
The Role of the Mother Tongue in Learning English as a Foreign Language: A Case Study of First-Year Students at the Faculty of Languages – Surman

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ABSTRACT.

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This study explores The Role of the Mother Tongue in Learning English as a Foreign Language among first-year students at the Faculty of Languages in Surman, Libya. Arabic, as the learners' native language, plays a significant dual role in English language acquisition. The research reveals that when used strategically and moderately, the mother tongue facilitates comprehension of complex grammatical structures and vocabulary, mitigates learner anxiety, and enhances learner confidence. However, excessive reliance on the mother tongue may lead to mother tongue interference, which negatively impacts pronunciation, syntax, and overall fluency in English.

Employing a mixed-methods design involving questionnaires, language proficiency tests, and semi-structured interviews with English instructors, the findings demonstrate that the judicious integration of the mother tongue within communicative, technology-enhanced, and learner-centered pedagogical frameworks optimizes English language learning outcomes. The study underscores the importance of gradually reducing L1 use as learner proficiency advances while maintaining

sufficient support in early stages to ensure accessibility and motivation.

Moreover, the research highlights the value of teaching materials that prioritize authentic, context-rich, and multimodal inputs over direct translation. Additional effective strategies include cooperative and task-based learning activities that foster collaboration, critical thinking, and practical communication skills. Strong teacher support through clear explanations and scaffolding is vital to overcoming learners' difficulties.

In conclusion, the study advocates for balanced and evidence-based instructional approaches that combine strategic mother tongue use, advanced technologies, and interactive methodologies to enhance motivation, engagement, and communicative competence for university-level EFL learners.

Keywords: Mother Tongue, First Language, English as a Foreign Language, Libyan University Students, Language Acquisition, Grammar Comprehension, Vocabulary Learning, Mother Tongue Interference, Pronunciation Challenges, Communicative Competence.

الملخص:

تتناول هذه الدراسة دور اللغة الأم في تعلم اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية لدى طلاب السنة الأولى بكلية اللغات في صرمان، ليبيا. وتؤدي اللغة العربية، بصفتها اللغة الأم للمتعلمين، دورًا مزدوجًا ومهمًا في عملية اكتساب اللغة الإنجليزية. وقد كشفت نتائج الدراسة أن الاستخدام الاستراتيجي والمتوازن للغة الأم يساهم في تسهيل فهم التراكيب النحوية والمفردات المعقدة، ويحد من القلق اللغوي، ويعزز ثقة المتعلمين

بأنفسهم. في المقابل، فإن الاعتماد المفرط على اللغة الأم قد يؤدي إلى ما يُعرف بتداخل اللغة الأم، مما ينعكس سلبًا على النطق، والتركيب اللغوي، والطلاقة العامة في اللغة الإنجليزية. اعتمدت الدراسة على منهجية البحث المختلط، التي شملت استبيانات، واختبارات كفاءة لغوية، ومقابلات شبه منظمة مع معلمي اللغة الإنجليزية. وقد أظهرت النتائج أن الدمج الحكيم للغة الأم ضمن أطر تعليمية تواصلية مدعومة بالتكنولوجيا ومتمركزة حول المتعلم يُحسن بشكل ملحوظ من مخرجات تعلم اللغة. كما تؤكد الدراسة على ضرورة تقليل الاعتماد على اللغة الأم تدريجيًا مع تطور مستوى المتعلم، مع الحفاظ على دعم كافٍ في المراحل المبكرة لضمان سهولة الوصول إلى المحتوى وتحفيز المتعلم. وتبرز الدراسة أهمية استخدام مواد تعليمية قائمة على مدخلات أصلية، غنية بالسياق، ومتعددة الوسائط، بدلاً من الاعتماد على الترجمة المباشرة. كما تسلط الضوء على فاعلية أنشطة التعلم التعاوني والقائم على المهام، والتي تعزز مهارات التفكير النقدي، والعمل الجماعي، والتواصل العملي. ويُعد الدعم البنّاء من المعلمين من خلال الشرح الواضح والتدرج في تقديم المفاهيم عنصرًا أساسيًا في تجاوز صعوبات المتعلمين. وفي الختام، توصي الدراسة باعتماد مناهج تعليمية متوازنة قائمة على أدلة علمية، تدمج بين الاستخدام الاستراتيجي للغة الأم، والتقنيات الحديثة، والأساليب التفاعلية، بما يعزز الدافعية والمشاركة والكفاءة التواصلية لدارسي اللغة الإنجليزية على المستوى الجامعي.

