliability and inform its future replication.
5. *Methods of Data Collection and Analysis* involve outlining in detail the data collection tools and procedures (e.g., questionnaires, interviews) and the methods used for their analysis, whether they were quantitative or qualitative (LeCompte & Goetz, 1982, and Nunan, 1999, as cited in Zohrabi, 2013).

It can be observed that throughout the previous sections of this chapter, there was a detailed account of these five aspects to reinforce the external reliability of the study.

On the other hand, internal reliability is defined as the uniformity and consistency in gathering, examining, and understanding the data. Achieving internal consistency is possible when an impartial researcher reevaluates the data and reaches similar results to those of the initial researcher (Zohrabi, 2013). Nunan (1992) postulated that this process can be conducted by seeking the assistance of knowledgeable participants who can verify and validate the data analysis by performing a similar method of examining and interpreting the data. In this study, the internal reliability of the interview data analysis was verified by asking three faculty members to analyze the data. A similar analysis was reached, which supported the internal reliability of the analysis. The selected participants were faculty members who were not part of the study. This decision was made to ensure

that their evaluations were not influenced by previous exposure to the data or topics involved.

3.6 Summary of Chapter

The purpose of this chapter was to offer a thorough explanation of the methodology of this study. The chapter began by describing the research scope, setting, and population. The attention was then focused on explaining the methodological framework of the study, which was informed by Creswell (2009), Creswell and Creswell (2018), and Yin (2003, 2009, 2014).

Particularly, this methodological framework is based on two main aspects: the research strategy and the research approach. This study followed a case-study research strategy and a mixed-methods research approach. The research approach selection was guided by addressing previous research gaps and considering three elements (philosophical worldview, research design, and research methods). First, the philosophical underpinning of the research approach was the pragmatic worldview, which relies on employing a variety of methods to investigate the research problem. The specific design of the mixed-method research approach was sequential explanatory, which involved beginning the investigation with a quantitative approach, then supplementing it with a qualitative one. The methods employed involved a questionnaire for the quantitative approach and interviews for the qualitative approach.

The research was conducted in two stages. The first stage was quantitative. While the second was qualitative. Each stage was described meticulously in this chapter in terms of design, methods, sampling, data collection, and analysis procedures, with particular attention to aspects of validity, reliability, trustworthiness, and utility.

Chapter Four: Data Analysis and Results

4.0 Introduction

This case study was conducted to investigate the potential application of learner-centered English language teaching based on andragogy's assumptions at the Faculty of Languages, University of Benghazi. The investigation required answering two research questions. The first question focused on assessing the current extent to which instructors implemented learner-centered teaching practices, while the second sought to explore the instructors' insights concerning the approach. This chapter presents the data analysis and results for each of the two research questions, with each one discussed under a separate section. At the beginning of each section, an introduction is provided to restate the research question and the approach and analysis methods used to address it. After that, the data analysis and results of the question are outlined.

4.1 Data Analysis and Results: Research Question One

The first research question in this study was:

To what extent is learner-centered teaching currently implemented by English language instructors at the Faculty of Languages at the University of Benghazi?

Particularly, the first research question aimed to examine whether the learner-centered teaching approach was applied by English language instructors at the Faculty of Languages or not, and to measure the degree of its application or non-application. In other words, the goal was to gain an initial understanding of the teachers' practices concerning the learner-centered teaching approach. Accordingly, a quantitative research approach was employed in the first stage of this study to address this question, using the Principles of Adult Learning Scale (PALS) (see Chapter Three, Section 3.5.1.1.1 for more details).

PALS is a questionnaire designed to assess adult teachers' teaching styles in two categories: teacher-centered and learner-centered, and to measure the degree of

commitment teachers have to either of these styles (Conti, 2004). PALS consists of seven factors comprising a total of 44 positive and negative items. These items describe various practices an adult teacher might employ during teaching and measure the frequency of their implementation. The 44 PALS items are evaluated on a six-point Likert scale, which ranges from Always to Never. In the scoring procedure, positive items are awarded a score of 5 for “always” and 0 for “never”. In contrast, negative items are scored in reverse, where “Always” receives 0 and “Never” receives 5. If an item is left unanswered, a neutral score of 2.5 is assigned (Conti, 2004).

The values of all responses to the 44 PALS items are summed to determine the total score on PALS. The total score is, then, checked against the normative mean established by Conti (2004). In other words, Conti’s established normative mean is used as a reference for interpreting the total scores obtained on PALS. Respectively, the total PALS score can range from 0 to 220. The average of which is 146 with a standard deviation of 20. Instructors whose total score on PALS exceeds 146 are classified as typically following a learner-centered teaching approach. Conversely, those who attain a total score below this average are classified as following a teacher-centered teaching approach (Conti, 2004).

Furthermore, the standard deviations indicate the instructors’ degree of commitment to their teaching styles. Typically, scores fall within one standard deviation of the average, which means they normally range from 126 to 166. Scores that differ by 20 to 40 points from the mean (i.e., 146) suggest a firm and consistent adherence to a particular approach. If scores diverge by 40 points or more from the mean, it signifies an extreme commitment to that teaching style (Conti, 2004).

The total score on PALS signifies, in a general sense, what teaching style the instructor is following (i.e., teacher-centered or learner-centered). However, it does not describe the instructor’s specific classroom practices, which contributed to identifying their overall teaching style. To obtain this information, the instructors’ scores across each of PALS’s seven factors are checked. Thus, while the overall score on PALS designates the instructors’ overall teaching style, the scores on each PALS factor describe in detail the

instructor's specific teaching practices. Each factor represents a specific aspect of teaching style and comprises a set of items that describe this aspect (Conti, 2004). To determine the score for each factor, the values of responses to each item in the factor are added. After that, the score obtained is assessed in light of the normative mean of the factor established by Conti (2004).

Thus, Conti's normative mean for each factor is used as a reference to understand the respondent's scores obtained on PALS factors. Scores that are above the normative mean of any factor suggest an inclination towards the learner-centered practices described in the factor. On the other hand, scores that are below the normative mean in any factor indicate a tendency towards the teacher-centered aspects associated with that factor (Conti, 2004).

In this study, PALS was utilized in the first stage, which involved 48 full-time EFL instructors working at the Faculty of Languages. The respondents' total scores on the PALS and their scores across each PALS factor were determined following Conti's guidelines for item scoring, which are mentioned above. Subsequently, the collected data were analyzed using SPSS software to generate descriptive statistics, including the means and standard deviations of participants' overall PALS scores and scores for each of the seven factors outlined in the PALS.

Although the reliability of PALS has been established in previous research (e.g., Conti, 1982; Lele, 2020), it was crucial to reassess PALS reliability with this study sample. This is because reliability can be dependent on the specific research sample and context (Gliem & Gliem, 2003). To measure the reliability of PALS with this study's sample, Cronbach's alpha was calculated. The analysis yielded an overall alpha value of 0.836, which surpassed the widely accepted threshold of 0.70 (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994). This value supports the consistency and trustworthiness of PALS in this specific study.

The following sections describe the data analysis and results of the first research question. The analysis and results initially highlight participants' overall PALS score. Then, the focus shifts to examining participants' scores across each of the seven factors of PALS.

The decision to begin the analysis and results with the overall PALS score before focusing on each of the PALS factor scores is driven by the aim to provide a holistic picture of the participants' teaching style (i.e., teacher-centered or learner-centered) before offering a precise picture and in-depth information about their classroom actions and behavior.

4.1.1 Analysis and Results of Participants' Total PALS Score

As previously noted, instructors' overall PALS score defines their teaching style, whether teacher-centered or learner-centered. The total score on PALS ranges from 0 to 220. An instructor's total score on PALS is assessed against Conti's established normative mean of PALS, which is 146 with a standard deviation of 20. Those teachers who score above 146 are considered to be following a learner-centered teaching approach. Conversely, those who score below 146 are classified as adhering to a teacher-centered teaching approach. Moreover, the standard deviation helps determine how strongly a teacher supports a specific teaching approach. A score difference of 20-40 points from the mean indicates a strong and consistent commitment to either teacher-centered or learner-centered. If the difference substantially exceeded 40 points above or below the mean, it suggests an extreme commitment to either of the teaching styles (Conti, 2004).

In this study, the participants' total scores on PALS ranged from 87 to 154. Specifically, the majority of participants (43 out of 48, or 89%) scored below the normative mean of 146, while the remaining 5 (i.e., 11%) scored near or above it. The distribution of the participants' scores is illustrated in Figure 4.

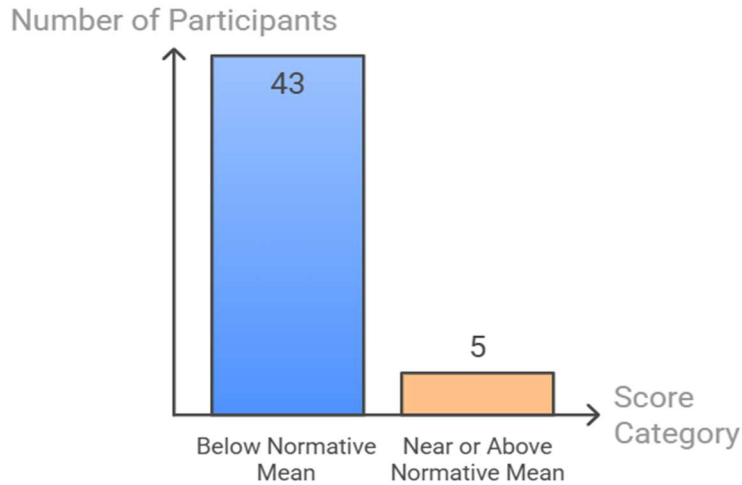


Figure 4: Distribution of PALS Scores of Study Participants

This range of participants' total PALS scores (i.e., 87 to 154) yielded a mean of 115.94, with a standard deviation of 16. Table 5 presents the descriptive statistics of the study participants' overall PALS scores, with the normative descriptive statistics of the total PALS score established by Conti.

Table 5

Descriptive Statistics of PALS Total Score

Measure	N of Items	Study (M+ SD)	PALS Norm (M+ SD)
PALS Total Score	44	115.94+ 16	146+ 20

Note. N= number; M= mean; SD= standard deviation.

As shown in Table 5, the mean of the study participants' total PALS score was 115.94, with a standard deviation of 16. This average was notably lower than the PALS total score normative mean of 146. This suggests that the study participants generally followed a

teacher-centered teaching approach. Moreover, the participants' mean (i.e., 115.94) diverged from the established mean (i.e., 146) by 31 points. This outcome demonstrated that the participants' commitment to the teacher-centered approach was strong and consistent.

The participants' descriptive statistics on the total PALS score (i.e., mean of 115.94 and standard deviation of 16) defined their teaching style, which was teacher-centered. Nonetheless, to understand the specifics of participants' teaching practices that contributed to the assessment of their overall teaching approach, it was crucial to examine their scores across the seven PALS factors.

4.1.2 Analysis and Results of Participants' Scores on PALS Seven Factors

As noted earlier, instructors' scores on PALS indicate the following two types of information: (1) the instructors' overall teaching style, and (2) the instructors' specific classroom practices. The first information is obtained by examining instructors' total PALS scores, as outlined in the previous section. The second information is gained by inspecting instructors' scores on each PALS factor, as described in this section. Each factor on PALS signifies a key aspect of teaching style and is scored by adding the values of responses to the factor items. These scores are then compared to Conti's previously established normative means. Scores higher than the normative mean in each factor indicate support for the learner-centered practices described in the factor. On the other hand, scores lower than the normative mean suggest a preference for the teacher-centered practices defined in the factor (Conti, 2004).

Each of the seven PALS factors is described individually in detail below. The description includes the factor's definition, normative mean, and the study participants' obtained scores on the factor. Following the description of each factor, there is a table that demonstrates the descriptive statistics of participants' scores in each factor alongside the normative descriptive statistics of the factor.

• **Factor One**, Learner-Centered Activities, comprises twelve negative items: 2, 4, 11, 12, 13, 15, 19, 21, 29, 30, 38, and 40. These items describe the teacher’s use of traditional classroom management techniques to maintain authority in the classroom, such as disciplinary actions. Within this framework, the teacher adheres to a single teaching method without considering variations in learning styles. Also, the teacher relies mainly on formal assessments rather than informal evaluation techniques. Scoring below Conti’s established normative mean for this factor signifies teachers’ support and preferences for the described teacher-centered practices. Conversely, scoring higher than the norm on this factor indicates teachers’ refusal of these teacher-centered practices. Conversely, it suggests that these teachers favor learner-centered classrooms in which students are encouraged to take responsibility for their learning. The range of scores for this factor is 0 to 60, with a normative mean of 38 and a standard deviation of 8.3 (Conti, 2004).

In this study, participants’ scores ranged from 12 to 43, which yielded a mean score of 28.45 and a standard deviation of 7.981. Table 6 displays the descriptive statistics of participants’ scores on Factor One in this study, with the normative descriptive statistics for Factor One.

Table 6

Descriptive Statistics of Factor One

Measure	N of Items	Study (M+ SD)	Factor 1 Norm (M+ SD)
Factor 1 Score	12	28.45+ 7.98	38+ 8.3

Note. N= number; M= mean; SD= standard deviation

Table 6 reveals that the participants in this study obtained a mean score of 28.45 on Factor One, which fell below the normative mean of 38. This result suggests a tendency among the participants to support the teacher-centered practices outlined in Factor One, rather than learner-centered ones.

• **Factor Two**, Personalized Instruction, includes nine items, of which three are negative, and six are positive items, numbered 3, 9, 17, 24, 32, 35, 37, 41, and 42, respectively. This factor describes the teacher’s application of diverse methods and strategies to adapt the learning experiences to students’ needs. This includes setting objectives based on individual capabilities and goals. It also describes creating a learning environment that supports both self-paced and collaborative approaches. Scores for this factor range from 0 to 45, with a normative mean of 31 and a standard deviation of 6.8 (Conti, 2004).

In this study, participants’ scores for this factor ranged from 9 to 35, which resulted in a mean of 22.75 and a standard deviation of 5.16. In Table 7, the descriptive statistics of the participants’ scores on Factor Two are presented alongside the established normative descriptive statistics of the factor.

Table 7

Descriptive Statistics of Factor Two

Measure	N of Items	Study (M+ SD)	Factor Two Norm (M+ SD)
Factor 2 Score	9	22.75+ 5.16	31+6.8

Note. N= number; M= mean; SD= standard deviation.

Table 7 illustrates that the participants attained a mean score of 22.75 on Factor Two, which was lower than the normative mean of 31. This result suggests that the participants’ teaching practices were inconsistent with the learner-centered practices described in this factor.

• **Factor Three**, Relating to Experience, consists of six positive items: 14, 31, 34, 39, 43, and 44. These items describe the teacher’s application of practices that address learners’ prior experiences and relate them to new knowledge. Additionally, it signifies the teacher’s use of techniques, such as practical activities that resemble real-life experiences,

to make learning relevant to students. The range of scores for this factor is 0 to 45, with a normative mean score of 21 and a standard deviation of 4.9 (Conti, 2004).

In this study, participants' scores for this factor varied from 7 to 29, with a corresponding mean score of 19.05 and a standard deviation of 4.96. Table 8 shows the descriptive statistics for the participants' scores on Factor Three and the normative descriptive statistics for the factor.

Table 8

Descriptive Statistics of Factor Three

Measure	N of Items	Study (M+ SD)	Factor Three Norm (M+ SD)
Factor 3 Score	6	19.05+ 4.96	21+ 4.9

Note. N= number; M= mean; SD= standard deviation.

Table 8 shows that the participants' average score on Factor Three was 19, which fell below the normative mean of 21. This result implies that the participants' practices diverged from the learner-centered principles outlined in Factor Three.

• **Factor Four**, Assessing Student Needs, comprises four positive items: 5, 8, 23, and 25. The items in Factor 4 describe the teacher's emphasis on students' unique needs and goals, and whether these align with students' present academic levels. Additionally, this factor designates the teacher's support for students in setting short-term and long-term objectives. The range of scores for the factor is 0 to 20, with a normative mean score of 14 and a standard deviation of 3.6 (Conti, 2004).

In this study, participants' scores for this factor ranged from 2 to 19, with a mean score of 11.84 and a standard deviation of 4.08. Table 9 presents the descriptive statistics of the participants' scores on Factor Four, alongside the normative descriptive statistics of Factor Four.

Table 9*Descriptive Statistics of Factor Four*

Measure	N of Items	Study (M + SD)	Factor Four Norm (M + SD)
Factor 4 Score	4	11.84 + 4.08	14 + 3.6

Note. N= number; M= mean; SD= standard deviation

As shown in Table 9, the participants achieved an average score of 11.84 on Factor Four, which was lower than the normative mean of 14. This result suggests that the participants' practices differed from the learner-centered practices described in Factor 4.

• **Factor Five**, Climate Building, contains four positive items: 18, 20, 22, and 28. These items describe the teacher's establishment of a friendly and informal learning environment. In this setting, the teacher encourages students to be actively involved and to communicate with one another. Additionally, errors are viewed as a natural part of the learning process. Moreover, students are encouraged to try, explore their abilities, and practice problem-solving skills. The range of scores for this factor is 0 to 20, with the normative mean score being 16 with a standard deviation of 3.0 (Conti, 2004).

In this study, participants' scores for this factor ranged from 7 to 18, which yielded a mean score of 13.61 and a standard deviation of 2.44. Table 10 below shows the descriptive statistics for the participants' scores on Factor Five, with the normative descriptive statistics for the factor.

Table 10*Descriptive Statistics of Factor Five*

Measure	N of Items	Study (M+ SD)	Factor Five Norm (M+ SD)
Factor 5 Score	4	13.61 + 2.44	16 + 3.0

Note. N=number; M= mean; SD= standard deviation

Table 10 reveals that the participants' average of 13.61 on Factor Five was less than the normative mean of 16. This finding demonstrates that the participants' teaching practices did not align with the learner-centered practices outlined in Factor Five.

• **Factor Six**, Participation in the Learning Process, contains four positive items: 1, 10, 15, and 36. These items describe the degree to which the teacher permits students' involvement in defining and assessing the learning content. In other words, the items designate a collaborative relationship between the teacher and students, where learners contribute to deciding the topics explored in class and the criteria for assessing their performance. The range of scores for this factor is 0 to 20, with a normative mean score of 13 and a standard deviation of 3.5 (Conti, 2004).

In this study, participants' scores for Factor 6 varied from 2 to 19, which resulted in a mean score of 10.93 and a standard deviation of 3.88. Table 11 presents the descriptive statistics for the participants' scores on Factor Six alongside the normative descriptive statistics for Factor Six.

Table 11

Descriptive Statistics of Factor Six

Measure	N of Items	Study (M+ SD)	Factor Six Norm (M+ SD)
Factor 6 Score	4	10.93 + 3.88	13 + 3.5

Note. N= number; M= mean; SD= standard deviation

As demonstrated in Table 11, the study participants achieved an average score of 10.93 on Factor Six, which was below the normative mean of 13. This reveals that the participants' teaching practices were contradictory to the learner-centered practices highlighted in Factor Six.

• **Factor Seven**, Flexibility for Personal Development, consists of five negative items: 6, 7, 26, 27, and 33. The items describe the teacher’s perception of their role as a knowledge provider, rather than a facilitator. In this context, the teacher sets objectives for students at the beginning of the course and firmly adheres to them without considering that students’ needs may change or evolve. A low score on this factor suggests that the teacher leans towards the outlined perceptions and practices. In contrast, a high score on this factor indicates that the teacher embraces flexibility and sensitivity towards individual student needs. In other words, it implies that the teacher modifies the classroom environment and curricular content to align with the growing needs of their students. The range of scores for this factor is 0 to 25, with a normative mean score of 13 and a standard deviation of 3.9 (Conti, 2004).

Participants’ scores for this factor ranged from 1 to 21, which generated a mean of 9.14 and a standard deviation of 4.87. Table 12 outlines the participants’ descriptive statistics for Factor Seven and the normative statistics of the factor.

Table 12

Descriptive Statistics of Factor Seven

Measure	N of Items	Study (M+ SD)	Factor Seven Norm (M+ SD)
Factor 7 Score	5	9.14 + 4.87	13 + 3.9

Note. N= number; M= mean; SD= standard deviation

Table 12 shows that the participants obtained a mean score of 9.14, which was lower than the established norm of 13 for Factor Seven. This result indicates that participants’ teaching approach aligned more closely with the teacher-centered practices associated with this factor than the learner-centered ones.

4.1.3 Summary of the Data Analysis and Results of Research Question One

The first research question in this study examined the degree to which English language teachers implemented the learner-centered teaching approach using the Principles of Adult Learning Scale (PALS). The instructors obtained an overall average score of 115.94, with a standard deviation of 16 on PALS, which was lower than the standardized means (i.e., 146, with a standard deviation of 20). This outcome indicated that the instructors in this study followed teacher-centered practices. Furthermore, they were strongly and consistently following this teaching approach.

Moreover, the instructors' scores across the seven factors of PALS were below the established mean scores across the seven factors of PALS. These results displayed that all of the participants' teaching practices were consistent with the teacher-centered practices described in PALS Factors.

Table 13 below summarizes the results of the first stage by displaying the descriptive statistics of participants' scores on PALS as a whole and across its seven factors, alongside the corresponding pre-established normative values. This table aims to highlight the comparison between participants' scores and the established benchmarks.

Table 13

Descriptive Statistics of PALS Total and Factor Scores: Study Sample vs. Normative Data

Measure	Study (M+ SD)	Normative (M+ SD)
Overall PALS	115.94 + 16	146 + 20
Factor 1	28.45 + 7.98	38 + 8.3
Factor 2	22.75 + 5.16	31 + 6.8
Factor 3	19.05 + 4.96	21 + 4.9
Factor 4	11.48 + 4.08	14 + 3.6
Factor 5	13.61 + 2.44	16 + 3.0
Factor 6	10.93+ 3.88	13 + 3.5
Factor 7	9.14 + 4.87	13+ 3.9

Note. M= mean; SD= standard deviation.

As shown in Table 13 above, the participants of this study obtained mean scores that were lower than the normative mean established by Conti across PALS and all seven factors. Figure 5 is a visual representation of these results.

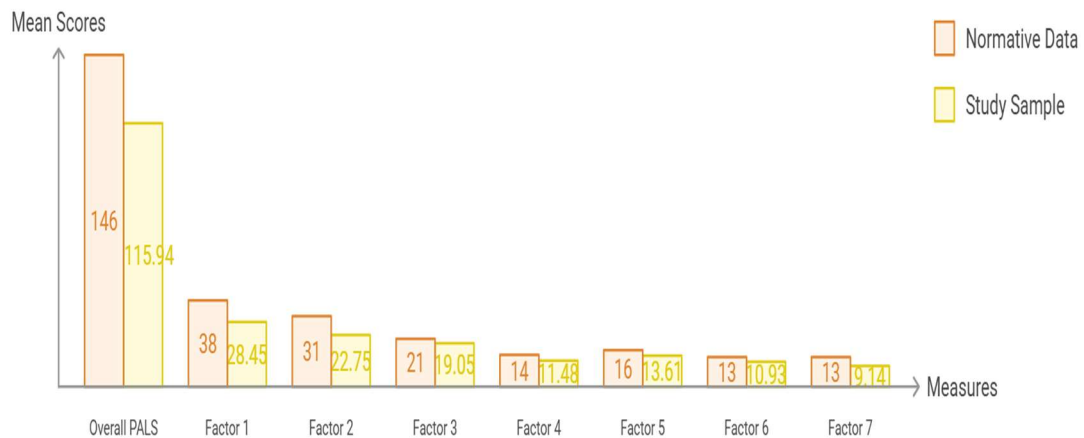


Figure 5: Overall PALS and Factor Scores Mean: Study Sample vs. Normative Data

In conclusion, the first research question aimed to measure the degree to which English language instructors at the Faculty of Languages applied the learner-centered teaching approach by using PALS for this assessment. As displayed in Figure 5, which compares the scores obtained by the study participants on PALS as a whole and across its seven factors against the normative scores established by Conti (2004), the participants' results did not align with the learner-centered approach described in PALS as a whole and across its factors. This conclusion highlights that the instructors primarily adopted a teacher-centered approach with no evident application of any learner-centered teaching practices.

4.2 Data Analysis and Results: Research Question Two

The results obtained from the first stage of this study regarding the first research question revealed that the participants (i.e., 48 English language instructors) strongly and consistently followed a teacher-centered teaching approach. The second stage of this study aimed to verify, expand, and elaborate on the findings from the first stage. In particular, the second stage aimed to answer the second research question, which was:

What are the instructors' perceptions of learner-centered teaching?

In essence, the second research question aimed to examine the teachers' underlying beliefs and assumptions, which influenced their practices regarding the learner-centered approach. To answer this question, a qualitative research approach was employed in the second stage of this study, in which interviews were conducted with 10 English language instructors who previously participated in the first stage. The interview data were analyzed using thematic analysis, which helped detect patterns in participants' answers and classified them according to specific codes and themes. The thematic analysis was inductive. In other words, it was driven by the data obtained from the participants and focused on their insights and experiences without analyzing them according to the theoretical framework of the study (i.e., andragogy). However, in the discussion (See Chapter 5), the same data were interpreted deductively in relation to andragogy's principles.

This section presents the thematic analysis and results of the second research question. The analysis begins by outlining the main themes and subthemes identified in the data. After that, each theme and subtheme are discussed in detail, and are supported by quotes from the study participants.

4.2.1 Thematic Analysis and Results of the Interviews

The thematic analysis of the data obtained from participants' interviews revealed four main themes regarding the participants' perceptions of the learner-centered approach. Moreover, there were subthemes identified within the first, third, and fourth themes. These are as outlined as follows:

1. **Definition of Learner-Centered Teaching:**
 - a. Teacher-guided learner-centeredness.
 - b. Personalized instruction.

2. **Application of Learner-Centered Teaching.**

3. **Advantages of Learner-Centered Teaching:**
 - a. Student development and autonomy.
 - b. Enhanced engagement and learning outcomes.
 - c. Collaborative learning.
 - d. Motivation for learning.

4. **Challenges of Implementing Learner-Centered Teaching:**
 - a. Student-related challenges.
 - b. Teacher-related challenges.
 - c. Institution-related challenges.

4.2.1.1 Definition of Learner-Centered Teaching

The first theme identified from the data analysis of the interviews was the definition of learner-centered teaching. This theme serves as the foundation for addressing the second

research question and gaining insight into the participants' perceptions of learner-centered teaching, as it outlines how they conceptualize the approach and what it signifies for them.

First, the examination of participants' responses revealed a remarkable uniformity among them in terms of how they defined the approach. Their definitions revealed two viewpoints (i.e., subthemes): (a) teacher-guided learner-centeredness, and (b) personalized instruction.

4.2.1.1.1 Teacher-Guided Learner-Centeredness

The viewpoint discussed in the first subtheme of the definition of learner-centered teaching was described by the majority of the participants, as identified in the analysis. It describes learner-centered teaching as a teaching approach that endorses learners' involvement and independence within an essentially teacher-directed framework.

According to the participants, learner-centered teaching involves encouraging learners to adopt an active role, to hold more responsibilities, and to develop independent learning skills. For example, one participant noted: "In a learner-centered approach, students take a more active role. Instead of just listening to the teacher, they figure out how to learn on their own" (P1), while another stated that "This approach helps students become more independent in their learning by encouraging them to take charge of their learning and develop skills to learn on their own" (P 7). Additionally, the following definition was provided by the tenth participant:

It is teaching based on the students, where they work together to read an article, discuss it, and answer questions together. They may also be asked to look for information, search for it, or debate a certain topic. When we say learner-centered, the emphasis is on the effort produced by the students, not the teacher. (P 10)

Within this definition of learner-centered teaching, the participants emphasized the teacher's role in supporting and guiding learners' involvement and independence. The

participants noted that the teacher should be responsible for managing key elements of the learning process, such as selecting learning materials and creating a facilitative environment for learners to engage in self-inquiry and develop their skills: “I’m not for a fully learner-centered model. I think the teacher should still decide on topics and materials. Basically, I set the content and objectives, and then students work on figuring out the best way to understand it” (P1). Another participant added: “I think the teacher is more aware of choosing the material or topics. Learners should be encouraged to discover what the teacher prepares for them, especially in the beginning stages. The teacher should be responsible for major decisions” (P 5).

Furthermore, the participants explained that the setting at their work environment (the Faculty of Languages, University of Benghazi) is not suitable for implementing a high level of learner-centeredness for reasons explored in the subsequent sections:

It is more advisable and practical in the situation of our university that the teacher plays a main role in providing the materials and setting the goals for learning. The teacher has to be a guide and facilitator and should be there for the students and not leave them on their own. The teacher can get ideas from the students and make them involved in the decision-making, but in the end, it is the teacher’s responsibility to make major decisions. (P 3)

In our case, it is impossible to imagine that students can choose the curriculum or make critical decisions. The students do not have the capacity to do this. Teachers must be in control of this aspect, and they can encourage learner-centeredness within their control and guide. (P4)

4.2.1.1.2 Personalized Instruction

The second viewpoint in this second subtheme regarding the definition of learner-centered teaching was that the approach was associated with personalized teaching. This point was expressed by a few participants who defined learner-centered teaching as an approach that caters to learners' needs, interests, and preferences: One participant stated that "It is a teaching method that places the needs, interests, and goals of the student at the center of the learning process. The focus is on the student, not the teacher" (P 8). Moreover, another participant reported that:

In a learner-centered way of teaching, the focus is on the students and what they need, like, and know. This method of teaching encourages students to be active in their learning, making it more interesting and connected to their own lives and goals. (P 6)

Notably, one participant provided a description of learner-centered teaching that integrated the two viewpoints identified in this analysis (i.e., teacher-guided learner-centeredness and personalized learning). She stated that learner-centered teaching promotes active student engagement under the teacher's guidance, who is responsible for selecting materials that align with the students' interests and needs:

Learner-centered teaching means that students take an active role in their own learning, while the teacher acts as a guide. The teacher picks materials and plans lessons based on what interests and benefits the students. Instead of just giving answers, the teacher helps students discover rules and meanings on their own and encourages them to evaluate their own progress and take charge of their learning both in and out of class. (P 9)

4.2.1.2 Application of Learner-Centered Teaching

The second theme identified in the interview data analysis was the extent to which and the manner in which the participants engaged in learner-centered teaching practices. Several observations have been made regarding this theme. First, and markedly, only one participant reported a consistent application of learner-centered teaching. This participant explained that she had undertaken teacher-training programs in the past, which motivated and reinforced her use of learner-centered teaching practices, such as familiarizing the learners with the learning objectives:

I first had a training course at IH Institute. So, they taught us that the students need to know what they're going to learn. And why, why they're learning such structure, why they're learning such strategy of reading or listening. So, since I've started teaching, I always do that, I write the aims on the board. (P 2)

The same participant provided more examples of her learner-centered teaching practices, such as encouraging the learners to elicit the learning objectives, and promoting teamwork among the students: "I give students some time to read the aims. They can elicit what we're going to do or what's the aims of the lesson" (P 2). She added:

In order to encourage responsibility among students, I usually, or in most cases, I rely a lot on peer checking, group work. To be honest, I feel that learners learn from their peers or learn from their group much more than they do when the teacher explains every single thing. (P 2)

For the other nine participants, several remarks were noted concerning their application of the learner-centered approach. Generally, the participants reported a lack of application of the learner-centered approach. For example, Participant 7 stated that he had never explained the learning goals to the students because he assumed that students would naturally predict them from the content:

I think that students already know the aims of each course . They are mature! I mean that they know that the aim of the literature course is to learn about literature and so on. The same applied to the lessons we give. The title of the lesson, which I usually write on the board at the beginning of each lecture, they can tell the aims from the title. They can figure out what the lesson is about. (P 7)

Moreover, Participant 1 noted that her teaching style did not encourage learners to take charge of their learning practically and effectively:

I do not think that I encourage self-responsibility among students. I simply tell them that it is their responsibility to study, they should take notes, write what I am saying, highlight important notes. I tell them to study what I taught and concentrate on important points. But I do not make effort to promote their responsibility. (P 1)

In a similar vein, Participant 9 claimed that she had never employed any strategies to check if students were prepared to study the content she was going to teach. In other words, she had never assessed whether students had the foundational knowledge needed to study certain content. This participant presumed that, since the students had passed the previous academic terms, they would be ready to learn the content of the term they were currently in:

to tell you the truth, the class time does not allow me the opportunity to consider whether students are ready to learn what I am going to teach or not. I never really consider this point because I think the semesters are graded in levels, which means that students probably are ready for the stage in which they are. (P 9)

The same participant (i.e., Participant 9) reported that she had never employed any strategies to motivate her students, despite being aware of these strategies:

I might seem like I am contradicting myself here and my previous answers but I strongly believe that what is needed to enhance students' internal motivation is involving them more in the process of learning. Students need to be active and involved. They need to apply their learning in practical manners. They also need to study content that is suitable for their level so they do not feel demotivated and frustrated. However, I find myself as a teacher not applying these ideas. (P 9)

On the other hand, a few participants stated that they had occasionally applied some learner-centered practices, including highlighting students' experiences and encouraging them to engage in hands-on activities. Nonetheless, the participants stressed that their application of these strategies highly relied on whether the material was suitable for this application or when they had extra class time.

It depends, actually, on the topic that I'm teaching. Sometimes it happens I do this in speaking classes. We have many opportunities to bring students' previous experience or relate what we have in the class to their experience. So if I find the situation is suitable for this, I do it. (P 3)

Some books that we use, the last part of the lessons include practical applications. So, I try to have students do these tasks if the time allows it . I mean if in that lesson, I managed to finish explaining the lesson, and there is time, I have students apply practical tasks. If the time is not enough, sometimes, I would ask them to complete them at home. (P 4)

In a few cases, participants reported employing learner-centered teaching activities. However, their description of these activities involved teacher-centered strategies. For example, Participant 3 stated that her method of encouraging learner autonomy primarily involved giving verbal advice to students on how to become autonomous:

I tell my students, “Don’t just depend on what I taught you here. You just need to go, for example, for the speaking, try to practice with your friends while you are having your lunch at the cafeteria, or you try to make everything around you English, your phone, your laptop.” (P 3)

Similarly, Participant 1 described her application of the learner-centered strategy of activating students’ background knowledge about the topic. The participant explained that she does this by giving related examples herself rather than encouraging students to share their previous experiences:

I do not ask them to share their previous experience or knowledge or anything. When I give them an example myself to activate their prior knowledge, I feel that they become more attentive. They concentrate more with me, they participate, they express themselves. (P 1)

Likewise, the same participant (i.e., Participant 1) stated that promoting students’ motivation depends completely on the teacher and described this process through teacher-centered strategies:

as a teacher, my ability to give examples, relate to students’ experience, activate their background, try to make studying more interesting for them and to relate it to their lives. I think this is the best we can do as teachers. So it is all in the hands

of the teacher to ask questions, tell stories, activate students' knowledge, relate learning to their experience, and so on. (P 1)

4.2.1.3 Advantages of Learner-Centered Teaching

The third theme in the thematic analysis was about the advantages of learner-centered teaching, which were outlined by the study participants. Notably, the study participants highlighted that some of their reported advantages were observed during their infrequent application of the approach, whereas some were based on the participants' assumptions rather than their direct application or observation of learner-centered teaching practices.

The participants' reported advantages of learner-centered teaching can be divided into four types or subthemes: (1) student development and autonomy, (2) enhanced student engagement and learning outcomes, (3) collaborative learning, and (4) motivation for learning.

4.2.1.3.1 Student Development and Autonomy

The first subtheme in the advantages of learner-centered teaching describes the development of students' independent and self-directed learning skills.

The participants noted that learner-centered teaching promotes students' skills. Moreover, the gained skills result in immediate and long-term advantages, which help students tackle future learning endeavors independently and effectively: "It promotes learners' autonomy. It increases the degree of self-awareness. It also increases learners' responsibility so they can pursue their higher studies depending on their own selves" (P 2), "For the long-term advantages, it will build independent learners who can take responsibility for their learning. They can continue learning even beyond the classroom and the lecture. They don't rely on the teachers in every aspect. They become independent" (P 3).

Similarly, the participants maintained that learner-centered teaching cultivates skills that are crucial for success in the current century:

By providing opportunities for students to explore, discover, and create knowledge, this approach helps students develop their critical thinking skills, which are essential for success in today's world. In addition, the learner-centered approach increases students' confidence. By giving students more control over their learning and encouraging them to express their ideas and opinions, this approach helps students build their confidence and self-esteem. (P 8)

4.2.1.3.2 Enhanced Student Engagement and Learning Outcomes

This second subtheme in the advantages of learner-centered teaching explains that the approach makes students more engaged in learning. Furthermore, it notes that this engagement leads to other benefits, which improve learning outcomes.

To begin with, participants explained that by encouraging learners to take charge of their learning, learner-centered teaching naturally makes them more involved with the content. Participants noted that this deep involvement enables students to understand the content better and remember it for longer:

In my experience, I think if the students work more and try to discover more by themselves, they will gain more knowledge. I once heard someone say that when you simply listen to the lecturer, you will get 5% of the information, but if you are involved in learning, you will obtain 65% of the information. So, when the learners are working and when they are involved, they will gain more knowledge. (P 4)

When the learner is actively involved in the learning process, they tend to learn the material better. By being engaged and searching for the answers themselves, rather than just passively receiving information, the learner is more likely to truly

understand and remember the content. The act of the learner exploring, discovering, and figuring things out on their own leads to more effective and lasting learning, compared to simply being spoon-fed the information by the teacher. (P 5)

Moreover, the participants described the influence of some learner-centered practices, such as focusing on students' previous experiences, and maintained that these practices make students more attentive and responsive to the material:

Focusing on students' personal experiences is my favorite part! I believe that it is the easiest way to get students' attention and get them to actually participate and speak. I usually do that either at the beginning of the lesson to get students' attention. I also do it at the end of the lesson as a way to ensure they got the idea and wrap the lesson in an engaging way. (P 6)

To be honest, I feel like this strategy makes them more interested and engaged in the lesson. When they feel that that they can personally relate to the content. I also feel like they understand the content better this way. (P 9)

Likewise, the participants mentioned that learner-centered practices, like hands-on activities, consolidate students' comprehension of the material and increase their confidence in applying it:

When you make the students practice what they have learned, you make sure that they really comprehend the lesson, you give them the chance to or the freedom to express themselves by writing or by speaking. What else? You make them feel

confident when they make their own composition whether it was writing or spoken. You give them a sort of confidence and confidence would lead to increase autonomy for learners and then they become competent students or competent learners. (P 2)

Finally, the participants described the impact of familiarizing the learners with the learning goals on garnering their attention and encouraging them to invest more effort in learning: “I try not to forget to state the aims of the lesson to my students. I believe it is important to do that because it makes students realize the importance of concentrating and making effort with me” (P 6).

4.2.1.3.3 Collaborative Learning

The third subtheme in the advantages of learner-centered teaching focuses on student participation in collaborative work with their peers and the benefits that result from this collaboration.

The participants noted that learner-centered teamwork activities offer meaningful opportunities and context for using the target language: “In a learner-centered approach, students are more involved in their learning. They work together to solve problems, talk about topics, and exchange ideas, which improves their language and communication abilities” (P 9).

Moreover, the participants explained that students’ collaboration in learner-centered classrooms enables them to acquire knowledge and build skills from each other:

To be honest, I feel that learners learn from their peers or learn from their group much more than they do when the teacher explains every single thing. For example, when I teach writing, they know how to track the mistakes that they have done. Let me give you an example. For example, spelling mistakes, grammatical

mistakes. So when they work together in groups or in pairs, I think they can understand each other much better than the teacher does all the time. It's sort of breaking the routine. It's not only about the teacher, you know. (P 2)

Lastly, the participants pointed out that students have positive attitudes towards collaborative learning and acknowledge its benefits, as illustrated in the following extracts by participants: “Students love working together. They love group work” (P 4), “Another key factor is collaborative work. I always feel that working in pairs or groups makes students more active, confident, and interested”(P 7), “They prefer to work in groups, maybe because they like to help each other and feel less nervous” (P 8).

4.2.1.3.4 Motivation for Learning

The fourth subtheme in the advantages of learner-centered teaching was students’ internal motivation for learning. Internal motivation refers to pursuing learning based on an internal desire and to achieving inner goals. The analysis of participants’ views highlighted that they connected learner-centered practices to increased internal motivation.

Participant 4 described an experience in which she shifted her teaching from being completely teacher-centered to learner-centered. She noted that she immediately observed improved motivation among her students:

When I began to incorporate it in the classroom, I noticed that students are more excited and more motivated. They are happy to communicate their answers in English. Their eyes were sparkling. They were happily using the language. This is what I like about this approach. (P 4)

Furthermore, the participants recognized and described the role of internal motivation in influencing students’ involvement and interest in learning:

Without motivation, there would be no engagement or participation in the class. Internal motivation is essential if it is not a must. Other than that, the class would be very boring, students wouldn't be interested. You would feel at the very end that you did not do your job well as a teacher. (P 2)

In the same respect, the participants drew attention to the teacher's role in promoting student motivation:

A skillful teacher knows how to change the atmosphere of the classroom, knows how to relate learning to the students and encourage them to relate the topic to themselves. I think it is 90% the teacher's responsibility to motivate students and make them active. (P 1)

Moreover, the participants mentioned how learner-centered activities impact students' motivation. For example, Participant 3 described the effect of practical applications and promoting students' autonomy as follows:

By providing opportunities for students to learn the language. when students feel that they are achieving their goals, they are really learning the language, not only grammar, but how to use it practically. Another factor is making students autonomous learner. By encouraging them to learn independently. For example, encourage them to learn a grammatical rule by themselves. I think that by doing this, by feeling that they are capable, their motivation will be increased. (P 3)

Likewise, Participants 2 and 3 highlighted the value of clarifying the learning objectives on the learners' motivation: "For me, in order to enhance students' motivation, I try to

highlight what we're going to cover today. Why are you here? What message should you understand or what message should I convey for them?" (P 2), "I believe that if the student knows the goal of the lesson, they, they feel they are more interested, and they are more motivated to learn this specific goal" (P 3).

On the other hand, the participants focused on the importance of adapting the content to learners' current level, and how this aspect can positively or negatively impact their motivation. They stated that "Students also need to study content that is suitable for their level so they do not feel demotivated and frustrated" (P 9), "If students don't have the information or knowledge needed to study the lesson, the first thing you will notice is a drop in their motivation level to study the lesson" (P 2).

In a similar vein, the participants drew attention to the importance of establishing a supportive and encouraging learning environment that encourages students to explore, experiment, and even make mistakes during this process:

Give your students the chance, make them feel confident that they are capable of writing, they are capable of speaking, they are capable of being really competent We all make mistakes, so do not give your student immediate correction or feedback. Especially if it was a negative feedback or correcting them in front of the class. That would make them feel shy and they will not participate anymore. Give them a second chance, give them a third chance. Give them even a fifth chance in order to feel confidence. Confidence is the key to internal motivation. (P 2)

If we understand students more, maybe we can motivate students. I usually do this. I usually stand in front of the students and tell them, I need you all to participate. I need you all work. Don't be afraid. If you make a mistake, you are here to make

mistakes. I, I try to tell this to the student. I, I tell them that if you come here and, uh, and for example, speaking and talked and you made mistakes, I'll give you marks for trying. It doesn't matter if you give, uh, if you make mistakes or not, I just want you to be brave and talk. (P 3)

Moreover, the participants confessed that despite their awareness of the benefits of learner-centered teaching, they did not implement it effectively due to contextual factors, as stated by one participant: “This why it annoys me how little opportunities we as teachers provide for our students to foster this motivation. But then again, we are restricted by a lot of obstacles” (P 7). Moreover, Participant nine reported:

I might seem like I am contradicting myself here and my previous answers, but I strongly believe that what is needed to enhance students’ internal motivation is involving them more in the process of learning. They need to apply their learning in practical manners. However, I find myself as a teacher not applying these ideas. Because I am restricted by the teaching environment. (P 9)

4.2.1.4 Challenges of Implementing Learner-Centered Teaching

The fourth and final theme emerging from the analysis was the obstacles that prevented the participants from implementing the approach. These were classified into three types or subthemes: student-related challenges, teacher-related challenges, and institution-related challenges.

4.2.1.4.1 Student-Related Challenges: Students’ Resistance to the Learner-Centered Approach

The first subtheme in the challenges of implementing learner-centered teaching was caused by factors related to the students. In essence, most participants stressed that students’ rejection of the approach was the most challenging obstacle for them. That is,

the participants discussed that their attempts to encourage learners' participation and involvement were often faced with resistance and a passive response from the students:

I do not make effort to promote their responsibility because there is no response from the students. I swear by God that they are good and perfect listeners but there is no reaction from them... no comments! No response! They might only shake their heads and say 'yes'. Students are like the wall. Sorry for the expression. They do not want to engage in learning. They want to only be passive. Students are lazy! They do not want to speak. (P 1)

The participants outlined some reasons for students' resistance and passivity. First, the participants attributed students' attitude to the fact that their previous learning experiences, which they were accustomed to, involved traditional teaching and learning methods in which the teacher was the main source of knowledge, and students adopted a passive role. The participants explained that this fact made it challenging for students to embrace new teaching and learning methods, which involve reversing these roles:

They are accustomed to being listeners. They sit in their desks and wait for the teacher to provide them with the answers. The idea about the teacher for them is that she should spoon-feed them and provide them with the material of learning, and their job is to memorize and put it in the exam learners are grown up with the idea that the teacher is a leader. I am teaching 1st semester. I notice that the way students have been taught all their lives is reflected in their personalities. They keep sitting on the chairs, waiting for the teacher to speak, give commands, and explain. They are accustomed to this way. (P 1)

Second, the participants believed that students abstained from taking charge of their learning because they were inclined towards traditional teaching and learning. That is to say, the students found conventional methods more convenient because they required less effort, and were more reliable as they mainly depended on the teacher, as reported by the following participants: “Learners prefer to depend on their teachers with everything. They like to be spoon-fed the information. They prefer to ask their teacher about every step they do” (P 3), “I feel that being quiet and listening carefully to my explanations makes them feel at their safe comfort zone. And by asking them to step out of this, they feel intimidated” (P 7).