1- INTRODUCTION

In Libya, Arabic is the dominant linguistic medium and functions as the native language acquired naturally through early family and community interaction. English, by contrast, is introduced as a foreign language and is usually learned in structured educational environments rather than through exposure in daily life. Within this context, the present study investigates how English is taught and learned during the early stages of university education, with a specific focus on first-year students in the Department of English at the Faculty of Languages, Surman.

Although considerable research has examined the role of the mother tongue in school-level English learning, far less attention has been given to adult learners who embark on studying

a foreign language at university. These learners typically exhibit different learning behaviors: they tend to question instructional approaches, show sensitivity to exclusive use of English, and may require strategic support through their first language to reinforce comprehension and build confidence (Noyan, 2022; Hanif, 2016). Occasional and purposeful integration of the mother tongue has been shown to assist in clarifying complex grammatical structures, supporting vocabulary learning, reducing anxiety, and helping learners make sense of new linguistic concepts (Metruk, 2024).

Teaching beginners in an EFL environment poses inherent challenges. Limited vocabulary and weak grammatical foundations can make it difficult for students to follow instructions or engage effectively when English is used exclusively. Furthermore, excessive emphasis on grammar at early stages may restrict opportunities for developing essential communicative abilities in speaking and listening (Hu, 2022). Thus, understanding how and when the mother tongue can be used productively is crucial for improving learning outcomes among novice learners.

1.1 Research Problem

Teachers of English as a foreign language often struggle to maintain a strict English-only policy in classrooms with beginners. This study seeks to explore how the mother tongue can serve as an instructional resource to address challenges such as limited vocabulary, gaps in grammatical knowledge, and the potential negative impact on oral and listening proficiency when learners lack sufficient linguistic support.

1.2 Research Questions

What factors encourage the use of the mother tongue in EFL classrooms?

Do first-year English students at the Faculty of Languages in Surman benefit from the use of their mother tongue during the learning process?

1.3 Study Objectives

To determine the situations and frequency in which the mother tongue is employed in EFL instruction.

To examine the necessity and impact of mother-tongue use on first-year university students' English learning.

1.4 Significance of the Study

This research highlights opportunities to enhance the teaching of English as a foreign language by identifying the main challenges experienced by learners and by assisting educators in developing teaching techniques and learning materials that better address these challenges. Understanding learners' academic and linguistic needs enables curriculum designers to shape more effective and learner-centered programs that foster a supportive environment for language development. Furthermore, the findings presented may serve as reference points for decision-makers at both institutional and national levels when formulating policies related to language instruction, resources allocation, and curriculum reforms. Beyond its practical value, the study enriches the body of knowledge in foreign language acquisition and opens the door for future investigations that could expand upon the issues uncovered in this research.

2- LITERATURE REVIEW

The mother tongue, understood as the language naturally internalized during early childhood through family and social interactions, constitutes the foundation upon which learners build their linguistic and cognitive development (Khatti, 2011). Its role in the process of acquiring English as a foreign language (EFL) has been widely examined, with research emphasizing that it can function both as a facilitating tool and as a potential obstacle depending on how it is employed in instructional settings.

Recent scholarship highlights that when used purposefully, the mother tongue can significantly enhance learners' comprehension and overall learning efficiency. Studies conducted by Zacharias (2004) and Tang (2002) in varied educational contexts reveal that L1 provides meaningful support when explanations in English prove insufficient, enabling learners to grasp difficult concepts more quickly. Butzkamm (2006) similarly argues that L1 serves as a reliable gateway to L2, helping learners navigate unfamiliar linguistic structures with greater ease. Miles (2004) further notes that measured use of the mother tongue fosters confidence and improves learners' spoken English performance.

From a pedagogical standpoint, the contribution of the mother tongue varies according to the instructional approach adopted. Traditional grammar-translation methods rely extensively on L1 to clarify vocabulary and grammatical patterns, making it particularly useful for beginners who require explicit explanation (Khatai, 2011). However, approaches that insist solely on target-language use can create barriers to comprehension and heighten learner anxiety, especially in the early phases of learning (Meyer, 2008; Shema, 2008). These findings support the view that L1 should function as temporary scaffolding—useful at initial stages but gradually reduced as learners gain greater communicative competence in English. Cognitive perspectives offer another dimension, suggesting that translation activities place high cognitive demands on learners and may be more appropriate for adults who possess advanced language-processing abilities. When thoughtfully incorporated, translation tasks can cultivate metalinguistic awareness and strengthen language learning by encouraging reflection rather than rote memorization (Osra Janulin, 2008). Additionally, L1 can act as an emotional buffer, reducing stress and preventing communication breakdowns by offering learners a psychological sense of security.