Third, the participants reported that students’ weak proficiency in English contributed to their rejection of the approach. Primarily, it affected students’ ability to engage in interactive activities where they must use the target language to express themselves: “The challenge is to get students to actually participate! To speak! To share their experience. Not all of the students can use English to speak well about themselves” (P 6). “The majority of students are not capable of applying what we teach practically. They will be using Arabic, which ruins the whole point. Their English is low. I ask them to prepare presentations, it is obvious that they memorized them” (P 8).

Likewise, the participants noted that students’ low competence in the language made it difficult for them to communicate the learning objectives to the students. In other words, the participants found it useless to explain the learning goals because they knew the students would not be able to understand them:

When it comes to difficulties in how they actually react to the goals of a course or objectives, yes, some students would just sit still. Some would like to agree with what you’re speaking of, but you know throughout their body language, throughout their facial expressions, that they’re not really on the same page as you. They couldn’t really actually understand what you’re talking about. (P 5)

I simply write the title of the lesson or mention the aims. I do not spend too long on this part because honestly, I believe that students will not grasp the aims until I teach the lesson. They will not understand what I am talking about it because their level is weak and I think that they are not paying much attention in class. (P 9)

Finally, the participants reported that students' poor command of the English language made them less confident to participate in learner-centered activities:

maybe also this is a result of lack of confidence. They feel that they are not in that level that they can decide how to learn and what to learn or how to do the task. So they keep relying on the teachers. (P 3)

4.2.1.4.2 Teachers-Related Challenges: Teachers' Resistance to the Learner-Centered Approach

The second subtheme in the challenges of implementing learner-centered teaching was the teachers. Notably, similar to the first challenge discussed in the previous section, participants noted that the teacher-related challenges stemmed from teachers' reluctance to apply the learner-centered approach. Respectively, the participants outlined several reasons for this outcome.

First, the participants explained that many teachers preferred their authoritative roles in traditional teaching methods, and they were concerned about losing this sense of control in learner-centered classrooms: "Teachers are not used to giving or sharing power with the students. They might feel offended when students give them comments or when they are given the chance. They might prefer to do all the work" (P 4). "As Libyan teachers, we are accustomed to traditional teaching roles where we have authority in class, we decide everything. We are in control. We explain, assess, teach! Giving some of this control to the students makes us feel undermined" (P 9).

Second, the participants noted that teachers were keener on employing teacher-centered teaching because it was less demanding in terms of time and effort, as opposed to the learner-centered approach: “I think as teachers, it is much easier for us to apply the traditional way, although we know most of the time that it is wrong. But it saves time and effort when managing large classes” (P 4), “It is embarrassing to admit this but I think we, as teachers, resort to the traditional book-centered method basically because it saves a lot of time and it guarantees the delivery of content which is assessed in the exams” (P 7).

Third, one participant reported that one of the reasons she resorted to the teacher-centered approach was because her colleagues consistently encouraged her and each other to employ uniform and traditional teacher-centered methods:

Some reasons are related to my co-workers who are teaching the same subject with me. For example, there are 4 teachers who are teaching the same subject as me, and they tell me, “Please follow the protocol. Be like us. Don’t do anything different. Don’t let them choose the topics of the presentation. You should choose the topics like us”. So, I have to follow the other teachers in order to be like them because they prefer the teacher-centered method. (P 1)

Lastly, the participants stated that their classes were characterized by students with varying levels of skills and abilities, which made it difficult for teachers to implement the learner-centered approach. In particular, this challenge highlights the need for extra time and individualized attention from the teacher to the learners, especially when employing hands-on and interactive activities: “There are different levels of students: some are fluent and good, while others are weak - they require more time, and some will finish faster than others. This can cause problems” (P 3), “Not all of the students can use English to speak well about themselves. Not all students are capable of performing practical tasks. Unless, of course you manage group work smartly and put weak students with students who can help them” (P 6).

4.2.1.4.3 Institution-Related Challenges: Institution Policy

The third subtheme identified in the challenges of employing learner-centered teaching was related to the policy followed in the study setting (i.e., the Faculty of Languages). Primarily, the faculty policy posed difficulties for teachers to employ the learner-centered approach, which were related to: the curriculum, time, classroom size, training, resources, and facilities.

First, the majority of participants agreed that one of the main factors that prevented teachers from applying learner-centered teaching was that the faculty imposed a fixed curriculum that teachers were not permitted to change. This situation was compounded by the fact that teachers were obliged to evaluate students' achievement based on it. This left teachers with no option but to adhere to this curriculum:

The policy of our department forces us to keep on applying the traditional method. This takes us to the choice of materials we use in teaching. During my teaching, I was never given the chance to choose the material that I have wanted. Being stuck with what will be included in the exams kept us from having the freedom to choose our own method of teaching. (P 2)

One participant specified that the curriculum selected by the faculty is inconsistent with the students' culture. This fact made it irresponsible for teachers to encourage the practical application of the content:

The curriculum does not allow it. We do not have a say in the choice of the curriculum, and the available curriculum does not allow for the implementation of the learner-centered approach. For example, the curriculum is not actually related to our religion. Sometimes, some lessons or some lectures, there is no connection of what they really have in our life. (P 5)

Moreover, the participants maintained that the faculty policy required teachers to cover the entire curriculum. As a result, the teachers prioritized content completion at the expense of considering crucial matters, such as checking whether students possessed the necessary knowledge to engage with new content:

I have to give the lesson anyway. Whether students are ready to learn it, whether it matches their level of knowledge or not, this is not something I can change. You see, we have a fixed curriculum that we are supposed to cover. I cannot change the content and add things by myself because this will waste time which is already very limited. The time is barely enough to cover the assigned material. and do not forget that this material will be included in the exam. (P 7)

In addition to the issues related to the curriculum, the participants noted problems with the term duration. Principally, the participants stated that having a limited term duration made it extremely challenging for them to manage their schedules and cover the material. Consequently, teachers often resorted to traditional teaching methods instead of embracing learner-centered approaches and promoting students' autonomy and involvement.

I have 12 lectures to give during a semester, and if there are any holidays due to official occasions or bad weather, then I lose some of these lectures. I usually end up with 8 lectures. I find myself obliged to finish the course and the material that is imposed on me by the department, and I have to follow the protocol and instructions of the department. The time is not enough for me. I keep teaching until I finish, and this is where I find myself turning into the traditional way of teaching, which is the teacher-centered approach. (P 1)

I think the key challenge in helping students become more responsible and autonomous learner is that we do not have enough time, time is challenging. If we have time, more time that we can build student confidence that we teach them how to become autonomous, what strategy they need to do in order to do the tasks by themselves and become responsible learners. So I feel that the time is the key solution for many of the problem that we face in teaching. (P 3)

Furthermore, the participants commonly complained about the challenge of having a large number of students in classrooms, which prevented teachers from offering sufficient individualized attention and genuine learning opportunities for the students: “I have to say that it is not easy to ensure that all students are ready for learning the specific content because the large number of students in the classroom is a big challenge” (P 2), “We have large number of students. If I was to give them all individual attention, I will never be able to teach anything” (P 4). “Another challenge is the class size. I think it is easier when the student number in the class is not very large. It is challenging to get the students to work in pairs or groups when the number is large” (P 10).

Similarly, the participants expressed concerns about the lack of teacher guidance and training provided by the faculty for implementing learner-centered teaching. One participant reported that she had been teaching at the same study setting for over ten years, and during which time, there had never been any genuine opportunities for teacher professional development courses:

We lack training courses! We need guidance! We don't have this in our department. Ever since I graduated and started work as a teacher assistant in the department and until this moment, I have never received any developmental courses or training in any teaching techniques. (P 5)

Finally, the participants pointed out the lack of facilities and resources provided by the faculty, which restricted the teachers' ability to motivate students and employ interactive and innovative teaching practices:

We do not have facilities like technology to enhance students' motivation. We do not even have smart boards. We cannot access the internet at the university to increase the entertainment in class like a video for students to learn from. We do not have any of these facilities. (P 1)

One major barrier is the lack of support and training from the department. Without guidance or resources, teachers may struggle to incorporate this approach into their classrooms effectively. Therefore, there's a need for training and resources to help teachers understand the benefits. I try my best to motivate students by employing these things. But I am usually restricted by lack of resources, the type of book and the students' lack of skills. (P 10)

4.2.3 Summary of the Data Analysis and Results of Research Question Two

The second research question in this study aimed to examine English language instructors' perceptions of the learner-centered teaching approach. Addressing this question involved conducting interviews at the second stage of this study with ten instructors who participated in the first research stage and responded to PALS. The data obtained from the interviews were analyzed using thematic analysis, which resulted in four key themes generated from the participants' insights concerning the definition, application, advantages, and challenges of learner-centered teaching.

Particularly, the instructors in this study defined learner-centered teaching as a personalized instructional approach that endorses learners' active involvement within a teacher-guided framework. Moreover, the results revealed that the instructors commonly

employed the teacher-centered approach. Despite this fact, the instructors acknowledged that the learner-centered approach offers various benefits that largely enhance students' academic experience and achievement. Nonetheless, the instructors were restricted by numerous challenges that prevented them from applying learner-centered teaching. Figure Six is a summary of the themes and subthemes that were identified in the thematic analysis.

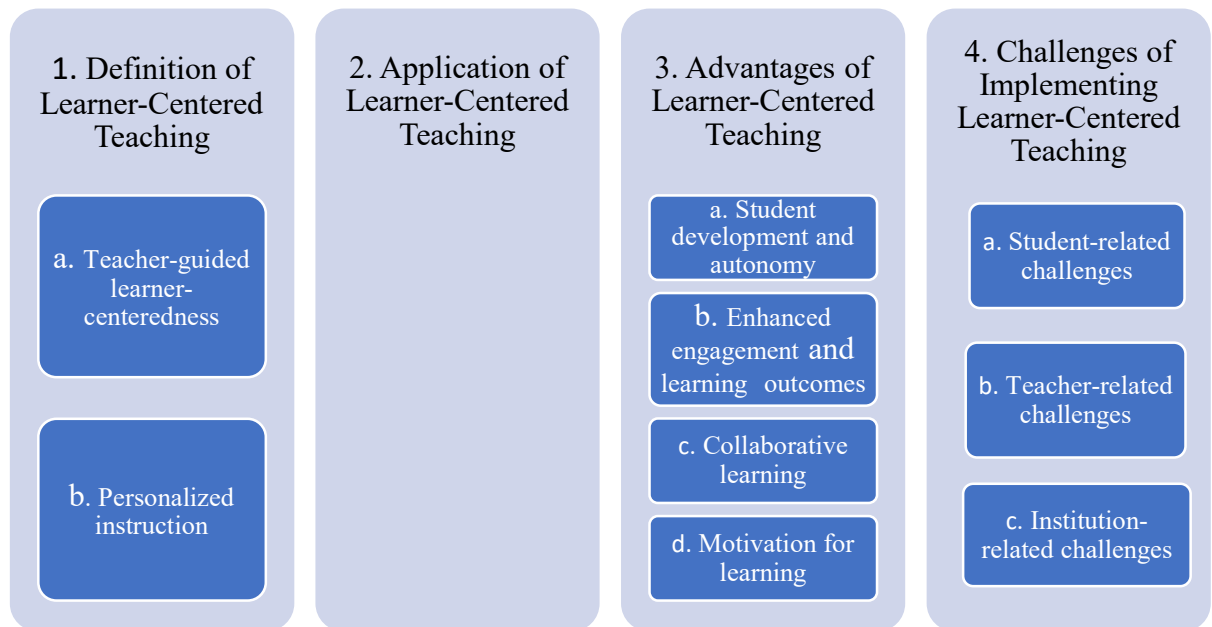


Figure 6: Summary of Themes and Subthemes

4.3 Summary of Chapter

This chapter presented the data analysis and results of the two research questions of this study. Each question was discussed comprehensively through the data collection and analysis methods. The first research question examined English language teachers' application of learner-centered teaching using PALS with 48 instructors, which was analyzed statistically. The results revealed that the instructors predominantly followed a teacher-centered approach. The second research question examined the instructors' perceptions of learner-centered teaching by conducting interviews with 10 instructors, which were analyzed using thematic analysis. The analysis revealed four themes regarding

teachers' perceptions of learner-centered teaching, which pertained to the definition, application, advantages, and challenges of the approach.

Chapter Five: Findings and Discussion

5.0 Introduction

Guided by the principles of andragogy theory, this case study investigated the feasibility of applying learner-centered English language teaching at the Faculty of Languages, University of Benghazi. Achieving the aim of this investigation involved answering two research questions. The data analysis and results of these two research questions were presented in the previous chapter. This chapter seeks to interpret and discuss the results of these questions in light of the study's theoretical framework (i.e., andragogy), and by comparing them with insights and findings from existing literature. An overall interpretation of findings is also provided to highlight the conclusion drawn from the investigation conducted in this study.

5.1 Discussion of the First Research Question

The first research question in this study was:

To what extent is learner-centered teaching currently implemented by English language instructors at the Faculty of Languages at the University of Benghazi?

The first stage of this study addressed the first research question by administering the Principles of Adult Learning Scales (PALS) among 48 English language instructors at the Faculty of Languages. The overall scores on PALS demonstrated that the teaching style of English language instructors at the Faculty of Languages, University of Benghazi, was strongly and consistently teacher-centered. Furthermore, the instructors' results across all seven PALS factors indicated that their teaching practices aligned with all of the teacher-centered practices described in the PALS factors. In the following points, the instructors' results on each of the seven PALS factors are first restated, then interpreted in light of the six principles of andragogy:

1. The instructors' results concerning PALS Factor One, Learner-Centered Activities, indicated that they employed conventional and teacher-centered

classroom management techniques, such as using disciplinary actions and endorsing quietness in the classroom rather than encouraging interaction and involvement from the students. Additionally, the instructors' approach to assessing their students relied on formal techniques (e.g., standardized tests), rather than informal evaluation techniques. Finally, the instructors employed a single rather than varied teaching method and assumed that all students had similar learning styles.

Interpreting these results through the lens of andragogy reveals that the instructors' teaching practices conflicted with its principles. For example, encouraging quiet teacher-dominant classrooms runs counter to andragogy's *learner's self-concept* principle, which endorses addressing learners' self-perception of independent and responsible individuals who should contribute to and participate in their learning, and whose voices should be heard. Moreover, the fact that the instructors adhered to a single teaching style without considering learners' differences (e.g., interests, learning styles, etc.) contrasts with andragogy's principle of the *role of learners' experiences*. This principle highlights the differences among learners' backgrounds and the value of addressing and catering to them.

2. The instructors' results on PALS Factor Two, Personalizing Instruction, revealed that they did not adjust their teaching depending on students' needs, objectives, and capabilities. That is to say, the instructors applied single teaching methods, assessments, and materials. Moreover, the instructors relied mainly on traditional forms of lecturing to present the subject material rather than a variety of teaching techniques. Finally, the instructors were more inclined to encourage competition among the students than promote cooperation.

The findings from Factor Two deviate from andragogy's principles in several ways. First, the fact that they did not consider students' requirements, goals, and abilities contradicts the *learner's self-concept*, which values learners' opinions and

self-directed decisions regarding their learning. Second, they contrast with andragogy's *role of learners' experiences*, which acknowledges learners' differences and encourages instructors to be sensitive to them. Third, the results of Factor Two conflict with andragogy's *readiness to learn* principle, which underscores the important link between the content students are studying and their present needs. This andragogy principle also encourages monitoring learners' evolving needs and adapting instruction accordingly.

Finally, the last point highlighted in the results of Factor Two was that teachers in this study did not promote learners' cooperation, but rather endorsed competition among them. In this respect, it is important to note that andragogy's principles did not place any notable emphasis on cooperative learning. This fact did not permit the comparison of the last point in Factor Two results with andragogy.

3. The instructors' results on PALS Factor Three, Relating to Experience, uncovered that they did not consider or value the role of students' previous experiences in the learning process. In particular, the instructors did not utilize techniques to relate new content to students' experiences, nor did they structure the learning activities around practical life matters that are relevant to students.

From the perspective of andragogy, the findings regarding PALS's third factor are inconsistent with andragogy's principle of *the role of learners' experiences*. This principle strongly highlights the value of integrating learners' experiences into the learning process and using them as a valuable resource. Moreover, this andragogy principle urges teachers to value learners' backgrounds as a means for displaying respect for their self-identity. Finally, the outcomes from Factor Three conflict with andragogy's principle of *orientation to learning*, which stresses that learners are more motivated to learn content that resembles real-life tasks and challenges that are relevant to them.

4. The instructors' results on PALS Factor Four, Assessing Student Needs, demonstrated that they did not assist their students in determining their learning goals and needs, and in assessing the gap between these goals and their current achievement levels. Additionally, the instructors did not support students in developing learning goals, whether in the short or long run.

Based on andragogy, there is a discrepancy between the findings of Factor Four and the principle of *readiness to learn*. This principle states that teachers should consider learners' needs and monitor their progress to identify any corresponding changes in their learning needs. In addition, this principle suggests that teachers should contribute to stimulating learners' willingness and readiness to learn.

5. The instructors' results on PALS Factor Five, Climate Building, uncovered that their classroom environments were characterized by inflexibility. In particular, the instructors did not promote collaborative learning experiences, nor did they encourage students to take risks. Moreover, the instructors offered limited opportunities for students to practice problem-solving and explore their abilities, and had negative attitudes towards students' mistakes.

In light of andragogy, the findings from Factor Five display that the instructors' teaching practices were incongruent with andragogy's *self-concept* principle. According to this principle, the learning environment should be flexible and should encourage learners' sense of freedom and choice in their learning. Also, the results from Factor Five reinforce those obtained in Factor Two above, that the instructors were more inclined towards creating a competitive rather than cooperative learning environment among the learners.

6. The instructors' results on PALS Factor Six, Participation in the Learning Process, indicated they did not have a collaborative relationship with their students.

Specifically, the instructors did not permit students' involvement in learning decisions, such as the choice of material and the criteria for assessment.

Framed within andragogy, the findings of Factor Six reveal that the instructors' practices undermined andragogy's principles of the *need-to-know* and *learners' self-concept*. Both of these andragogy principles endorse students' contribution in learning decisions, such as the selection of content and learning methods, and in assessing the relevance of the material for them.

7. The instructors' results on PALS Factor Seven, Flexibility for Personal Development, indicated that they perceived themselves as the main source of knowledge in the educational process, rather than as facilitators of learning. The instructors initially established specific and fixed educational aims that were not subject to change regardless of students' growing needs. Additionally, they were strict about the topics allowed to be discussed in class.

In light of andragogy, Factor Seven findings deviate from two of its principles. First, they are in opposition to the *readiness to learn* principle, which emphasizes attending to students' evolving needs and adjusting instruction accordingly. Second, these findings diverge from andragogy's principles of the *need to know* and *learners' self-concept*. Both these principles are in favor of giving a sense of freedom of choice for learners, such as involving them in choosing the topics they can discuss in class

In brief, the specific teaching practices of the instructors in this study, as measured by PALS' seven factors, were inconsistent with andragogy's following five principles: *the need to know*, *the learner's self-concept*, *the role of learners' experiences*, *readiness to learn*, and *orientation to learning*. In other words, the instructors in this study did not implement any of these five principles of andragogy.

It can be observed that there was no assessment of andragogy's sixth principle (i.e., motivation) by the PALS factors. Accordingly, it is worth noting that andragogy had

already established and clarified the strong connection between its sixth principle and its other five principles. In other words, Knowles et al. (2020) proposed that adult learners' motivation is more likely to thrive in settings that endorse adult learning principles (i.e., the need to know, the learner's self-concept, the role of learners' experiences, and so on). Viewed from this perspective, it is safe to assume that although PALS does not explicitly measure teachers' practices for motivating their learners, the entire assessment obtained by PALS in this study can be used to infer teachers' practices concerning the motivation principle. In this case, if PALS results revealed a clear lack of implementation of the five andragogical principles, then it is logical to assume that the motivation principle was also lacking in the instructors' practices.

The above interpretation and discussion of the instructors' results on the PALS factors in light of andragogy's principles leads to the conclusion that learner-centered English language teaching is not currently applied by English language instructors at the Faculty of Languages, University of Benghazi. Alternatively, and particularly, the instructors are strongly and consistently committed to following a pedagogical, teacher-centered rather than an andragogical, learner-centered English language teaching approach.

Framed within earlier studies that investigated the same topic using PALS, the findings from this study align with Conti's (1985b) research in which adult English language teachers in Texas obtained an average PALS score of 130.05. This mean score similarly revealed an inclination towards teacher-centered teaching among the instructors. Although Conti's study did not report the teachers' results across the seven factors, which hindered the direct comparison between the two studies in this area, and despite the time and context differences between the two studies, both studies highlighted a preference among adult English language teachers for teacher-centered practices.

Likewise, Kovačević's (2011) research, which involved adult English language teachers from diverse backgrounds in Istanbul, revealed that the teachers strongly followed pedagogical, teacher-centered practices. Similarly, but not entirely identical to this study, Kovačević's (2011) study found that teachers' practices were consistent with the teacher-

centered approach across all PALS factors except for Factor Three, Relating to Experience, where half of the teachers practiced the learner-centered perspective of the factor while the other half applied the teacher-centered ones.

The findings of this study also align with another study in the Chinese context, where research conducted by Wang and Storey (2015) revealed that Chinese adult English language teachers adhered to a pedagogical, teacher-centered approach. In particular, the Chinese teachers obtained low scores on Factors One, Two, Six, and Seven on PALS. Nonetheless, the teachers were found to implement some learner-centered teaching aspects such as personalizing instruction, relating to learners' experiences, and assessing students' needs. Thus, while the general assessment was that the teachers followed a teacher-centered approach in both the Chinese study and this one, there was a difference in the degree of teacher-centeredness across the two studies. In other words, the teachers in this study were stronger in their implementation of the teacher-centered approach, or less engaged in learner-centered practices, as opposed to the teachers in the Chinese setting.

In congruence with this study, a rather more recent research by Lele (2020) found a prevalence of the teacher-centered approach among adult English language teachers in Virginia, who averaged a score of 136.2 on PALS, and low mean scores across all PALS factors, except for a marginally higher score in Relating to Experience. Moreover, the findings of this research correlate with López and Odón (2024), who found English language teachers in Ecuador following a teacher-centered approach, as was indicated by their mean score on PALS, which was 103.67.

It can be concluded that the comparison between the findings of this study and those of others with similar aims and tools (i.e., using PALS) revealed that, despite time and contextual differences, there is a widespread dominance of the teacher-centered teaching approach among adult English language teachers. This outcome persists despite the existence of a large amount of research that advocates for replacing teacher-centered teaching with learner-centered methods.

The discussion now shifts to previous research, which, although employing different tools than PALS, similarly examined learner-centered English language teaching. Consistent with this study's findings, research conducted by Van Aswegen and Dreyer (2004) in South Africa, Ahmad (2016) in Saudi Arabia, and Badjadi (2020) in Algeria illustrated that adult English language instructors primarily followed a teacher-centered teaching approach.

Nevertheless, contrary to this research's findings, a qualitative study using interviews by Azmi and Anggrainy (2020) in Indonesia found that English teachers were applying andragogy's principles in teaching speaking skills at the university level, and linked this approach to positive language learning outcomes.

On the other hand, a study by Wang (2007) in the Chinese primary EFL context, employing a questionnaire, classroom observation, and interviews with teachers, found that teachers applied a combination of teacher-centered and learner-centered practices rather than strictly adhering to either one alone. Likewise, Bremner's (2019) investigation on the teaching experience of five EFL Mexican teachers using teacher interviews and a timeline activity demonstrated that the teachers initially adopted a teacher-centered approach. However, over time, the teachers acknowledged the value of learner-centered methods and started to implement them. Nonetheless, the teachers eventually found it more effective to incorporate both approaches to accommodate contextual challenges.

In Libya, previous research on the teaching styles of adult English language instructors has yielded similar outcomes to this one, despite differences in setting, time, and assessment tools. At Elmergheb University, Abushina (2017) conducted research on teaching practices, which involved both students and teachers. The research was conducted in two phases employing a questionnaire, interviews, teacher training, and a pre-and-post intervention questionnaires. Similar to this study's finding, Abushina's (2017) study found that the teachers predominantly applied teacher-centered practices. Likewise, Masaud's (2023) study in two (unspecified) Libyan universities using a

questionnaire and interviews illustrated that the instructors' practices were mainly teacher-centered.

Therefore, the results from this study largely parallel, but also contradict, the findings of previous research in the EFL context. These mixed findings provide further evidence for the need for more investigation into the reasons behind and solutions to these outcomes.

5.2 Discussion of the Second Research Question

While the first research question aimed to assess teachers' application of learner-centered teaching, the second question aimed to validate the results obtained from the first and to clarify the reasons behind them by investigating teachers' perceptions of the learner-centered approach. The second research question in this study was:

What are the instructors' perceptions of learner-centered teaching?

To answer this question, interviews were conducted during the second research stage with ten English language instructors, which were later analyzed thematically. The thematic analysis revealed four main themes regarding the teachers' perceptions of learner-centered teaching: Definition, Application, Advantages, and Challenges of learner-centered teaching. In the subsequent sections, each theme is discussed individually, in light of andragogy and within the existing literature. The aim of addressing each theme in isolation is to ensure the depth and clarity of the discussion.

It is noteworthy that prior investigations of andragogy in English language teaching relied mostly on quantitative research methods. This observation led many researchers, such as Kovačević (2011), Wang and Storey (2015), Lele (2020), and Purwati et al. (2022), to call for qualitative research in this area to obtain rich and context-specific insights into this topic. Thus, while there is some available qualitative research concerning andragogy in English language teaching, the amount of this research is rather limited. As a result, it was challenging to compare the findings of the second research question in this study with previous similar studies. Thus, the following discussion and comparison to literature involved studies that focused on learner-centered English language teaching in general, or

employed different frameworks than andragogy, as well as the limited available qualitative research that could be identified.

5.2.1 Definition of Learner-Centered Teaching

The first theme identified in the analysis of English language instructors' perceptions was their definition of learner-centered teaching, which involved two viewpoints.

The first viewpoint was that the instructors in this study rejected the idea that learner-centered teaching means handing complete authority to the learners in navigating their educational journey. Alternatively, the instructors viewed the approach as one where the teacher remains in control of making the main decisions in the process (e.g., selecting materials) and directing and guiding learners. At the same time, the instructors emphasized that in learner-centered classrooms, the learners should be encouraged by their teachers to take more responsibility, participate more in class, and explore the material.

The second viewpoint was that the instructors defined learner-centered teaching as a personalized approach that considers and addresses learners' needs and preferences when formulating learning objectives and selecting the content and teaching methods.

The English language instructors' views, as described above, both align with and diverge from the core assumptions of andragogy. In line with the six core assumptions of andragogy, the instructors acknowledged that learner-centered teaching entails a strong and dynamic learner role and adapting the teaching process to suit the learners' learning interests and requirements. Nevertheless, there is a discrepancy in the degree of learner involvement and autonomy endorsed by the instructors in this study and andragogy.

Andragogy supports the view that adult learners should be given the choice to decide what they want to learn, how to learn it, and why it is important for them. On the other hand, the instructors in this study stressed the teacher's responsibility and role in making these decisions. Thus, it can be concluded that the instructors in this study advocated for a more balanced level of learner-centeredness than the high level promoted by andragogy.

In light of the literature, the definitions of instructors in this study concerning learner-centered teaching align with the views of prominent scholars, such as John Dewey's perspectives on progressive education (Dewey, 1956), Maslow and Rogers' insights in humanistic learning (Knowles et al., 2020), and Piaget and Vygotsky's views on constructivist theory (Kalina & Powell, 2009). Collectively, these scholars emphasized that learner-centered teaching involves active learner roles and meeting students' needs and preferences. Similarly, this perspective is echoed by various researchers who shared the same elements in their definitions of learner-centered teaching, including Twigg and Doucette (1992), Collins and O'Brien (2003), Brown (2003), and Nunan (2013).

Also, in correspondence with the emphasis of instructors in this study on active learner involvement in learner-centered classrooms, Bremner's (2021) meta-analysis of the different interpretations of learner-centered teaching in 326 academic journal articles published between 2010 and 2019 found that active participation was identified as the most prominent characteristic of learner-centeredness, which was found in 87% of the definitions examined.

Likewise, the instructors' views of learner-centered teaching being a personalized approach aligned with Bremner's (2021) meta-analysis findings, where the second prominent aspect of learner-centeredness was found to be adapting to needs, were mentioned in 64% of the definitions.

Moreover, it was noted in the previous section that the views of instructors in this study involved an emphasis on the teacher's strong and guiding role in learner-centered education. Within this perspective, the instructors suggested that teachers should control key aspects and decisions, while students should be encouraged to participate, take responsibility, and explore under the teacher's guidance. To compare this perspective with others in the literature, it is important to restate that Ur (2001), as cited in Calvo (2007), and Nunan (2013) identified two interpretations of learner-centered teaching: a weak and a strong one.

The weak interpretation describes the implementation of learner-centered teaching as a gradual process. The process begins with the teacher controlling the main aspects of the educational procedure, while learners assume a minimal role. Then, gradually, the teacher assigns more responsibility and tasks to the students, including planning, monitoring, and assessing their progress, while providing consistent guidance and feedback. On the other hand, in the strong interpretation of learner-centered teaching, the educational process begins with a strong student role where they are granted a substantial degree of autonomy in deciding what they learn, how they learn it, and how they should be assessed from an early stage (Nunan, 2013; Ur, 2001 in Calvo, 2007). Framed within the above two interpretations, it can be concluded that the instructors' views in this study align with the weak version of learner-centered teaching, since they were in favor of a strongly teacher-controlled approach to learner-centeredness.

Notably, the instructors' perspectives on learner-centered teaching in this study are also largely consistent with Vygotsky's social constructivist perspective. Vygotsky primarily advocated for a gradual and teacher-supported approach to learner-centeredness, rather than assigning immediate responsibility and decision-making to the learners. Specifically, Vygotsky believed that at the beginning, the teacher's role should be strong and prominent in assisting learners, while learners initiate the process in a rather dependent role. Then, the teacher should slowly minimize their support and encourage learners to become more independent and involved (Gibbons, 2015; Wilhelm et al., 2001).

The instructors' perspective on the teacher's role and preferred degree of learner involvement are also congruent with Wang's (2007) study, which demonstrated that Chinese EFL teachers held a culturally influenced perspective that favored a balanced view of learner-centered teaching. In particular, the Chinese teachers in Wang's (2007) study maintained that teachers should have a prominent role in learner-centered classrooms, while students' needs and active engagement should be highly endorsed.

On the other hand, this view by the instructors partially conflicts with the findings of Bremner's (2021) meta-analysis, which revealed that almost half of the definitions

examined favored granting learners substantial autonomy and control in deciding learning decisions, such as choosing the material and methods. Likewise, the instructors' insights on the degree of learner-centeredness differ from those put forth by the European Students' Union, which highlighted students' rights in determining curriculum content, teaching methods, and evaluation techniques (Attard et al., 2010).

In comparing these findings with Libyan research, a consistency can be observed between this study and those of Shihiba's (2011) and Masaud's (2023), where teachers in both studies associated the learner-centered approach with active and personalized learning. However, Shihiba's (2011) study differs in another perspective from this study. In this study, there was a notable agreement among the instructors in how they defined the learner-centered approach. Conversely, in Shihiba's study, some teachers viewed the learner-centered approach as one that undermines teachers' authority and assigns complete power to learners.

The above discussion leads to the conclusion that while there is a common agreement that learner-centered teaching involves a dynamic learner role and a personalized learning environment, there is a sharp difference in the level of learner involvement and freedom encouraged in these classrooms. Some argue in favor of early learner engagement in key learning decisions, while others advocate for an incremental approach of learner-centeredness.

Finally, as noted before, there was a common agreement among the instructors in this study concerning their definitions of the learner-centered approach. Furthermore, the instructors' views were largely corroborated by established definitions in the literature. These observations indicate that the instructors in this study possess a high degree of awareness and knowledge of the concept.

From another perspective, the teachers' limited understanding of the concept of learner-centered teaching can pose a challenge for implementing the approach, as was identified in previous research, such as the studies by O'Sullivan (2004) in Namibia, Ahmad (2016)

in Saudi Arabia, and López and Odón (2024) in Ecuador. In these studies, the teachers were found to lack knowledge of the key aspects of learner-centered teaching, which hindered the application of the approach. Viewed from this perspective, the strong conceptual alignment displayed by this study's instructors reflects a notable strength of this study and a promising basis for the successful adoption of learner-centered practices.

5.2.2 Application of Learner-Centered Teaching

The second theme recognized in the analysis of English language instructors' perceptions of learner-centered teaching was the instructors' application of the approach, which revealed three mixed findings.

The first and most prominent finding was that the majority of English language instructors in this study did not implement the learner-centered teaching approach. In particular, the instructors reported specific aspects of their teaching practices that were in opposition to learner-centered principles. For example, the majority of instructors acknowledged that they did not generally clarify the learning objectives for their students or encourage a sense of responsibility and control among them. Furthermore, they maintained that they did not draw on learners' previous experiences and backgrounds, and failed to integrate practical applications and hands-on activities into the learning process. Moreover, the instructors noted that it was not part of their usual practices to consider the alignment of the content with students' preparedness to learn it. Finally, the instructors recognized that they failed to implement techniques or activities that they knew could be motivating for their students.

Interpreting these first results in this theme in light of andragogy demonstrates that the English language instructors in this study did not implement any of andragogy's principles. That is to say, first, the fact that they did not clarify the learning objectives to their students conflicts with andragogy's *need-to-know* principle. Second, by not encouraging learners to take charge and be responsible, the instructors in this study undermined andragogy's *learner's self-concept* principle. Third, the instructors' lack of emphasis on learners' experiences runs counter to andragogy's principle of the role of learners' experiences. Fourth, the absence of practices that promote practical applications

of the content violates andragogy's *orientation to learning* principles. Fifth, failing to check and ensure learners' readiness for learning specific content clashes with andragogy's principle of *readiness to learn*. Finally, the fact that the instructors reported not implementing learner motivational practices, along with the lack of applying the other five learner-centered practices, contradicts andragogy's motivation principle, which holds that adult learners' internal motivation can be nurtured by respecting their needs and providing a learning environment that endorses adult learning principles.

The second finding derived from the analysis was that few instructors in this study occasionally applied learner-centered practices. Primarily, their application of these practices was influenced and determined by the circumstances. For example, when the material or class time allowed it, they would encourage students to engage in practical applications.

Viewed through the lens of andragogy, the second finding suggests that the instructors' rare application of andragogy's principles was inconsistent, unplanned, and not prioritized. In other words, it was shaped by contextual factors, rather than being structured and systematic.

The third finding identified from analyzing the instructors' application of learner-centered teaching was that few of them claimed that they implemented certain learner-centered practices, but their descriptions reflected teacher-centered applications. For instance, rather than promoting students' autonomy in the class, the instructors relied on advising students to become independent and seek information beyond the classroom. Another example was that the instructors shared their own experiences to activate students' knowledge about the new topics, rather than encouraging students to share their own.

Discussed in light of andragogy, the third finding indicates that the English language instructors in this study may lack the knowledge of how to apply andragogy's principles efficiently. According to andragogy, the described practices (e.g., encouraging learners' autonomy and drawing on their experiences) should be encouraged in the class and

performed by the learners, rather than the teacher. Notably, this finding conflicts with the findings of the first theme, in which the instructors displayed an adequate conceptual understanding of andragogy's key learner-centered principles, despite the differences in the degree of learner involvement encouraged by both perspectives. This finding could suggest that some instructors may understand the theoretical aspects of andragogy's principles, but fail to apply them practically in the classroom.

Situating this discussion within the existing literature involves several observations. First, the finding that the majority of the instructors did not apply the principles of andragogy, validates those of the first research question that English language instructors at the Faculty of Languages followed a pedagogical, teacher-centered approach and did not apply the andragogical, learner-centered principles. In this respect, this finding has already been compared to the existing literature (See Section 5.1).

Second, the finding that some instructors applied andragogy's principles in an inconsistent and unstructured manner due to limitations in the instructors' environment parallels that of Wang's (2007) study, where the contextual environment and limitations drove Chinese teachers to integrate the two approaches, rather than relying exclusively on either one alone.

Third, the finding that some instructors reported applying the principles of andragogy, while their applications were teacher-led, rather than learner-centered suggest that the instructors in this study lack knowledge or training on how to apply the principles of andragogy efficiently. This factor could, in turn, partially or fully explain the teachers' lack of implementation of the approach. In this case, these outcomes are consistent with the findings of Van Aswegen and Dreye (2004) in South Africa, Ahmad (2016) in Saudi Arabia, Marwan (2017) in Indonesia, and Shihiba (2011) in Libya, who found that inadequate teacher training and limited understanding hindered the implementation of learner-centered approaches among English language teachers.

While the findings highlight an apparent and strong lack of learner-centered teaching application by the instructors in this study, the same instructors strongly and collectively believed in the benefits of this approach. This theme is discussed next.

5.2.3 Advantages of Learner-Centered Teaching

The third theme in the English language instructors' perceptions of learner-centered teaching was their views of the advantages of the approach.

First, the instructors noted that the learner-centered teaching approach helps students grow and develop independent learning skills, which are crucial aspects for thriving in the current life demands and business market. Second, the instructors reported that learner-centered principles (e.g., familiarizing students with the learning goals, drawing on their experiences, and participating in hands-on activities) promote students' engagement with the material, which ultimately results in enhanced understanding and longer information retention. Together, these benefits lead to greater learning outcomes.

Third, the instructors maintained that the approach heavily relies on collaborative work experiences, which offer genuine opportunities for students to communicate in the target language and learn from each other's skills. Finally, the instructors established that learner-centered activities (e.g., aligning the content with students' developmental needs) and providing a supportive learning environment can boost students' internal motivation and increase their willingness to learn. Notably, the instructors clarified that their reported advantages are based on their assumptions and observations during their infrequent application of the approach, rather than a consistent style of application.

Discussing the above results in light of andragogy demonstrates that the English language instructors in this study view andragogy's principles positively and acknowledge their academic benefits. This fact was evidenced by the numerous advantages that the instructors outlined for the application of andragogy's principles. In particular, the instructors were mindful that the present challenges of today's world necessitate that individuals possess the self-directed learning skills endorsed by andragogy. Moreover, the

instructors recognized that andragogy's emphasis on learners' active involvement improves their academic achievement.

Furthermore, the instructors collectively agreed that applying the five principles of andragogy (i.e., *the need to know*, *learners' self-concept*, *the role of learners' experiences*, *orientation to learning*, and *readiness to learn*) results in the promotion of learners' motivation, which is the sixth principle of andragogy. For example, the instructors noted that students are generally more interested and motivated to learn content that can help them tackle common challenges in their lives (as suggested by andragogy's *orientation to learning* principle) and that they are usually more willing to learn content that aligns with their current developmental needs (as described in andragogy's *readiness to learn principle*). Thus, the instructors linked the sixth principle of andragogy to the benefits derived from the other five principles. More remarkably, the instructors in this study explained the benefits of andragogy's principles in the same manner as they were originally described in the andragogy model, and on the same basis on which they were developed.

Nonetheless, there was a discrepancy between the instructors' perceptions and andragogy's assumptions in terms of the emphasis placed on collaborative learning. On the one hand, the instructors in this study described learner collaboration as a crucial tenet of learner-centered teaching and associated it with positive language learning outcomes. On the other hand, although andragogy occasionally addresses this aspect throughout its principles, it places more emphasis on the learner as an individual. In other words, unlike the instructors in this study who underscored collaborative learning, andragogy's attention is directed more towards individualized than collaborative learning.

Furthermore, another notable difference between this study and andragogy's assumptions relates to the concept of adult learning. Andragogy's assumptions were primarily developed based on the differences between adult learners and children and the consequent need for an instructional approach that caters to these differences. Conversely, the instructors in this study viewed the principles of andragogy in terms of their general

academic benefits, without acknowledging their specific suitability for adult learners. That is to say, none of the instructors in this study highlighted that adult learners require a special teaching approach or techniques. This observation may indicate that the instructors in this study do not embrace the idea that adults have unique needs that differ from those of other age learners. Alternatively, this fact could suggest that instructors believe in the value of learner-centeredness as an approach for all ages, and not merely for adults.

Relating the instructors' views on the advantages of learner-centered teaching in this study to the existing literature reveals that they largely align with the theoretical insights of prominent scholars. Comparable to the instructors in this study, Weimer (2002), Nunan (2013), Lattimer (2015), and Felder and Brent (2016) held similar views on the advantages of learner-centered teaching by underscoring that it promotes learners' autonomy, cultivate skills that are necessary to tackle today's challenges, improves comprehension and retention of the content, and enhances learners' collaboration and motivation.

Moreover, it was noted earlier that the instructors in this study emphasized the role of collaborative learning and its benefits, which did not entirely align with andragogy's assumptions. On the other hand, this view by the instructors strongly corresponds with other theoretical insights of learner-centered teaching, such as those of Dewey, who maintained that effective learning takes place in a social, collaborative, and learner-centered context (Flinders & Thornton, 2013, as cited in William, 2017). Furthermore, the instructors' views are largely consistent with those of Vygotsky's social constructivism framework, which highlights the value of educational support and assistance that the learner receives from the environment, whether from the teacher or peers, and how this can facilitate and accelerate learners' development (Kalina & Powell, 2009; Wilhelm et al., 2001).

Relating the instructors' insights in this study to previous empirical research also reveals notable consistencies between the teachers' views and actual research findings. It is important to restate that the studies included here did not specifically investigate the

principles of andragogy as this one did, but focused on learner-centered teaching in general, which exhibits common features across different frameworks.

For example, in correspondence with this study, Marwan's (2017) study in Indonesia revealed that the approach resulted in more meaningful, engaging, and autonomous learning experiences. Likewise, Mohamed's (2022) study in Sudan found that students' English language proficiency and motivation were significantly enhanced in learner-centered classrooms. In China, Du (2021) reported that learner-centered teaching led to notable progress in students' motivation, learning strategies, and overall performance. Additionally, studies in Saudi Arabia (Althubaiti & Alqurashi, 2022; Kassem, 2019) demonstrated that the learner-centered approach positively influenced students' independence, anxiety, motivation, classroom interaction, and overall academic gains. Finally, a study by Yaqubi et al. (2022) in Afghanistan displayed that the learner-centered approach enhanced EFL learners' language skills, both in the classroom and beyond.

Situating the findings of this theme within the existing literature reveals that the perceptions of instructors in this study align with the views of renowned scholars and are supported by empirical research findings. This observation highlights a notable contradiction: English language instructors at the Faculty of Languages have a solid conceptual awareness of the academic value of the learner-centered approach. Nevertheless, their teaching approach remains teacher-centered.

Relating the findings of this theme to the Libyan context uncovers a consistency between this study and those of others, although they were conducted in different Libyan EFL settings. In particular, Shihiba's (2011) study in the secondary school setting and both Abushina's (2017) and Masaud's (2023) research in the higher education setting revealed that English language teachers had very positive perceptions about the learner-centered approach, and nonetheless, were strongly teacher-centered in their classroom practices. A similar conclusion was reached by Badjadi's (2020) study in Algeria, where English language teachers were found to follow a teacher-centered approach, despite holding

positive attitudes towards the learner-centered teaching style. This observation highlights a gap between teachers' beliefs and their actual classroom practices.

The first theme identified in the analysis of instructors' perceptions, as well as this one, highlighted the instructors' mindfulness and awareness of the theoretical aspects of the learner-centered approach. On the other hand, the findings of the first research question and those of the second theme in this analysis highlight a stark contrast: the instructors' teaching practices are teacher-centered. This discrepancy between the instructors in this study's theoretical beliefs and actual instructional practices highlights the critical need to investigate the underlying factors that hinder the application of the learner-centered approach. The next theme explores this area.

5.2.4 Challenges of Implementing Learner-Centered Teaching

The fourth and last theme derived from the analysis of the English language instructors' perceptions was the challenges of implementing the learner-centered approach, which were classified into three types: student-related, teacher-related, and those related to the institution (i.e., the Faculty of Languages).

The first and most prominent obstacle that the instructors reported for applying the learner-centered approach was related to the students, particularly their resistance to the approach. The instructors explained that students' negative attitude towards the approach stemmed from three main reasons. First, the instructors noted that students are accustomed to teacher-centered teaching due to its widespread dominance in the Libyan teaching setting. Second, the students find teacher-centered teaching more convenient because it relies heavily on the teacher, who is a more trusted and reliable figure to direct this process. At the same time, teacher-centered teaching places minimal effort on the students, which is more preferable for them. Third, the instructors noted that students were reluctant to engage in active and learner-centered experiences because it would demand communication in the target language, which is an area where students are largely deficient and lack confidence.

Explaining the first challenge (i.e., students' resistance to learner-centered teaching) based on andragogy reveals two strong contrasts with the key assumptions on which the theory was primarily developed. First, andragogy's principles assume that adult learners' inherent self-concept is inclined towards independence, self-directed learning, and freedom of choice, and that they reject situations which limit this sense of self-empowerment (Knowles et al., 2020). Conversely, the findings here demonstrate that adult students at the Faculty of Languages prefer to be directed and guided by the teacher, and they react passively and negatively to situations that encourage their active participation.

Second, andragogy's assumptions postulate that adults are innately motivated to learn and evolve and that this internal motivation mostly thrives in learning environments that address their learning needs and respect their maturity level (e.g., encouraging learners' autonomy and involving them in the learning objectives). However, the findings outlined above reveal that the same view cannot be expected with EFL students in this study. That is to say, the findings demonstrated that these students prefer traditional teacher-centered methods in which they are dependent on the teachers and where the roles are minimized to passive reception. As a result, it might be the case that different assumptions can be made about these EFL students' motivation and the need for alternative strategies to promote it. As Merriam (2001) noted, the principles of andragogy may not align with the characteristics of all adult learners.

The second obstacle the instructors reported for implementing learner-centered teaching was related to the teachers themselves, specifically their reluctance to engage in this approach. The instructors stated that they leaned towards a teacher-centered rather than a learner-centered approach for several reasons. First, the instructors explained that they were more familiar with the traditional teaching approach, which made it more comfortable for them to apply because it gave them a sense of control. Conversely, the instructors feared that they would lose this sense of authority in learner-centered classrooms. Second, the instructors noted that they perceived the teacher-centered approach as more convenient because it required less time for planning and delivering information, as opposed to learner-centered approaches. Third, the instructors described

pressure from colleagues to follow uniform teaching methods, which are teacher-centered. Finally, the instructors specified that they were reluctant to apply learner-centered approaches because they require additional execution time and individualized learner support, which is considered difficult to implement in their classes, where there is a wide range of learner skills and abilities and a notably low proficiency in the English language.

Interpreting the second obstacle (i.e., teachers' resistance to learner-centered teaching) from the perspectives of andragogy unveils an additional discrepancy between the theory and this study's findings. According to andragogy, the teacher's role is that of a facilitator of students' self-directed learning, rather than the only source of authority in the classroom. Within this view, the student's role allows them to make decisions and have control over their learning (Knowles, 1980). Remarkably, the findings here show that EFL instructors in this study are comfortable with their authoritative role and feel threatened by delegating some of this power to the students, as endorsed by andragogy's principles. This outcome, in addition to students' preference for their roles in teacher-centered classrooms, which was noted above, underscores the divergence between andragogy and the environment in this setting.

Furthermore, the principles of andragogy, such as *the learner's self-concept*, are based on the assumption that adult learners are capable of making sound decisions about their learning. Moreover, the principles of *the role of learners' experiences* and *orientation to learning* suggest that adult learners benefit from engaging in experiential and practical tasks. Conversely, the instructors reported that EFL students at the Faculty of Languages are notably different in their skills and abilities, and generally lack adequate English language competence. This fact calls into question the students' capability to engage in andragogy's principles.

The third obstacle that the instructors reported for the application of learner-centered teaching was related to the policy of their work institution: the Faculty of Languages. The instructors described four aspects of the faculty's policy that hindered the effective application of the approach. First, the instructors explained that the faculty imposes a

uniform and fixed curriculum that all instructors must adhere to and cover in a certain amount of time (i.e., during the term). Second, the instructors noted that the duration of the term (i.e., 12 lectures) was not sufficient to cover the curriculum and implement or incorporate learner-centered methods or materials. Third, the instructors argued that the faculty policy permitted a large number of students in class, which made it largely difficult to provide personalized support and genuine learning opportunities. Finally, the instructors complained about the lack of training, support, and facilities provided by the faculty, which complicated the implementation of learner-centered teaching by the teachers.

Examined through andragogy, the third obstacle highlights two key issues. First, andragogy's principles implicitly presume that teachers have the freedom to direct the learning process according to learners' needs. For example, the principles of *the need to know* and *the learner's self-concept* assume that teachers can invite students to contribute to formulating their learning objectives. Likewise, the principle of *orientation to learning* postulates that teachers can base the learning material on real-life tasks and challenges. Nonetheless, EFL instructors in this study are constrained by rigid learning goals and a curriculum, and they are obligated to cover it in a restricted time, which makes it challenging to apply andragogy's principles.

Second, andragogy's principle of *readiness to learn* maintains that teachers must align the content with learners' developmental needs and stage of development. On the other hand, the findings regarding the institutional challenges highlighted the overcrowded nature of EFL classrooms at the faculty and the lack of teacher training and resources. These obstacles suggest that it may not be feasible for teachers with limited skills and facilities to manage these classes while promoting andragogy's principles. In addition, the limited time noted by the instructors obliges them to prioritize content coverage over implementing these learner-centered principles.

Discussing the challenges of implementing learner-centered teaching in light of the literature highlights several observations. The challenges related to students' resistance to

the learner-centered approach are corroborated by the observations of Felder and Brent (2006). Both scholars highlighted that students who are accustomed to traditional and teacher-centered methods find it difficult to embrace learner-centered methods, which require active involvement and responsibility from them.

Similarly, in line with the challenges related to teachers' resistance to the learner-centered approach, Felder and Brent (2006) reported that teachers often expressed concerns and discomfort about embracing innovative and learner-centered teaching approaches. Notably, this apprehension is found among both novice and experienced teachers. Likewise, Hoidn (2016), as cited in Hoidn and Reusser (2021), explained that teachers often react negatively to learner-centered approaches due to their underlying assumptions about teaching and learning, their previous teaching experiences, and their fear of change.

In correspondence with this study's findings regarding the students' and teachers' caution towards learner-centered teaching, several Libyan scholars related the absence of learner-centeredness in the Libyan EFL context to the rooted cultural and educational beliefs among teachers and students. Elabbar (2011) explained that Libyan EFL teachers and students prefer teacher-centered methods, which assign teachers complete control over classroom practices and minimize students' involvement, because they believe that this approach is more effective for language learning. Similarly, Orafi et al. (2021) attributed the dominance of teacher-centered methods in Libyan EFL classrooms to the prevalent educational culture, which relies on the teacher as the primary source of knowledge and undermines students' active participation. Abukhattala (2018) maintained that the social culture in Libya positions teachers as moral and behavioral role models, which students must obey and respect. At the same time, this perception discourages students' contributions and promotes teacher-centered practices.

Moreover, the findings of this study regarding the institutional challenges of implementing learner-centered teaching are consistent with the views of Hoidn (2016), as cited in Hoidn and Reusser (2021), who reported that institutional restrictions, such as lack of support

systems and limitations in time, can largely impede the teacher's willingness to apply learner-centered practices.

The study's findings concerning the institutional barriers are also reinforced by previous research in the Libyan EFL setting. In particular, Omar (2014) and Abushina (2017) similarly noted that one of the reasons for the prevalence of teacher-centered approaches in Libya is the lack of sufficient training and resources provided for Libyan EFL teachers to implement contemporary teaching methods.

Empirically, the challenges identified in this study for implementing the learner-centered approach are consistent with numerous global and local studies that examined learner-centered teaching. In particular, mirroring the findings of this study, comparable challenges (i.e., limitations in time, resources, teacher training, and curriculum used) were reported by English teachers in studies conducted at different times and in various contexts. These included: O'Sullivan (2004) in Namibia, Van Aswegen and Dreye (2004) in South Africa, Wang (2007) in China, Ahmad (2016) in Saudi Arabia, Bremner (2019) in Mexico, and Badjadi (2020) in Algeria.

It is worth noting that O'Sullivan (2004) in Namibia postulated that learner-centered teaching is a Western concept that needs to be adapted to fit teachers' competencies and the cultural and educational environment, whether in Namibia or other contexts. On the other hand, Wang (2007) in China and Bremner (2019) in Mexico reported that teachers in their studies noted that contextual challenges and their settings necessitated the adoption of a hybrid approach that combines both teacher-centered and learner-centered methods.

Research from the Libyan EFL setting also reflected similar findings to this study, highlighting the complexity of employing learner-centered teaching approaches. In particular, Shihiba's (2011) research in secondary schools, Abushina's (2017) and Masaud's (2023) studies in the higher education setting identified challenges caused by institutional work policies, such as the large class sizes, limited teacher training and facilities, and the dominant traditional assessment approaches.

The consistency between this study's findings and those of others conducted internationally and in Libya highlights that, despite the differences in timelines and research contexts, the application of learner-centered teaching continues to be met with parallel challenges that pertain mainly to systemic issues. This fact emphasizes the need for continuous research that proposes and examines context-specific solutions to addressing these issues.

5.3 Overall Interpretation of Findings

This case study investigated the possibility of implementing learner-centered teaching in light of andragogy theory at the Faculty of Languages, University of Benghazi. The findings from this study revealed aspects of consistency as well as discrepancies between andragogy's principles and the instructors' practices and perceptions in this setting. As for the applications of andragogy's principles, the findings revealed a notable absence of these principles in the majority of instructors' practices, who were found to strongly and consistently follow a pedagogical, teacher-centered teaching approach.

An examination of the instructors' perceptions of andragogy revealed several observations. First, the instructors collectively demonstrated a strong theoretical awareness of andragogy's main assumptions, which pertained to active student involvement and sensitivity to their needs and interests. However, contrary to andragogy, the instructors argued against a high degree of student autonomy and involvement in key learning decisions. Alternatively, the instructors largely believed in a strong teacher role within this environment, which assigns complete authority to the teacher to determine the main decisions of the educational process. Notably, these instructors' views on learner-centered teaching were consistent with some established theoretical insights, such as those of Vygotsky's social constructivist theory, which endorsed a balance of teacher-learner centeredness.

Second, the instructors were mindful of the benefits of andragogy's principles, which they associated with promoting students' skills and autonomy, improving students' learning

achievements, and increasing students' motivation. It is noteworthy that these benefits are rooted in the core assumptions of andragogy and various theoretical insights on learner-centered teaching. Moreover, they are supported by empirical research findings.

Moreover, the instructors in this study noted that another benefit of learner-centered teaching was learner collaboration, and they related this benefit to others, such as facilitating meaningful interaction and skills development among students. This aspect is not equally emphasized by andragogy's principles, which were more focused on individualized learning aspects. Markedly, this emphasis on learner collaboration represents a key aspect in Vygotsky's social constructivist theory, which highlights another point of consistency between it and the views of instructors in this study.

Although the findings revealed a strong theoretical awareness among the study instructors of the concept and benefits of andragogy's learner-centered principles, various obstacles were reported by the instructors that hindered the implementation of andragogy in this environment. These were related to students' and teachers' rejection of the approach and the policy of the faculty.

Analyzing the study findings from the perspective of andragogy raises questions about its applicability in this study setting. The challenges identified concerning students, teachers, and faculty policy conflict with the fundamental assumptions of andragogy. In particular, andragogy assumes that adult learners are inherently inclined toward and capable of self-directed learning, contributing to their learning decisions and participating in practical, problem-based learning activities. On the contrary, the findings highlight that EFL students at the Faculty of Languages prefer teacher-centered methods that require minimal engagement from them and rely primarily on the teacher. Furthermore, the research outcomes demonstrate that students at the faculty lack the capabilities, skills, and language proficiency needed to make autonomous choices and engage in self-directed, experiential, and problem-based learning.

In addition, andragogy portrays the teacher's role as that of a facilitator whose job is to guide students' self-directed learning and to create a learner-centered environment that caters to students' needs, goals, and preferences. However, the instructors in this study acknowledged their preference for their roles in the teacher-centered approach and valued the power it gave them. Furthermore, the instructors were in favor of a more restricted learner involvement in key learning decisions and assigned this role to the teacher. Also, the instructors perceived their roles in learner-centered classrooms as time and effort-consuming due to the varying and low abilities exhibited by their students.

Additionally, andragogy's assumptions encourage students' involvement in their learning decisions and participation in active learning. Conversely, the institutional constraints highlighted in this study involved severe restrictions on the employed curriculum, the allowed time, the number of students in classrooms, and the training and facilities provided for teachers to apply andragogy's principles.

Lastly, andragogy placed more emphasis on individualized learning aspects. On the other hand, the study instructors emphasized the importance of collaborative learning as central to their understanding of learner-centered teaching. Collectively, the above incongruities between andragogy and the practices and perceptions exhibited by instructors in this study represent remarkable challenges in the feasibility of applying andragogy's learner-centered principles in this setting.

Nevertheless, educators and researchers continue to emphasize the pressing need and the academic benefits of implementing learner-centered English language teaching. These recommendations are observed both at the international level (Althubaiti & Alqurashis, 2022; Elhag & Elhassan, 2022; Calvo, 2007; Du, 2021; Gibbons, 2015; Jones, 2007; Kassem, 2019; Nunan, 2013; Yaqubi et al., 2022) and in Libya (Abushina, 2017; Al-Araibi & Saleh, 2020; AlManafi et al., 2023; Aloreibi & Carey, 2017; El Mezughi, 2021; Elramli, 2023; Omar, 2014; Omar, 2019; Omar, 2020).

These recommendations underscore the need for considering the development of context-specific solutions for implementing learner-centered teaching in this study setting. Moreover, it is necessary to revisit the findings from this study, which revealed a strong theoretical knowledge among the teachers of the concept and value of learner-centered teaching. These outcomes represent a promising foundation for implementing this teaching approach in this setting and indicate that there is potential for its successful application, provided that suitable adaptations are considered. These are explored in detail in the next chapter.

5.4 Summary of Chapter

This chapter presented the main findings of each research question in this study in light of andragogy theory and the literature to identify points of consistency and inconsistency. Moreover, an overall interpretation of findings from both research questions was provided to highlight the conclusion reached regarding the study's main objective (i.e., investigating the feasibility of implementing learner-centered teaching at the Faculty of Languages). The decisions made based on this conclusion are explored further in the next chapter.

Chapter Six: A Proposed Framework for Implementation: A Dual-Focused EFL Learner-Centered Teaching Model

6.0 Introduction

This chapter presents a model that is proposed and developed by the researcher of this study for the application of learner-centered teaching at the Faculty of Languages, University of Benghazi. First, the rationale behind the model is provided, which is followed by an explanation of the model's theoretical basis. Subsequently, the model and its structure are presented, with a detailed description of its key principles and the practical recommendations for their application.

6.1 Rationale of the Model

In response to the increasing emphasis on the value of learner-centered teaching and the need for more research in the Libyan EFL context to modify and enhance language teaching approaches (Abushina, 2017; AlManafi et al., 2023; Aloreibi & Carey, 2017; El Mezughi, 2021; Elramli, 2023; Omar, 2014; Omar, 2019; Omar, 2020; Orafi et al., 2021), this research investigated the potential for applying learner-centered teaching at the Faculty of Languages, University of Benghazi.

As noted at the outset of this study (See Chapter 1), the investigation of the applicability of learner-centered teaching in this study was guided by the framework of andragogy theory. Hence, andragogy theory guided the research questions and discussion of findings in this study. Respectively, the interpretation of findings (See Chapter 5) highlighted several inconsistencies between andragogy and the practices and perceptions of English language instructors in this study setting. These outcomes led the researcher to conclude that implementing andragogy in this study setting necessitated making certain adaptations to make it suitable for the linguistic, institutional, and cultural realities of the Faculty of Languages. In this respect, it is imperative to draw attention to the following assertion made by Knowles et al. (2015):

Over the years, a variety of refinements to the core adult learning principles of the andragogical model have emerged. Some might view the refinements as weakening the model, but our view is that they strengthen it. Learning is a complex phenomenon that defies description by any one model. The challenge has been, and continues to be, to define what is most characteristic of adult learners, to establish core principles, and to define how to adapt those core principles to varying circumstances. The more researchers identify factors that moderate and mediate adult learning, the stronger the core principles become. (p. 159)

The above statements by Knowles et al. (2015) encourage and permit the adaptation of andragogy's principles in accordance with the specific needs of the learning environment in which it is to be implemented. These assertions and the findings from this study have been the driving force behind and the basis for the researcher's attempts to modify andragogy's principles according to the contextual needs of this study setting.

Based on the findings from this study and recommendations by Libyan EFL researchers (Abushina, 2017; Masaud, 2023), the researcher postulates that implementing andragogy's learner-centered principles in this setting primarily and essentially requires a gradual approach where the teacher plays a strong, supportive, and directing role in the process, particularly at the early stages of exposing students to the approach. Within this framework, learner collaboration should be highly encouraged to provide additional support for learners to assist one another in developing English language knowledge and skills. As learners advance their English language knowledge and learner-centered skills, teachers can gradually minimize their control and encourage learners to become more independent.

Accordingly, the researcher proposes a dual-focused model for implementing learner-centered English language teaching in this study setting, which is based on integrating an additional theoretical framework into andragogy. This integration of the additional framework aims to address the challenges identified in this study context and facilitate the application of andragogy in it.

6.2 Theoretical Foundation of the Model

This section aims to explain the theoretical basis for the model proposed in this study. As noted earlier (See Chapter 5), numerous factors raised concerns about the application of andragogy at the Faculty of Languages. Nevertheless, Knowles et al. (2020) emphasized that andragogy is characterized by high flexibility, which permits the modification of its principles and the incorporation of additional frameworks to address the needs of specific educational settings and facilitate its implementation. Consequently, the researcher considered integrating another theory into andragogy to make it suitable for application at the Faculty of Languages.

It is critical to clarify that the researcher's decision to incorporate an additional theory into andragogy is not based on her views on limitations in andragogy per se. Conversely, the researcher believes that andragogy addresses crucial and inclusive factors concerning learner-centered teaching, which include a clear focus on the roles of both the teacher and learners. Nonetheless, the researcher postulates that the educational environment and the contextual factors at the Faculty of Languages necessitate a steady and strongly supported learner-centered approach. Accordingly, the researcher believes that the principles of social constructivist theory have the potential for meeting the specific needs of this setting, and that their integration into andragogy can facilitate the application of andragogy's principles in this context.

Developed by Lev Vygotsky, social constructivism is a theory that emphasizes learners' active involvement within a socially supported learning environment. In particular, it suggests that learning is both an individual and a social process, and that learning is most effective when supported by the help of teachers and peers, who promote and accelerate the development of knowledge and skills (Tobin & Tippins, 1993).

Several reasons guided the selection of social constructive theory for this study. First and foremost, social constructivism is primarily a balanced teacher-learner-centered philosophy, rather than strictly a learner-centered one. It advocates for a gradual learner-centered approach by emphasizing the teacher's strong initial role in supporting students'

active engagement in learning, which is then slowly minimized as students become more competent and capable (Wilhelm et al., 2001). Notably, this is what is needed in this study setting, as highlighted in the findings (See Chapter 5). A shift from the dominant teacher-centered approach at the faculty to learner-centeredness requires a balanced and progressive strategy, rather than an immediate high degree of learner-centeredness.

Second, central to social constructivism is the emphasis on the value of collaboration in learning, which is not limited to the teacher's support but involves learners' collaboration with one another (Kalina & Powell, 2009). The findings of this study highlighted that students at the faculty could benefit from extra support from their peers in their attempts to adopt more active roles in their learning. Moreover, the instructors in this study considered learners' collaboration as a key component of learner-centered classrooms and underlined its benefits for students' language and skills development.

Third, social constructivism particularly and significantly influenced the field of foreign languages teaching and learning (El Mezughi, 2021). The theory acknowledged that language learning does not develop based on isolated skill drills, but requires interactive and meaningful activities in which language is used both as the focus of and a tool for learning (Cameron, 2001; Tobin & Tippins, 1993). It follows that the social constructivist perspective has direct applicability in this study setting, where the primary goal is the teaching and learning of English. By adopting a social constructivist framework in this context, the English language can be utilized as both the focus of learning and the medium through which students can communicate, inquire, clarify, and construct knowledge. Moreover, by relying on interactive and meaningful activities rather than abstract activities, language can be presented in the context of its real purpose, which is genuine and purposeful communication.

Fourth, there are two prominent concepts in the social constructivist theory: the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) and the Zone of Actual Development (ZAD). ZPD refers to the tasks that are beyond a learner's current capabilities and which they can achieve with the help of others in the learning environment, whether teachers or peers. Through

this help and guided practice, the learner can acquire the knowledge and skills that enable them to tackle the same tasks independently and unassisted in the future. These tasks that the learner can tackle independently fall within the learner's ZAD (Wilhelm et al., 2001). The assistance provided by teachers and peers to help a learner address current learning challenges and develop skills to tackle similar challenges autonomously in the future is referred to as *scaffolding*, which represents a key element in Vygotsky's social constructive theory (Gibbons, 2015; Vygotsky, 1962, as cited in Kalina & Powell, 2009).

The concept of scaffolding is particularly relevant in the context of this study, where the findings revealed passive learning attitudes and poor proficiency levels among EFL students at the Faculty of Languages, which hindered their engagement in learner-centered activities. By providing strong and systematic support for these EFL students from their teacher and peers, they can gradually acquire active and independent learning skills and develop confidence in this area.

In this respect, the researcher of this study aims to use scaffolding as a tool for facilitating the application of andragogy's principles in this setting and gradually help shift students' current teacher-dependent learning attitudes to more learner-centered ones, which can be viewed as moving from the ZPD to the ZAD. In this case, ZPD refers to the challenges faced in shifting students' present status of passive learning to active learning, by applying andragogy's principles, and with the help of the learning environment. Conversely, ZAD, in this case, represents the level at which students become capable of adopting active and independent learning roles, as endorsed by andragogy's principles.

It was noted earlier that Knowles et al. (2020) strongly emphasized the possibility of adapting andragogy and reinforcing it with another theory to meet the needs of various learning environments. In a similar vein, Tobin and Tippins (1993) highlighted the academic value of the constructivist theory and the feasibility of incorporating it with other frameworks when the aim is to achieve effective education in various educational settings. Consequently, the researcher of this study suggests that social constructivist theory can work in harmony with andragogy and, together, they can represent a suitable

framework for implementing learner-centered teaching at the Faculty of Languages, University of Benghazi.

Therefore, the researcher's proposed dual-focused EFL learner-centered teaching model is based on integrating the social constructivist theory into andragogy to scaffold (i.e., support) the application of its principles at the Faculty of Languages, University of Benghazi. The researcher postulates that the scaffolding provided by this integration can help overcome the limitations of applying andragogy at the Faculty of Languages.

6.3 Introducing the Model

The model developed in this study is a dual-focused EFL learner-centered teaching model integrating Vygotsky's social constructivist principles with Knowles's andragogy principles to provide a unified framework for implementing learner-centered teaching at the Faculty of Languages, University of Benghazi.

The implementation of the model takes the form of a cyclical process, in which learners are gradually assisted in moving from passive learning and dependence on the teacher toward interactive learning and independence. Because learning is a continuous process, the cycle is continually renewed as learners grow and encounter new challenges.

Figure 7 below shows the dual-focused, learner-centered EFL teaching model and its cyclic implementation process. This cycle is presented in two layers aimed at achieving the core goal of the model: an Interactive Learning Environment (i.e., Learner-Centered), represented by the circle at the center of the figure. The outer layer involves Vygotsky's social constructivist principle of Scaffolding, which includes (1) Teacher-Learner Interaction and Peer Interaction. Both types of Scaffolding occur within the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). The final element in the outer layer is the Zone of Actual Development (ZAD). The inner layer of the model consists of the six learner-centered principles of andragogy: the need to know, learners' self-concept, the role of learners' experiences, readiness to learn, orientation to learning, and motivation.

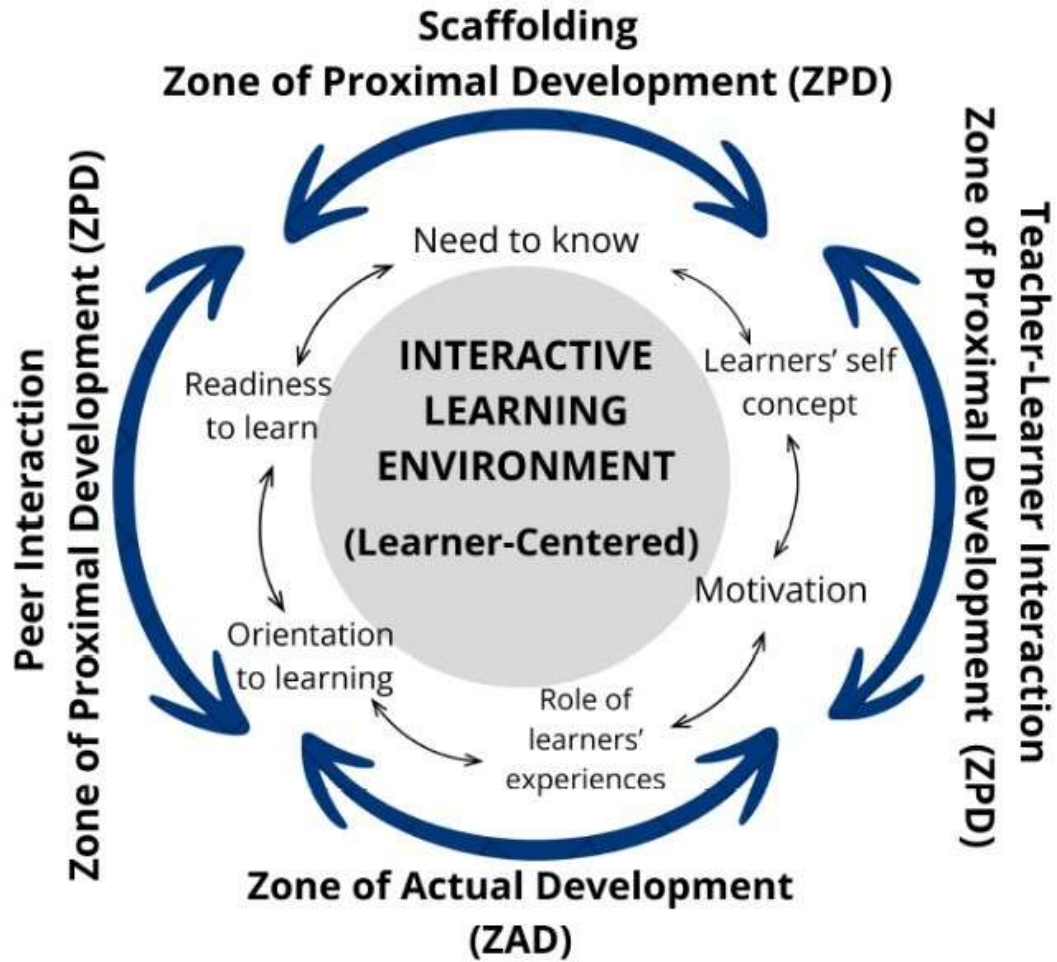


Figure 7: A Dual-Focused EFL Learner-Centered Teaching Model

The figure above illustrates the cyclical process of implementing the dual-focused, EFL learner-centered teaching model. The cycle starts with Scaffolding in the outer layer, which occurs within the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). ZPD includes tasks that a learner cannot do alone yet but can complete with guidance and support from the social environment (i.e., teacher and peers) (Wilhelm et al., 2001). In this context, ZPD highlights learners' need for strong guidance to participate in learner-centered learning. As shown in the figure, scaffolding is provided through (1) teacher-learner interaction and (2) peer interaction. This scaffolding aims to engage learners in learner-centered practices, which include their need to know, their self-concept, the role of their experiences, their

readiness to learn, their orientation to learning, and their motivation. The stage where students become capable of engaging in and performing learner-centered practices with greater skill and independence is called the Zone of Actual Development (ZAD).

Nevertheless, it is important to emphasize that the process shown in this model is ongoing, as learners need continued scaffolding as they progress and face new challenges in their learning journey, restarting the cycle. Thus, the cyclical nature of the model reflects the developmental and continuous nature of learning.

6.4 Principles of the Model

The previous section introduced the dual-focused EFL learner-centered teaching model in a broad sense and explained its implementation as a cyclic process. This section aims to present and describe each of the principles of the proposed dual-focused EFL learner-centered teaching model in detail, along with suggestions for applying each of these principles.

As noted earlier (See Section 6.1.2), the model is based on the integration of scaffolding from the social constructive theory into andragogy's six principles. This integration aims to promote the gradual transition from a teacher-centered to a learner-centered teaching/learning environment at the Faculty of Languages, using andragogy's six principles. This integration results in the development of a dual-focused EFL learner-centered teaching model, which consists of six principles. These include *scaffolding the need to know*, *scaffolding the learner's self-concept*, *scaffolding the role of learners' experiences*, *scaffolding the readiness to learn*, *scaffolding the orientation to learning*, and *scaffolding learners' motivation*.

Below is a detailed explanation of each of the six principles of the dual-focused EFL learner-centered teaching model and their implementation. In each of the principles, scaffolding serves as the basis for applying and implementing each of the principles. Specifically, under each principle, an explanation is provided of the support of its application through the teacher-learner interaction, and peer interaction using examples

from English language teaching. Furthermore, there are suggestions for the implementation of each principle, which are informed by the principles of social constructivism and andragogy, the insights of prominent scholars, and the researcher's personal teaching experiences in the English language teaching context.

1. **Scaffolding the *Need to Know***

Scaffolding the need-to-know principle refers to supporting learners' recognition of the purpose, importance, and relevance of the learning material, which can significantly influence students' learning effort and time (Knowles et al., 2020). Teachers can support the application of this principle by clarifying for learners how the material can contribute to their language development and broader life goals through providing clear explanations and demonstrations. For instance, if the lesson focuses on job interview skills, the teacher can describe how mastering these skills can enhance students' employability opportunities and careers in general. The teacher can also provide real-life examples. For example, when teaching food-related vocabulary and phrases, the teacher can demonstrate or provide examples of how to use these words and phrases to order food from a restaurant, which displays the immediate applicability of the material to students.

In addition to the teacher's scaffold, peers can be encouraged to support one another in recognizing the relevance of the material. Students can be invited to engage in reflective group discussions where they use English to share their views and perceptions about the value and applicability of the new knowledge and skills. For example, after a lesson about persuasive writing techniques, students can be encouraged to discuss in groups how they can employ the learnt phrases and skills in real-world contexts, such as participating in a campaign for a cause they are interested in.

• **Suggestions for applying the *scaffolded need-to-know* principle**

Given that English is not Libyan students' first language, they might find it challenging to understand the purpose behind the material and activities employed in the classroom, which highlights the importance of supporting the application of this principle by teachers

and peers in this setting. Drawing on insights from Nunan (2013) and the researcher's recommendations, the following are suggested steps for applying the *scaffolded need-to-know* principle:

- a. During students' first-time enrollment in the English Language Program at the faculty, the faculty should provide students with clear and detailed information about the objectives and expected outcomes of the program and each of its five departments: English Language Department, Literature Department, Theoretical Linguistics Department, Applied Linguistics Department, and Translation Department. To facilitate the application of this step, the faculty can hold a program orientation session, and/or provide students with a program handbook or digital guide. These should outline the program aims, the knowledge and skills that students will gain in each department, the assessment methods, and key policies.
- b. During the renewal of students' registration for each new term, the faculty should provide students with details about each course's description, which explains the objectives of the course, and how it relates to their academic and professional goals. This step can help students make informed decisions about course selection, provided they are permitted the chance to do so.
- c. At the beginning of each course, the teacher should provide students with an introduction to the course. This introduction should outline the learning objectives and their relevance to students' academic and professional goals, the curriculum structure, and the expected teaching, learning, and assessment methods.
- d. At the beginning of each class, the teacher should clarify the learning objectives of the lesson and their relevance to students' development, either by writing them on the board or verbally outlining them. Alternatively, the teacher can divide students into groups. Before each class, the teacher can assign the

material that is the focus of the next lesson to a group and ask them to predict its goals and expected outcomes. After confirming the results obtained by each group with the teacher, a member of the group can be invited to explain the lesson objectives to the whole class.

- e. The teacher should follow the same approach with each learning task or activity. That is, the teacher should familiarize students with the aims before asking them to engage in it. This can be achieved either through the teacher's explanation or by encouraging students to predict these objectives by working in collaboration with their peers.

- f. At the end of each lesson, the teacher can divide students into groups and encourage them to engage in reflective discussions about the value of the knowledge and skills that were the focus of the lesson. In addition, students can be invited to suggest types of activities they prefer to engage in in the next lessons, or difficulties they encountered. Finally, the teacher can remind students of the aims of the lesson as they were clarified at the beginning, and elicit from the students whether they have been successfully achieved. This step can reinforce students' feelings of achievement and help them identify weak areas that need to be addressed.

2. Scaffolding the *Learner's Self-Concept*

Scaffolding the learner's self-concept signifies the support provided for learners to nurture and develop how they perceive themselves in terms of their personality, ability, and roles. It is argued that adult learners view themselves as capable individuals who are responsible for making and directing their life decisions. This self-concept drives them to reject any restrictions on their freedom and the imposition of ideas and decisions by others (Knowles et al., 2020).

The learner's self-concept can be gradually fostered and established with the appropriate degree of assistance in each stage. During the early stages of university study, students commonly lack sufficient knowledge and skills. In this case, the teacher should play a key role in providing substantial support and guidance to the students, while regulating key decisions and aspects of the educational process. At the same time, the teacher can encourage learners' involvement in their learning decisions by inviting them to engage in simple, peer-cooperative decision-making processes under the teacher's guidance. By promoting collaborative and teacher-regulated decision-making among students, the teacher can satisfy learners' need for control and freedom gradually and supportively. With practice and time, and as students develop more competencies, they become more confident in their capabilities. It is then that the teacher can gradually minimize their control and give more freedom and responsibility to the learners, even at the individual level.

For example, in the early stages of implementing learner-centered teaching, the teacher can invite students to work in groups to suggest classroom policies, such as the rules for participation, rewards, and consequences. However, key decisions, such as the choice of teaching strategies and assessment methods, remain under the teacher's control. This approach gives students a sense of control over their learning without overwhelming them by asking them to make decisions that are beyond their current capabilities. Later, when students are more accustomed to their active roles in learner-centered classrooms, the teacher can increase individual decision-making opportunities and give more responsibilities to the students at the individual level.

The same approach should be followed when students are assigned new or challenging tasks, such as giving presentations. During the students' first attempts to deliver a presentation, the teacher should provide generous guidance and assistance within a socially supported framework to enable the cultivation of students' competence and confidence. That is, students can be encouraged to give group presentations before asking them to deliver presentations individually. Moreover, the teacher can assist groups in preparing their presentation by breaking the process into smaller, manageable tasks and

by providing sufficient templates, guidelines, and teacher demonstrations. During group work, students can support one another's language learning and share a sense of responsibility by exchanging ideas and practicing together. With sufficient time and experience, students can be encouraged to deliver presentations independently, with the teacher minimizing their support and help.

Moreover, it is important to encourage reflective feedback among the students, whether after group or individual work. Teacher and peer feedback can be a valuable tool for helping learners recognize their strengths, weaknesses, and the areas that need improvement.

- **Suggestions for applying the *scaffolded learner's self-concept principle***

Among the six principles of andragogy, the learner's self-concept can be regarded as considerably challenging to implement, particularly in teacher-centered learning environments. The difficulty stems from the fact that the principle of learners' self-concept assumes that adult learners thrive in environments that endorse their self-concept of capable, free, autonomous, and responsible learners, and that teachers can play a facilitating role in this process. On the other hand, in teacher-centered environments, these roles are different: students play dependent and passive roles, while the teacher plays the role of main authority and director of the educational process. Consequently, the application of this principle necessitates a progressive approach that balances teacher and student control over the educational process. In this respect, the researcher recommends adopting Nakata's (2010, pp. 6-8) model for teaching self-directed language learning.

The selection of Nakata's (2010) framework was driven by its articulation of a gradual process that resembles what is needed in this study setting, which is shifting students' roles from complete dependence on the teacher to becoming more self-directed language learners. Specifically, the first stage of the model mirrors the Libyan EFL teaching environment and this study context, which is strongly teacher-centered. The subsequent stages of the model provide a gradual release of control from the teacher to learners, which is particularly suitable for this context. Finally, the model emphasizes learner

collaboration, which aligns with the proposed model in this study and the needs of this setting. Nakata's (2010) model consists of the following three stages:

a. Preparation Stage

The first stage of the model is characterized by complete teacher-centeredness and a very restricted student role. During this stage, the teacher plays a strong and authoritative role. Moreover, the teacher is required, during this stage, to obtain a comprehensive understanding of their students' needs by investigating various aspects of their backgrounds, such as language learning history, proficiency levels, learning styles, language learning attitudes, and any limitations that might hinder their progress. The aim of gathering this information is to adapt the learning process and material in accordance with learners' needs (Nakata, 2010).

Moreover, it is the teacher's responsibility during this stage to promote students' motivation for learning by building a trusting relationship with them, highlighting the benefits of learning a foreign language, and assisting them in setting both short-term and long-term goals (Nakata, 2010). Furthermore, the teacher should focus on developing students' language competence and learning skills during this stage.

It is important to point out that many EFL teachers and learners may need to spend a considerable time at this stage before they are capable of moving to the next stage. This difficulty may arise from contextual restrictions in some study settings. In this case, teachers can make certain adaptations to this stage and extend it if the situation necessitates (Nakata, 2010)

b. Developmental Stage

This stage is characterized by several roles played by the teacher, which align with and extend the roles of the previous stage. The first role is to continue assessing and monitoring students' achievement levels and learning needs, and to provide constant support for learners. The second role involves creating opportunities for learners to use the English language for communicative purposes, like expressing themselves. The

teacher's third role during this stage is to build a trusting and collaborative relationship among the students.

Moreover, while the teacher's role in the previous stage involved motivating learners, the teacher's role during this stage includes empowering students to motivate themselves and become more independent. Furthermore, students are encouraged and supported by their teacher at this stage in formulating their immediate and future learning goals, developing self-monitoring skills, and engaging in reflective learning (Nakata, 2010).

Lastly, it is noteworthy that progression to the next stage can only take place after students have successfully achieved the aims of this phase (Nakata, 2010)

c. Self-regulated Stage

During the final stage of this model, the teacher's role shifts from being the primary authority to a facilitator, advisor, and guide in students' language learning. Having obtained a coherent understanding of learners' needs in the previous two stages, the teacher can create personalized and more effective teaching strategies while providing meaningful and constructive feedback for the students. Guided by the teacher's feedback, students develop the ability, at this stage, to monitor and assess their progress. As a result, students become more independent and capable of directing their learning. Simultaneously, the teacher minimizes the support provided to students and nurtures more self-directed learning opportunities. Finally, this stage involves exposing learners to challenging tasks to stimulate them and sustain their interest in learning (Nakata, 2010).

3. Scaffolding the *Role of Learners' Experiences*

Scaffolding the role of learners' experiences signifies supporting the incorporation of learners' experiences as a key element in the educational process. In this sense, this integration entails relating the new content to students' background knowledge and prior experiences, acknowledging the diversities in learners' backgrounds, and promoting experiential learning opportunities (Knowles et al., 2020).

The teacher can scaffold the application of this principle through various techniques. For example, to relate the new content to students' previous experiences, the teacher can provide a model, which involves the teacher sharing their own experiences about the topic first before asking the students to do the same. Alternatively, the teacher can provide students with prompts (e.g., questions) that enable them to activate their prior knowledge and experiences regarding the new content.

Alternatively, the teacher can divide students into groups and encourage them to share their previous experiences about the new content. The fact that students come from varied backgrounds and have different prior experiences means that applying this principle in groups entails the sharing of rich and diverse insights.

Furthermore, the application of this principle promotes experiential learning opportunities, which the teacher can encourage through practical applications of the new content. For example, after a lesson about translating songs, students can be encouraged to translate a familiar song. Likewise, these practical applications should be guided and supported by the teacher. Moreover, it is preferable to promote these applications within groups before asking students to do them individually, to build their confidence and encourage the sharing of skills and insights among students.

- **Suggestions for applying the *scaffolded role of learners' experiences* principle**

Emphasizing the role of learners' experiences can enhance the learning process in several ways. First, relating students' previous knowledge to the new content can raise their interest and deepen their understanding of it. Second, encouraging hands-on learning activities with the new material can increase students' engagement with it and consolidate their comprehension of it (Knowles et al., 2020). The following are some suggestions for the application of this principle:

- a. The teacher can highlight the role of learners' experiences by using them as a lead-in to any lesson or topic. For example, in a lesson about summer holidays, the teacher can encourage students to share stories of previous summer

holidays. One way to promote this is for the teacher to model, or give an example of a past summer holiday incident, and then ask students to share their experiences as a whole class. Alternatively, after demonstrating an example, the teacher can divide students into groups and encourage them to share their ideas. Applying this activity at the group level instead of the whole class can make students more at ease, and minimize their shyness or lack of confidence. Respectively, Knowles (1980) and Gibbons (2015) highlighted that encouraging learners to share their experiences in groups can significantly enhance the learning process.

- b. The teacher can tap into learners' experiences by using the concept mapping technique, which helps students visually connect their prior knowledge with the new content. For instance, when introducing a new topic such as global warming risks, students can be encouraged to work in groups and create a map that includes any ideas they associate with this concept (e.g., personal experiences with environmental concerns).

- c. After introducing new content, the teacher should allow students to engage with the material in practical and experiential terms, for example, through role-plays, group discussions, and skill-practicing exercises (Knowles, 1980). For instance, after a lesson on the function of apologizing, students can be encouraged to create and practice role-plays related to this function, drawing on previous experiences. Moreover, after a grammar lesson on the future tense, students can be encouraged to share their future work plans in groups.

To support students' engagement in these experiential activities, the teacher can use a variety of supporting techniques, such as graphic organizers, which help students organize their thoughts. For example, in the example above about the apologizing function, the teacher can encourage students to use charts to

input examples from their own lives. This can make the activity easier, more relevant, and engaging to the students. Moreover, for the future tense activity, the teacher can provide students with sentence frames, which include prompts like “in the future, I.....”. Sentence frames aim to support students in expressing their thoughts during discussions and become more confident in sharing their experiences while practicing their language skills.

- d. Finally, consolidating learners’ experiences and reinforcing learning through personal connection can be promoted following the completion of learning activities through reflective discussions. For example, after reading a text about shopping or traveling, students can be encouraged to discuss their previous experiences with this topic in groups. This technique can enable students to connect learning activities to their own lives while practicing their English language skills.

4. **Scaffolding the *Readiness to Learn***

Scaffolding the readiness to learn means supporting learners’ preparedness to engage with the learning content. Knowles et al. (2020) explained that students are ready to engage in and learn a certain content if it aligns with their developmental level and needs. Moreover, they argued that the effectiveness of teaching relies on the degree to which the learning content aligns with learners’ maturity level and requirements. On the other hand, if there is an inconsistency between the content and students’ readiness, which refers to when the content diverges from the learners’ current capabilities or needs, the teacher can employ various strategies to stimulate students’ readiness to learn (Knowles et al., 2020).

Teachers can stimulate students’ learning readiness through guided support, particularly when the content or tasks are challenging or above their current level. For example, when students are required to write essays using complex sentence structures, the teacher can write sentence starters on the board as a reference to support this application. In addition,

the teacher can allow students to consult the book and online resources while providing guidance.

Likewise, when working on challenging tasks, the teacher should allow students to work on them collaboratively before asking them to engage in similar tasks independently. Teamwork enables students to support one another, which stimulates their readiness to learn. For instance, after a literature lesson on literary analysis, students can be encouraged to work in groups to conduct a literary analysis of a poem. At the same time, the teacher can monitor and assist students in this process. When students demonstrate more competence in this area, they can be asked to conduct their literary analysis individually.

Finally, it is crucial during the application of this principle that teachers continuously assess learners' progress and needs to identify any changes that need to be addressed (Knowles et al., 2020). This can be done through formal assessments (i.e., exams) or informally (e.g., class discussions). Obtaining constant feedback on students' achievement levels enables teachers to adapt their teaching accordingly and facilitates students' willingness to engage with the content.

- **Suggestions for applying the *scaffolded readiness to learn* principle**

The application of this principle relies on aligning the material with students' current progress level and needs, while providing sufficient support and guidance for students when there is misalignment between the two, which is when students show signs of unreadiness to engage with the content. The following are suggestions for applying the scaffolded readiness to learn principles:

- a. In the case that the teacher observes a discrepancy between the assigned curriculum and the learners' current language learning level and needs, the teacher can provide supplementary information and/or material and activities to bridge the gap between the two. For example, when the teacher observes that the assigned reading material contains advanced grammatical structures that some or all

students might not be familiar with, the teacher can use a pre-reading activity that highlights this structure and its usage. This step can provide students with the prerequisite knowledge needed to tackle the reading material and stimulate their readiness to engage with the material.

- b. When assigning tasks or materials that are above the students' levels, to challenge them, there should be sufficient support from their teacher and peers to avoid demotivation or negative attitudes among the students. For example, when assigning speaking tasks that require advanced or new vocabulary, the teacher can provide ample support during the pre-speaking stage by providing vocabulary lists and prompts. Moreover, the level of teachers' support should depend on students' levels and needs, which the teacher should be familiar with through experience with them. With lower-level students, the teacher can offer more extensive scaffolding by breaking down the material into smaller, more manageable steps and providing additional explanations and examples.

In the same respect, it is important to assign challenging tasks at the group level before the individual level. For example, teachers can assign a group project where students must write a poem, before asking students to perform a similar task independently. By working in groups, students can be encouraged to research, collaborate, and teach each other during the preparation process.

- c. Another way for the teacher to stimulate students' readiness to learn is by encouraging peer teaching. For example, the teacher can ask higher-level students to focus on a language aspect that other students struggle with and give them plenty of time to research resources and plan how to teach it effectively. Once the higher-level students are prepared, and under the teacher's supervision, the teacher can divide the rest of the class into smaller groups and assign a higher-level student to each group to lead the teaching. This approach can empower higher-level students, while the other students are likely to feel more motivated and engaged when taught

by their peers. During this process, it is essential for the teacher to monitor and address any challenges that arise.

5. **Scaffolding the *Orientation to Learning***

Scaffolding the orientation to learning refers to supporting students in connecting the new knowledge to immediate real-life applications. Knowles et al. (2020) maintained that adults are more inclined towards problem-based and task-based learning that has direct applicability to their lives. The teacher can reinforce the practical applicability of the content by employing techniques that present the content as real-life situations or problems, such as case studies and group projects (Knowles et al., 2020).

To support learners' engagement in practical learning tasks and challenges, the teacher can divide the tasks into a sequence of smaller steps that are easier to tackle. At the same time, the teacher should help students by providing resources, depending on the challenges, such as modelling language use and providing vocabulary lists.

Furthermore, teachers can support the application of these principles through promoting teamwork where students can benefit from each other's problem-solving skills and tackle challenges cooperatively. It is recommended to assign roles within groups to ensure that each member contributes and practices their language skills.

Upon completing these tasks, students should be encouraged to reflect on their performance in groups to discuss aspects, including the language used, the challenges faced, and the strategies employed.

- **Suggestions for applying the *scaffolded orientation to learning* principle**

For the application of this principle, Knowles (1980) maintained that the best approach is to organize the learning experiences around problem areas rather than subjects. For example, he argued that adults will be more interested in joining a course entitled "Writing Better Business Letters" than one entitled "Composition I" because the course is presented

in the context of learners' practical concerns. The following are suggestions for applying the scaffolded orientation to learning principle:

- a. The teacher can highlight the applicability of the content to students' lives by communicating it to them at the beginning of each course, lesson, and activity. For example, in a listening and speaking lesson entitled "Summer Jobs", the teacher can explain and highlight on the board at the beginning of the lesson that the lesson aims to teach job-related vocabulary and encourage students to discuss their dream job. This method personalizes the content, raises students' interest in it, and enables them to see how the lesson content relates to their lives and future careers.

- b. One means through which the *orientation to learning* principle can be applied is through task-based learning activities. These activities focus students' attention on task completion rather than language forms per se, while learning the form is the byproduct of these types of activities (Harmer, 2014). Task-based learning activities can be implemented in three stages: the pre-task stage, the task cycle stage, and the language focus stage (Harmer, 2014). The following is an example suggested by the researcher that follows the stages of task-based learning as described by Harmer (2014):

- **Example of task-based learning**

This task requires students to give a brief presentation about a famous person of their choice.

During the **pre-task stage**, the teacher shows students examples of short biographies while discussing the typical content of biographies.

During the **task cycle stage**, the teacher divides students into pairs or groups and invites them to choose a figure to plan their presentation about. Students are encouraged to use the dictionary or seek the teacher's assistance while planning their presentations.

After planning is completed, students deliver their presentations to the class, without interruption from the teacher, as the main aim in this stage is to promote students' fluency rather than accuracy.

During the **language focus stage**, the teacher focuses on analyzing the language used by students in their presentations and addressing any language problems. Based on this assessment, the teacher may ask students to revise their presentations and deliver them again with the necessary adjustments. Harmer (2014) considers this repetition of tasks very beneficial for students' language practice.

- c. Another approach for applying the orientation to learning principle is problem-based learning (PBL). PBL is a learner-centered approach in which the learning process primarily involves students in solving problem-based activities situated in the framework of real-life challenges. These activities are designed by the teacher based on the course content. Within this context, the teacher plays the role of a facilitator who organizes students' collaborative work and assists students in the process of self and peer evaluation. The teacher also provides feedback to the students (Boud and Feletti, 1997, as cited in Othman & Shah, 2013).

Drawing on insights from Savery (2006), the researcher suggests the following example of problem-based learning, which could be applied in the *Teaching* Course, as it focuses on assessment and teaching skills.

- **Example of problem-based learning**

Problem Scenario

In a small town in eastern Libya, primary schools have been reporting poor English language learning outcomes among students, particularly in pronunciation. As a result, the schools have filed appeals to the Ministry of Education to address this problem and investigate the main causes. Accordingly, a group of English language graduates from the

city of Benghazi has been assigned to visit this village to investigate this issue and plan how to address it. As part of their visit, they will be asked to teach the students pronunciation daily for a week in an after-school session, lasting two hours.

Steps to Implement Problem-Based Learning

- **Introducing the case scenario**

The teacher introduces the scenario above to the students and informs them of the challenge they are required to address: examining the root cause of students' deficiency in pronunciation, and teaching them to address these deficiencies

- **Planning how to address the problem**

The teacher elaborates on the problem by highlighting the key issues that need solutions. The teacher divides students into groups and encourages them to brainstorm ideas to address the challenges identified in the first step.

- **Guided learning:**

The teacher provides support and guidance to learners as they collectively engage in problem-solving. The teacher can ask guiding questions to direct students' focus towards potential solutions, for example, what methods are effective for teaching pronunciation to young learners? During their teamwork, the teacher continues to monitor students to assist them when needed. After completing their work, each group can present their solutions to the whole class.

- **Evaluation and self-reflection**

During their presentations in the previous step, the teacher evaluates students' progress and provides feedback. Moreover, the teacher encourages students to engage in reflective discussions to highlight the strong ideas presented by the other groups and identify areas that need improvement.

6. Scaffolding Learners' *Motivation*

Scaffolding learners' motivation refers to fostering their internal willingness to learn. Andragogy highlighted the importance of motivation, whether external or internal, for successful learning. However, it particularly emphasized the significance of internal motivation. Furthermore, it linked adult learners' internal motivation to the provision of a learning environment that acknowledges their needs and preferences, which entails applying the five other principles of andragogy (Knowles et al., 2020). Similarly, Houde (2006), an educator in adult learning, noted that learners' motivation closely relates to the fulfillment of three essential needs. The first two involve the learners' need to feel self-directed and capable, as endorsed by andragogy's principles. The third is learners' need to feel socially involved and related to others, which aligns with the social constructivist's perspective. Thus, Houde's (2006) view on motivation merges the perspectives of andragogy with social constructivism, which mirrors the foundation of this dual-focused EFL learner-centered teaching model.

Accordingly, it is crucial to emphasize that throughout the principles of this model, the aim is to foster learners' autonomy and capability and to attend to their learning needs within a socially supported learning environment. That is to say, in each principle in this model, there is an emphasis on helping learners become more autonomous, actively involved, and accomplished, with the support of the teacher and peers. Framed from this perspective, it can be concluded that the principles of this model collectively aim to foster learners' internal motivation for learning.

Moreover, this model postulates that external motivators, such as positive feedback, can significantly influence learners' internal motivation. In other words, when learners receive reinforcement from their social learning environment, whether from teachers or peers, their feelings of self-reliance and competence are enhanced, which can increase their internal motivation for learning.

- **Suggestions for applying the *scaffolded motivation principle***

Analyzing motivation, the sixth principle of andragogy, from the perspective of andragogy, and Houde (2006) led to the conclusion that learners' motivation depends on addressing their needs through applying andragogy's five other principles (i.e., the need to know, learner's self-concept, role of learners' experiences, readiness to learn and orientation to learning) within a social framework. Notably, the principles of this dual-focused EFL learner-centered teaching model meet this criterion because they focus on addressing adult learners' needs with the support of their social learning environment (i.e., the teacher and peers) by integrating social constructivist theory into andragogy.

Correspondingly, the researcher's recommendation for applying the scaffolded motivation principles involves a reinforcement of and a summary of the application of the other principles of this model as follows:

- a. The learning environment should support students' recognition of the aims behind each course, lesson, and activity they engage in. Simultaneously, students should be allowed the opportunity to reflect on the relevance of these objectives. Understanding and validating the significance of the learning material can impact students' interest and involvement in it.
- b. The learning environment should gradually promote students' autonomy and capability. Adopting a guided, systematic, and progressive approach to increasing students' independence can foster their motivation by fulfilling their need for self-fulfillment in a gradual and supported manner.
- c. The learning environment should acknowledge and emphasize students' backgrounds and previous experiences, while providing sufficient opportunities for new experiential learning and embracing diverse perspectives among students. Demonstrating to students that each of them matters and promoting the collective creation of new experiences through learning that

embraces their diversity can foster a sense of belonging and motivation among them.

- d. The learning environment should involve content that aligns with students' immediate development and needs, while providing sufficient support for them to tackle challenging learning. Paralleling the learning content with students' levels and needs, while facilitating their engagement with content that diverges slightly from this parallel, can create a balance that ensures students are interested in the content without discouraging them.
- e. The learning environment should offer sufficient opportunities for students to apply what they learn practically in tasks that have direct relevance and applicability to students' lives, and equip learners with the necessary support to tackle these tasks. Experiencing how the new knowledge helps them solve problems can instill a sense of purpose, which fuels their motivation to learn and succeed.
- f. The learning environment should promote open communication between the teacher and students. Furthermore, it should acknowledge students' efforts and achievements, and endorse their strengths and progress. Providing an encouraging learning environment in which students feel they are heard, valued, and respected can positively influence their willingness to learn.
- g. Finally, the learning environment should involve adequate opportunities for students to participate in collaborative learning. Regardless of the outcomes of cooperative tasks (i.e., whether success or failure), humans feel accomplished when they are socially involved and connected with others (Reis et al., 2000, as cited in Houde, 2006). Thus, it is argued that learner collaboration has a

direct link to enhanced motivation (Dörnyei & Murphey, 2003; Nakata, 2006; Ushioda, 2003, as cited in Nakata, 2010).

This section presented the dual-focused EFL learner-centered teaching model that aims to facilitate the application of learner-centered teaching at the Faculty of Language, University of Benghazi. As explained above, the model is based on integrating two theories: social constructivist theory and andragogy. Particularly, it involves scaffolding the application of the six principles of andragogy within a social environment supported by the teacher and students, and relies on using language as a tool and object for learning. Each principle was defined and explained, with some recommendations provided for its practical application in the classroom. Figure 8 below summarizes the above discussion. It illustrates the principles of the model and the suggestions for their application.



Figure 8: Summary of the Principles and Application of the Dual-focused EFL Learner Centered Teaching Model

6.5 Summary of Chapter

This chapter presented a dual-focused EFL learner-centered teaching model that is the product of a thorough analysis of the applicability of andragogy's learner-centered principles in this study environment. The chapter began by providing an introduction to set the context for the model, which was followed by an explanation of the model's rationale and theoretical basis. Following that, the model was introduced along with details of its key principles and practical suggestions for its application.

Chapter Seven: Conclusion and Recommendations

7.0 Introduction

This final chapter concludes this dissertation by providing an overview of the entire study. It begins by summarizing the key elements of the study, such as its main objectives, theoretical framework, research approach, and key findings. It also outlines the main contributions the study makes to the field of English language teaching, explains the limitations encountered during the research, and presents recommendations for faculty officials, teachers, students, and future researchers.

7.1 Summary of the Study

This case study primarily investigated the potential for applying a learner-centered English language teaching approach at the Faculty of Languages, University of Benghazi. The investigation was mainly framed in light of the theory of andragogy, an adult learner-centered theory developed by Malcolm Knowles and comprising six key assumptions: the need to know, the learners' self-concept, the role of learners' experiences, readiness to learn, orientation to learning, and motivation (Knowles et al., 2020).

The selection of andragogy as the theoretical framework of this study was based on three main reasons. First, andragogy is a learner-centered theory that was originally developed with a particular emphasis on adult learners, their learning needs, and the need for a specific teaching approach that caters to these needs. Similarly, this study was conducted with a special focus on learner-centered teaching in the context of the Faculty of Languages, where students are adults. This factor made andragogy relevant for investigation in this context.

The second reason for selecting andragogy in this study was that it adopts a comprehensive approach to analyzing adult learners' needs, which includes various aspects, such as the focus on the relevance of learning, learners' self-concept, their previous experiences, their readiness for learning, their inclination towards practical learning, and their motivation.

This inclusiveness represents a unique lens through which learner-centered teaching can be investigated in this study.

Third, to the best of the researcher's knowledge, the literature review demonstrates limited research regarding andragogy in the Libyan EFL context. This observation reinforced the selection of andragogy for examination in this study.

Collectively, the above three factors contributed to adopting andragogy as the guiding framework of this study. Thus, this study aimed to investigate the learner-centered English language teaching approach, as framed from the perspective of andragogy, at the Faculty of Languages, University of Benghazi.

The investigation necessitated examining two areas. The first was whether the learner-centered approach was currently applied by English language instructors at the faculty or not, and to measure the extent of its application or lack of implementation. The second was to explore the instructors' perceptions of this approach. These two areas were the basis for formulating the two main research questions in this study.

Addressing the two research questions was planned in accordance with the theory of andragogy, which contributed to the selection of the research approach, informed the choice of research methods, and guided the analysis and interpretation of the findings. Respectively, a mixed-methods research approach was employed to address the two research questions in two stages.

The first stage was quantitative and aimed to answer the first question (i.e., to measure the extent of instructors' application of learner-centered teaching) using the Principles of Adult Learning Scale (PALS). This questionnaire was developed by Conti (1978) to assess adult instructors' teaching styles (i.e., teacher-centered or learner-centered) and the degree of commitment instructors have to their teaching style. PALS is regarded as a reliable tool to assess instructors' application of andragogy's principles (Knowles et al., 2020). Thus, it was selected to gather data in the first stage of this study. This stage involved the

participation of forty-eight English language instructors from the faculty and revealed that the instructors did not engage in andragogy's learner-centered teaching practices. Rather, the instructors primarily and strongly followed a pedagogical, teacher-centered approach.

Consequently, the second research stage aimed to answer the second research question (i.e., to examine instructors' perceptions of learner-centered teaching) qualitatively. Respectively, interviews were conducted with ten English language instructors who previously participated in the first stage and responded to PALS. The interview questions were based on andragogy's principles and aimed to explore the teachers' underlying assumptions that influenced their teaching practices. The findings from the interview uncovered four key aspects in teachers' perceptions of learner-centered teaching. These involved the teachers' definitions, practices, perceived advantages, and challenges of the learner-centered teaching approach.

First, English language instructors in this study defined learner-centered teaching as an active learning approach that caters to learners' needs and interests. However, the instructors maintained that their context requires a balanced teacher-learner-centered approach where teachers maintain a strong control over directing the educational process and determining the extent of learners' freedom and contribution to learning.

Second, the findings from the second stage validated the ones obtained from the first by confirming that the English language instructors in this study did not implement learner-centered teaching principles in their classrooms.

Third, the English language instructors had positive perceptions of learner-centered teaching. Particularly, the instructors explained that it contributes to developing students' skills and autonomy, enhancing their learning achievements, promoting learner collaboration, and increasing students' motivation. Nonetheless, the instructors noted that their reported advantages were based on their beliefs and occasional application of these principles, but they were not based on a consistent application approach.

Fourth, the instructors outlined three main challenges to implementing learner-centered teaching, which pertained to students, teachers, and the faculty policy. The student-related challenges primarily stemmed from students' resistance to the learner-centered approach, resulting from their familiarity with and preference for conventional teacher-centered teaching, and their limited English language competence, which conflicts with the interactive nature of the approach. The teacher-related obstacles were related to the teachers' reluctance to implement learner-centered teaching due to their preference for their established roles in teacher-centered classes and the convenience of this conventional approach, especially in their classes, which are characterized by varying students' levels and weak English language competence. Finally, the faculty policy challenges involved an enforced curriculum, limited instructional time, overcrowded classrooms, and insufficient teacher training and facilities.

As established earlier, the chief aim of this study was to investigate the applicability of andragogy's learner-centered perspective at the Faculty of Languages, University of Benghazi. Thus, the findings from the two research stages were interpreted through the lens of andragogy. The interpretation revealed both consistencies and discrepancies between the study findings and the assumptions on which andragogy is rooted.

Mainly, the instructors demonstrated a solid theoretical basis concerning the assumptions and benefits of learner-centered teaching, which aligned with andragogy's key principles. Nonetheless, the instructors preferred a balanced teacher-learner-centered approach characterized by stronger teacher support and a more limited degree of learner involvement. On the other hand, andragogy advocated for a higher degree of learner autonomy and engagement. Moreover, the instructors' practices were mainly and strongly teacher-centered. Furthermore, the instructors placed more emphasis on learner collaboration as a key benefit of learner-centered teaching. On the other hand, andragogy was more focused on individualistic learning aspects and addressed learner collaboration less explicitly.

Based on the interpretations of the findings of this study in light of andragogy, the researcher concluded that the potential application of andragogy's principles at the Faculty of Languages is limited unless its principles are adapted to the needs of this study environment. Accordingly, the researcher proposed incorporating an additional theory into andragogy to address the limitations identified in this study setting. Particularly, the researcher postulated that Vygotsky's social constructivist theory constitutes principles that complement those of andragogy, and together they can meet the requirements of this specific research setting and facilitate the implementation of an andragogy-based learner-centered teaching approach at the Faculty of Languages, University of Benghazi.

The social constructivist theory was particularly selected for integration with andragogy for several reasons. First, it is based on a gradual implementation approach to learner-centered teaching, which balances teachers' strong support and authority with learners' active involvement. Second, the social constructivist theory places particular importance on the role of collaborative and supported learning between the teacher and learners. Third, social constructivist theory has a great influence on the field of language teaching and learning due to its emphasis on the use of language as both a means and a target of learning. These principles collectively meet the criteria needed to address the limitations of applying andragogy at the Faculty of Languages, which include a balanced teacher-guided and supported learner-centered approach, providing additional support through promoting collaboration among learners, and focusing on the use of the English language as the medium for learning and its main focus.

Consequently, the researcher proposed a dual-focused EFL learner-centered teaching model that incorporates social constructivist theory into andragogy theory to make it applicable at the Faculty of Languages. A central element in this model is the role of scaffolding the application of andragogy's six principles within a socially interactive environment supported by the teacher and peers, where language serves as the tool for interaction within this environment. The main aim of the model is to enable a smooth transition from a teacher-centered to a learner-centered teaching environment at the Faculty of Languages, University of Benghazi.

7.2 Contribution to Knowledge

The primary aim of this study was to investigate learner-centered English language teaching at the Faculty of Languages, University of Benghazi, by adopting the framework of andragogy. In doing so, this research has made several contributions to the advancement of knowledge in the field of English language teaching. These contributions can be considered at both global and local levels as they offer perspectives that extend previous studies, fill a notable gap in the literature, and inform policy, teaching practices, and future research. This section aims to highlight these contributions.

At the global level, this study builds on similar studies that examined learner-centered teaching through andragogy theory in the EFL setting (e.g., Kovačević, 2011; Lele, 2020; López & Odón, 2024; Wang & Storey, 2015). These studies used a quantitative research method (i.e., PALS) to examine adult instructors' application of andragogy's principles in English language teaching. The present study similarly used PALS for the same purpose. Nevertheless, this study did not merely rely on the statistical results of PALS in interpreting the instructors' practices concerning andragogy. Rather, the researcher of this study conducted a further and novel descriptive analysis to check the degree to which PALS accurately assesses instructors' application of andragogy principles. Particularly, the researcher compared the relationship between PALS' seven factors and andragogy's six principles. The analysis provided further evidence of the effectiveness of PALS as a measure of the andragogical principles and uncovered more details about the instructors' teaching practices concerning andragogy.

In this respect, it is important to restate that Knowles et al. (2020) had already asserted that PALS can effectively measure the principles of andragogy. Nonetheless, the researcher sought to conduct her descriptive analysis of the relationship between PALS and andragogy to further confirm the relationship between PALS and andragogy, to reinforce the credibility of the findings, and to clarify the instructors' practices.

Furthermore, to the best of the researcher's knowledge, the majority of previous global research that examined andragogy relied on quantitative research methods (e.g.,

Kovačević, 2011; Lele, 2020; Wang & Storey, 2015). Consequently, these researchers, in addition to Purwati et al. (2022), encouraged future researchers to employ a qualitative approach to elaborate on the quantitative research findings of PALS. Correspondingly, this study advanced these previous ones by employing a qualitative research approach in addition to the quantitative one. In doing so, the study responded to the researchers' recommendation by complementing and explaining the findings from PALS through examining teachers' underlying assumptions that contributed to the classification of their teaching approach. In addition, researchers (e.g., Purwati et al., 2022) recommended investigating the practical application of andragogy in the EFL context. By proposing a model for implementing andragogy in this study setting, this research offered new insights for the practical application of andragogy in the EFL context.

At the local level (i.e., the Libyan EFL context), this study sheds light on the current EFL teaching practices at the Faculty of Languages, which is a prominent platform for teaching and learning English in the Libyan EFL context. Moreover, the study investigated the applicability of the learner-centered teaching approach in this setting, which is a highly endorsed approach by many Libyan EFL researchers (e.g., Abushina, 2017; AlManafi et al., 2023; El Mezughi, 2021; Masaud, 2023; Omar, 2020). Moreover, it assessed the extent to which teachers implement the learner-centered teaching approach and examined their perceptions about it

Especially, this study contributes to knowledge in the local context by investigating the learner-centered framework of andragogy. Although some work may exist, the researcher's literature reviews suggest that research employing andragogy in the Libyan EFL context remains scarce. This study focused specifically on andragogy and investigated its implementation at the Faculty of Languages by adopting a comprehensive mixed-methods research approach to obtain and generate detailed insights into the topic under investigation.

In addition, this study introduces a novel and context-specific model for implementing the learner-centered teaching approach at the Faculty of Languages, University of Benghazi.

This model integrates two theories to address the limitations identified in the study setting by promoting a gradual transition from the dominant teacher-centered to the learner-centered teaching approach. Although the findings from this study are limited to its context and might not be generalizable, the researcher recommends applying her proposed dual-focused model in other higher education EFL settings. This recommendation is based on the fact that there are shared cultural and contextual factors among various Libyan educational settings, which increases the potential for these study findings to be relevant in other settings too.

Finally, this study offers valuable insights that can inform educational policies, classroom practices, and future research, particularly in the EFL higher education context. That is to say, the study highlighted challenges of implementing learner-centered teaching that stemmed from the institution's policy (e.g., restrictions on choice of curriculum, limited time, and absence of teacher training). These observations could encourage the Faculty of Languages and other higher education institutions to reconsider their policy and make initiatives to facilitate the implementation of innovative teaching approaches, such as developing targeted professional-development opportunities.

At the level of classroom practices, the model proposed in this study could advance the field by encouraging the application of learner-centered teaching in a manner that accommodates the Libyan cultural and social setting and meets the needs of both teachers and students. Finally, the model recommended by the researcher of this study could inform future research, which could investigate its efficiency and limitations in practice.

7.3 Limitations of the Study

Although the study makes valuable contributions, its findings and interpretation should be evaluated with awareness of its limitations, which this section aims to outline to provide transparency and inform future research. These limitations can be classified into four types, which are related to issues concerning the generalizability of findings, sampling issues, literature review, and the proposed model in this study.

The first limitation is about the generalizability of the findings from this study. This study is limited to English language teachers at the Faculty of Languages, University of Benghazi. Hence, the results may not be generalizable to English teachers in other Libyan higher education settings.

The second limitation concerns the sampling process during the first stage (i.e., quantitative); the researcher aimed to include all English language lecturers at the faculty (i.e., 53). However, five lecturers declined participation, which resulted in a final sample of 48. Despite the sufficiency of this sample, the inclusion of the whole population would have strengthened the findings of this study.

The third limitation of this research was locating relevant literature, both globally and locally. First, there were limited global studies that examined EFL teachers' application of andragogy qualitatively. This gap posed a challenge for the researcher in relating to and building on previous studies. As a result, there was a limited number of studies that were included in the literature review, and they mostly examined andragogy quantitatively.

Locally, the researcher was not able to find any related studies that examined andragogy in the EFL context. As a result, it was difficult for the researcher to compare the findings of this study with previous Libyan studies. Respectively, all the Libyan studies referenced in the literature examined learner-centered teaching in general or through different theoretical frameworks, but not from the perspective of andragogy per se. Nevertheless, there are common elements shared by the various perspectives on learner-centered teaching, as was noted in the literature review chapter. This fact reinforced the comparison of this study's findings with those of previous Libyan studies, despite the inconsistency in the adopted frameworks.

Finally, the last limitation pertains to the model proposed in this study. Despite its solid theoretical base that is informed by this study's findings and the work of prominent scholars in the field, the efficacy of the model is yet to be tested. That is, the effectiveness

of the model cannot be taken for granted unless it is put through empirical testing in future research.

7.4 Recommendations

Based on the findings, conclusions, contributions, and limitations of this study, this section proposes several recommendations, which are informed by insights from scholars in the field and the researcher's experience in English language teaching. These recommendations can be discussed in four respects: those targeted at faculty officials, teachers, learners, and future researchers.

- **Recommendations for Faculty Officials**

1. To facilitate the application of learner-centered teaching, decision makers at the faculty, such as the dean and department heads, should offer teacher training programs and workshops. These initiatives are essential in educating and equipping teachers with the necessary skills to apply contemporary and learner-centered teaching methods effectively.
2. Faculty officials are advised to adapt their policy to permit the involvement of teachers in the decision-making process regarding curriculum selection, assessment methods, and teaching approaches. Because teachers are more directly involved with their students, they are more aware of their needs and interests. Thus, when faculty officials collaborate with teachers, they can improve the efficiency of addressing the needs and interests of the students.
3. It is recommended that the faculty reconsider its policy regarding the duration of the term and the number and duration of lectures offered throughout the term. This adjustment is crucial if the faculty were to encourage the application of learner-centered teaching, which requires additional time, as opposed to traditional teaching approaches.

4. The implementation of learner-centered teaching necessitates that the faculty reduce the number of students per class. Overcrowded classrooms can hinder the teacher's ability to provide individualized attention and manage learner-centered activities, which ultimately negatively impacts the quality of teaching (O'Sullivan, 2004).
5. It is strongly emphasized that decision makers at the faculty ensure the reliability of the assessment of new students before they are admitted into the English Program. Furthermore, it is of crucial importance that decision makers only permit the admission of students who possess the prerequisite language knowledge and skills. The inclusion of students with no prior background in the language, or those who have notably deficient levels, will pose challenges for teachers in implementing learner-centered teaching.
6. It is recommended that the faculty provide more facilities for teachers, such as smart boards and a strong and accessible internet connection, to facilitate the implementation of learner-centered teaching methods.
7. The faculty is recommended to conduct continuous evaluations of teachers' practices to identify challenges and areas that need improvement.

- **Recommendations for Teachers**

1. Teachers are strongly advised to employ learner-centered teaching practices that encourage learners' involvement and participation. Moreover, teachers need to refrain from assuming that these practices undermine their authority. Rather, they ought to recognize that their roles in learner-centered teaching is strengthened, rather than undermined. As Nunan (2013) notes, implementing learner-centered methods places a vital responsibility on teachers to guide, facilitate, and support students throughout the learning process.

2. Teachers must recognize that the successful implementation of learner-centered teaching requires specific skills from the teacher (Nunan, 2013; O’Sullivan, 2004). Accordingly, teachers must take responsibility for seeking opportunities for their professional development, such as enrolling in training programs to enhance their teaching practices.
3. Teachers are urged to be mindful of their influence on promoting students’ motivation, which has a key role in successful learning. Teachers can motivate their students by clarifying the value of the learning content and its relevance to students’ goals (Felder & Brent, 2006; Knowles et al., 2020). In addition, teachers can motivate students by embracing their opinions, involving them in suitable decision-making processes, and integrating their prior experiences into the learning process. Furthermore, teachers should ensure that the content presented to the students aligns with their level and needs, and that it has direct applicability in their lives (Knowles et al., 2020).
4. Teachers are advised to be resourceful when faced with challenges of implementing learner-centered teaching. For example, in the case where the curriculum does not involve practical applications or when its content seems irrelevant to students, teachers are recommended to supplement it with extra materials or activities, which can easily be accessed through online sources. It is argued that exposing students to relevant and hands-on activities can significantly enhance the value of learning for them (Knowles et al., 2020; Nunan, 2013).
5. Teachers are encouraged to focus class time on learner-centered activities (e.g., discussion, practical activities), while assigning other activities for students to complete at home (e.g., writing), if feasible, in order to manage time limitations in applying learner-centered teaching (Felder & Brent, 2006; Jones, 2007).

6. Finally, teachers must continuously assess their teaching practices to identify their strengths as well as the areas that need refinement. One way to achieve this is by engaging in reflective practices with their colleagues, where they share best practices, resources, and discuss challenges. Moreover, teachers can survey students about their learning and teaching preferences.

- **Recommendations for Students**

1. Students must be mindful that they are directly responsible for their learning outcomes, and that it does not solely rely on the teachers. Therefore, students must take more accountability for their learning and play a more active role. Moreover, they must acknowledge that passive learning attitudes can potentially limit their progress and future career opportunities.
2. Students ought to recognize that language learning necessitates interactive and meaningful engagement with the target language. Therefore, they should continuously participate in active, practical, and collaborative class activities and discussions.
3. Students should pursue additional learning opportunities beyond the classroom to accelerate and advance their language knowledge and skills. This can be achieved by communicating with native speakers, if feasible, or with their peers using the target language. Moreover, students should continuously be exposed to the language in authentic contexts, such as the media.
4. Students should cooperate with their teachers by expressing their preferences regarding learning style and teaching methods. Such input can help teachers refine their practices in accordance with students' needs.

- **Recommendations for Future Research**

1. Since this research examined andragogy from the teachers' perspectives, future researchers are advised to investigate andragogy from the students' perspectives. Examining students' views and comparing them with those of the teachers can result in valuable insights that significantly contribute to enhancing the educational process.
2. Future researchers are advised to investigate the attitudes regarding the proposed dual-focused EFL learner-centered teaching model in this study, from the perspectives of the same teachers in this study setting. Because these teachers' views informed the development of this model, their assessment of it could be highly valuable.
3. It is highly recommended that future researchers conduct experimental research to apply the model proposed in this study and investigate the extent to which it has positive or negative effects on students' English language learning. Furthermore, it is recommended that researchers use classroom observation to document what actually happens inside the classroom and how both students and teachers react to this model.
4. There is a need for more research that examines andragogy's application and perceptions in other EFL Libyan higher education contexts to enable comparison with this study and offer a broader perspective on teaching practices.

7.5 Summary of Chapter

This chapter provided an inclusive conclusion to this study by revising its main objectives, theoretical framework, research approach, and findings. Furthermore, the chapter highlighted the contributions of this study, which were described at the international and

local levels, as well as informed policy, practices, and research in the Libyan EFL higher education context. In addition to highlighting these contributions, the chapter acknowledged the limitations of the study to enhance the trustworthiness and interpretations of the findings. These were related to the generalizability, sampling, literature, and proposed model in this study. Finally, the chapter outlined several recommendations that were aimed at faculty officials, teachers, students, and future researchers.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Principles of Adult Learning Scale (PALS) Developed by Gary J. Conti

DIRECTIONS

The following survey contains several things that a teacher of adults might do in a classroom. You may personally find some of them desirable and find others undesirable. For each item, please respond to the way you **most frequently practice** the action described in the item. Your choices are *Always*, *Almost Always*, *Often*, *Seldom*, *Almost Never*, and *Never*. If the item **does not apply** to you, circle never.

<i>Always</i>	<i>Almost Always</i>	<i>Often</i>	<i>Seldom</i>	<i>Almost Never</i>	<i>Never</i>
A	AA	O	S	AN	N

Question/Item	Response Category
1. I allow students to participate in developing the criteria for evaluating their performance in class.	A AA O S AN N
2. I use disciplinary action when it is needed.	A AA O S AN N
3. I allow older students more time to complete assignments when they need it.	A AA O S AN N
4. I encourage students to adopt middle class values.	A AA O S AN N
5. I help students diagnose the gaps between their goals and their present level of performance.	A AA O S AN N
6. I provide knowledge rather than serve as a resource person.	A AA O S AN N

7. I stick to the instructional objectives that I write at the beginning of a program.	A AA O S AN N
8. I participate in the informal counseling of students.	A AA O S AN N
9. I use lecturing as the best method for presenting my subject material to adult students.	A AA O S AN N
10. I arrange the classroom so that it is easy for students to interact.	A AA O S AN N
11. I determine the educational objectives for each of my students.	A AA O S AN N
12. I plan units which differ widely as possible from my students' socio-economic backgrounds.	A AA O S AN N
13. I get a student to motivate himself/herself by confronting him/her in the presence of classmates during group discussions.	A AA O S AN N
14. I plan learning episodes to take into account my students' prior experiences.	A AA O S AN N
15. I allow students to participate in making decisions about the topics that will be covered in class.	A AA O S AN N
16. I use one basic teaching method because I have found that most adults have a similar style of learning.	A AA O S AN N
17. I use different techniques depending on the students being taught.	A AA O S AN N
18. I encourage dialogue among my students.	A AA O S AN N
19. I use written tests to assess the degree of academic growth rather than to indicate new directions for learning.	A AA O S AN N
20. I utilize the many competencies that most adults already possess to achieve educational objectives.	A AA O S AN N

21. I use what history has proven that adults need to learn as my chief criteria for planning learning episodes.	A AA O S AN N
22. I accept errors as a natural part of the learning process.	A AA O S AN N
23. I have individual conferences to help students identify their educational needs.	A AA O S AN N
24. I let each student work at his/her own rate regardless of the amount of time it takes him/her to learn a new concept.	A AA O S AN N
25. I help my students develop short-range as well as long-range objectives.	A AA O S AN N
26. I maintain a well-disciplined classroom to reduce interference to learning.	A AA O S AN N
27. I avoid discussion of controversial subjects that involve value judgments.	A AA O S AN N
28. I allow my students to take periodic breaks during class.	A AA O S AN N
29. I use methods that foster quiet, productive desk work.	A AA O S AN N

Question/Item	Response Category
30. I use tests as my chief method of evaluating students.	A AA O S AN N
31. I plan activities that will encourage each student's growth from dependence on others to greater independence.	A AA O S AN N
32. I gear my instructional objectives to match the individual abilities and needs of the students.	A AA O S AN N

33. I avoid issues that relate to the student's concept of himself/herself.	A AA O S AN N
34. I encourage my students to ask questions about the nature of their society.	A AA O S AN N
35. I allow a student's motives for participating in continuing education to be a major determinant in the planning of learning objectives.	A AA O S AN N
36. I have my students identify their own problems that need to be solved.	A AA O S AN N
37. I give all my students in my class the same assignment on a given topic.	A AA O S AN N
38. I use materials that were originally designed for students in elementary and secondary schools.	A AA O S AN N
39. I organize adult learning episodes according to the problems that my students encounter in everyday life.	A AA O S AN N
40. I measure a student's long term educational growth by comparing his/her total achievement in class to his/her expected performance as measured by national norms from standardized tests.	A AA O S AN N
41. I encourage competition among my students.	A AA O S AN N
42. I use different materials with different students.	A AA O S AN N
43. I help students relate new learning to their prior experiences.	A AA O S AN N
44. I teach units about problems of everyday living.	A AA O S AN N

<i>Always</i>	<i>Almost Always</i>	<i>Often</i>	<i>Seldom</i>	<i>Almost Never</i>	<i>Never</i>
A	AA	O	S	AN	N

Appendix B: Participation Information Sheet-PALS

Part One-Introduction

Thank you for agreeing to participate in the first stage of this study aimed at examining English language instructors' practices and perceptions regarding learner-centered teaching.

Questionnaire Aim and Output

The questionnaire aims to assess the teaching styles of English language instructors at the faculty in terms of two classifications: teacher-centered and learner-centered teaching styles. The results of the questionnaire will be published in the researcher's Ph.D. dissertation, and they will be used to contribute to understanding prevalent teaching practices and inform future reform initiatives and research.

Questionnaire Layout

The questionnaire used at this stage of the study is the Principles of Adult Learning Scales (PALS), which was developed by Gary Conti (1978) during his doctoral program. PALS aims to identify the teaching practices of educators in terms of two categories: teacher-centered or learner-centered teaching styles. It is administered on a six-point Likert-type scale with positive and negative items. You will be asked to reflect on your teaching practices and preferences by rating the frequency with which you practice actions outlined in each of the 44 items on the PALS. The questionnaire will be available online to make it more convenient for you to answer. This can be conducted on the phone or at any computer with access to the internet. It should take no longer than 15 minutes to complete.

Who Can Take Part?

The researcher is looking for responses from all English language instructors at the Faculty of Languages, University of Benghazi.

Do I have to Take Part?

No, participation is completely voluntary. If you decide to take part and change your mind later, you can contact the researcher. There will be no consequences for this decision

Your Feedback Matters:

Your answers are significant in providing a picture of current teaching practices at the Faculty of Languages. Therefore, I kindly encourage you to share your answers with careful thought and consideration.

Confidentiality:

Your identity will be kept anonymous, for which only the researcher will have access. Your responses will be used for research purposes only.

Consent

Giving consent means you fully understand what the study is about and what taking part involves for you.

Would you like to take part?

If you are interested in taking part, please sign below.

.....

Nisreen Salah Elfeitouri
Ph.D. Researcher
Faculty of Languages
University of Benghazi
Libya

Part Two – Participant Information

1. Name:
.....

2. Gender:
 - Female
 - Male

3. Year of Teaching Experience:
 - Less than 2 years
 - Between 2 and 5 years
 - Between 5 and 10 years
 - More than 10 years

Appendix C: Interview Questions

The following interview questions are designed to gather insights into participants' perceptions of learner-centered teaching.

1. Are you familiar with the learner-centered approach? If so, how would you define it? could you share your understanding of it?
2. When you meet your students at the beginning of the term, how do you set the stage for what they can expect from the course? Do you touch on any specific objectives?
3. How do students usually respond after knowing the learning objectives?
4. Do you face difficulties in communicating the learning objectives to students? explain.
5. How do you feel about encouraging learner involvement/ responsibility/ autonomy?
6. How do you encourage involvement/responsibility/autonomy among your students?
7. What challenges do you face in this process?
8. How do you feel about addressing/discussing students' backgrounds / experiences in the classroom?
9. Do you incorporate/address the students' personal experiences into your teaching?
10. How do students respond to this approach?
11. What challenges do you face in this process?
12. How do you ensure/determine whether all students are ready to learn specific topics or skills?
13. When you notice that there is a gap in knowledge or students seem not ready to learn the content you are presenting, what methods do you use to bridge that gap in knowledge?
14. What challenges do you face in this regard?
15. How/ do you provide opportunities for students to apply what they learned during the class practically?

16. What specific strategies did you use to facilitate this real-life application, and how do students respond?
17. What challenges do you face in this process?
18. Reflecting on your teaching experience, how would you describe your students' motivation? do you observe any signs of motivation in your students?
19. Do you believe that your students are motivated to learn?
20. What factors within the teaching environment do you believe influence students' internal motivation?
21. Are there any strategies that you use to enhance students' motivation?

Appendix D: Participation Information Sheet-Interviews

Part Two-Introduction

Thank you for agreeing to take part in this second stage of this research aimed at examining English language teachers' practices and perceptions of learner-centered teaching.

Interview Aim and Output

The interview aims to examine English language teachers' beliefs, attitudes, and practices regarding the learner-centered teaching approach. The researcher intends to use the information gained from the interviews in her Ph.D. dissertation to reflect on teachers' perceptions and propose future recommendations for enhancing the teaching environment at the Faculty of Languages, University of Benghazi.

Interview Layout

The interview will consist of several questions that examine teachers' perceptions of learner-centered teaching. You may choose to engage in the interview face-to-face or online, based on your preference. The interview will take from 30 to 45 minutes.

Who Can Take Part?

The researcher is looking to interview English language instructors who previously responded to the PALS questionnaire and who have a minimum of five years of teaching experience at the Faculty of Languages and are familiar with this context.

Do I Have to Take Part?

No, Participation is completely voluntary. If you agree to participate now and change your mind later, you can withdraw from the interview at any time, and you will face no consequences for this action.

Your Feedback Matters

The information you share can be used to improve teaching practices and address contextual challenges at the Faculty of Languages. Therefore, the researcher kindly encourages you to pay considerable thought and consideration to your answers.

Confidentiality:

Your identity will be kept anonymous, for which only the researcher will have access. Your responses will be used for research purposes only.

Consent

Giving consent means you fully understand what the study is about and what taking part involves for you.

Would you like to take part?

If you are interested in taking part, please sign below.

.....

Nisreen Salah Elfeitouri

Ph.D. Researcher

Faculty of Languages

University of Benghazi

Libya

التحقق من تدريس اللغة الانجليزية المرتكز علي المتعلم في كلية اللغات بجامعة بنغازي : نحو نموذج مزدوج
للتنفيذ

اعداد

أ.نسرين صلاح جابر الفيتوري

تحت اشراف

د. هناء عبد الواحد البديري

الملخص

تلعب طريقة تدريس المعلم دورًا حاسمًا في التأثير على إنجازات الطلاب في التعلم. تصنف طرق التدريس عمومًا إلى نوعين رئيسيين: (1) طرق التدريس التي تركز على المعلم، والتي عادة ما تجعل المعلم هو المدير الرئيسي للعملية التعليمية، بينما يُتوقع من الطلاب استقبال المعلومات المقدمة من المعلم وحفظها حفظًا سلبيًا، و(2) طرق التدريس التي تركز على المتعلم، والتي تؤكد على مشاركة المتعلمين ومسؤوليتهم واحتياجاتهم وتجاربهم. تدعم نتائج الأبحاث في السياقات الدولية والمحلية التدريس المتمركز حول المتعلم وتبرز تأثيره في تحسين نتائج التعلم، وخاصة في تعلم اللغات.

وبناءً عليه، واستنادًا إلى نظرية تعليم البالغين، تناولت هذه الدراسة إمكانية تنفيذ نهج تعليم لغة إنجليزية مركّز على المتعلم في كلية اللغات بجامعة بنغازي. لتحقيق هذا الهدف، كان من الضروري فحص مدى دمج مدرسي اللغة الإنجليزية حاليًا لممارسات تعليم البالغين الموجهة نحو المتعلم في فصولهم الدراسية واستكشاف آرائهم حولها. بناءً على ذلك، أُجري البحث على مرحلتين. تضمنت المرحلة الأولى 48 مدرسًا للغة الإنجليزية وركزت على تقييم تنفيذهم لمبادئ نظرية تعليم البالغين الموجه نحو المتعلم باستخدام مقياس مبادئ التعلم للبالغين (PALS).

أظهرت النتائج عدم وجود أدلة على ممارسة مبادئ نظرية تعليم البالغين الموجه نحو المتعلم بين المعلمين. بدلاً من ذلك، كان المعلمون ملتزمين بشدة بالنهج التربوي الذي يركز على المعلم. وبعد ذلك، كانت المرحلة الثانية من الدراسة تهدف إلى استكشاف تصورات المدربين لمبادئ نظرية تعليم البالغين من خلال مقابلات شبه منظمة مع عشرة معلمين. كشفت النتائج عن معرفة نظرية قوية لدى المعلمين بمفهوم وفوائد مبادئ نظرية تعليم البالغين. ومع ذلك، كانت ممارسات المدربين تركز على المعلم بسبب عدة قيود في بيئتهم. تحليل نتائج هذه الدراسة في ضوء نظرية تعليم البالغين سلط الضوء على الحاجة لتعديل مبادئها لتناسب بيئة الدراسة. وعليه، اقترح الباحث نموذجاً سياقياً مزدوج التركيز لتنفيذ مبادئ نظرية تعليم البالغين الموجه نحو المتعلم في تدريس اللغة الإنجليزية لغير الناطقين بها في كلية اللغات.

الكلمات المفتاحية: التدريس المتمركز حول المتعلم، التدريس المتمركز حول المعلم، نظرية تعليم البالغين، المتعلمين البالغين، سياق تعلم اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية في ليبيا.



جامعة بنغازي
كلية اللغات
قسم اللغة الانجليزية

التحقق من تدريس اللغة الانجليزية المرتكز علي المتعلم في
كلية اللغات بجامعة بنغازي : نحو نموذج مزدوج
للتنفيذ

مقدمة من:

نسرين صلاح جابر الفيتوري

تحت اشراف

د. هناء عبد الواحد البدري

أستاذ مشارك

قُدمت هذه الاطروحة استكمالاً لمتطلبات الحصول على درجة الإجازة الدقيقة (الدكتوراة)

في

علم اللغة التطبيقي

بتاريخ: 28 / ديسمبر / 2025