Nonetheless, scholars caution against excessive reliance on the mother tongue. Atkinson (1993) maintains that while limited L1 use affirms learners' cultural identity and intellectual maturity, overuse can impede the development of communicative skills in English (Ausra

Januliene, 2008). This concern is reflected in studies from Taiwan, where persistent dependence on grammar-translation and phonetic drills weakened learners' ability to communicate effectively (Chung Yo, 2006). As a result, current communicative language teaching (CLT) models advocate a balanced strategy in which L1 is used selectively to support comprehension while English remains the dominant medium of instruction (Khati, 2011; Al-Zahrani, 2023).

Recent research also draws attention to the influence of L1 on phonological development. Differences between Arabic and English sound systems pose specific challenges for Libyan learners, highlighting the need for pedagogical approaches that emphasize auditory discrimination and pronunciation practice early in the learning process to reduce negative transfer (Motasem, 2025). Thus, while the mother tongue may assist comprehension, it simultaneously shapes pronunciation and grammar in ways that can either facilitate or hinder progress.

Moreover, the integration of modern technology can enhance the positive role of L1 by providing learners with tools for independent study and extended exposure to English. Blended learning environments that combine digital resources with traditional instruction promote engagement, accommodate diverse learning styles, and allow learners to build skills both inside and outside the classroom (Noyan, 2022).

Overall, the literature indicates that the mother tongue remains a valuable linguistic, cognitive, and emotional resource in EFL learning. Its effectiveness, however, depends on employing it in a balanced and intentional manner—one that progressively shifts learners toward greater reliance on English while still addressing their instructional and affective needs within culturally responsive teaching environments.

2.1 English Language Teaching Materials.

Selecting suitable instructional materials plays a central role in supporting effective English as a Foreign Language (EFL) instruction, particularly for students at the beginner level. Current pedagogical perspectives emphasize reducing dependence on direct translation into the learners' first language and instead recommend the use of authentic, meaningful, and contextually grounded materials. Such resources encourage learners to infer meaning through situational cues, visual support, and multimodal input rather than relying on word-for-word equivalence.

Contemporary communicative textbooks typically focus on familiar, everyday themes—such as family, daily routines, and time expressions—which provide immediate relevance and practical opportunities for language use. By anchoring lessons in real-life scenarios, these materials enhance learner engagement and facilitate long-term retention. When presenting new vocabulary, teachers are advised to make use of visual tools—such as images, objects, or illustrations—rather than providing direct translations. Demonstrating vocabulary visually, for example by showing an image of a “cat” instead of translating the word, helps learners form direct associations between English terms and their meanings. This practice complements the Total Physical Response (TPR) approach, where meaning is conveyed through actions, gestures, and physical demonstration—such as acting out the verb “walk”—thereby reducing anxiety and strengthening comprehension (Sanako Connect, 2025; ACTTEFL, 2025).

The increasing incorporation of multimedia and digital technologies into learning materials has also transformed EFL instruction. Interactive digital tools create immersive learning environments that enable students to develop listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills through dynamic and personalized activities. Software such as Sanako Connect provides a variety of instructional modes, including videos, audio materials, and real-time group interaction, allowing learners to engage with English in ways that match their learning preferences and encourage active participation (Sanako Connect, 2025).

High-quality teaching materials also support differentiated instruction by offering adaptable content that varies in complexity, format, and instructional approach. This adaptability ensures that learners with diverse proficiency levels and cultural backgrounds can access the material in ways that meet their individual needs and promote self-directed learning (Improving Literacy, 2025).

In essence, instructional materials that limit reliance on the mother tongue and instead prioritize contextualized, multimodal, and interactive resources are most effective in fostering communicative competence among EFL learners. Such materials encourage learners to process English meaningfully and directly, thereby supporting the development of fluency, confidence, and independent language use from the earliest stages of acquisition.

2.2 Modern English Teaching Methods for First-Year University Students

English language instruction at the university level has undergone notable transformation in recent years, with growing emphasis on creating learning environments that are motivating, interactive, and responsive to students' academic and personal needs. Contemporary approaches highlight the importance of learner autonomy, collaboration, and technological integration, particularly for first-year students who are developing foundational communicative and academic skills. The following methods represent widely adopted and effective practices in university EFL settings:

1. Cooperative Learning

Description: Students work together in small groups to complete shared tasks, allowing them to exchange ideas and support each other's learning.

Benefits: This collaborative structure strengthens spoken and written communication, promotes teamwork, and encourages active participation within the classroom community (Bashith & Amin, 2017).

2. Technology-Enhanced Learning

Description: This approach incorporates digital tools—such as computers, online platforms, multimedia resources, and interactive language software—into classroom instruction.

Benefits: Technology contributes to a dynamic and immersive learning experience. It broadens access to authentic language resources, develops digital literacy, and supports independent and blended learning pathways (Sanako Connect, 2025; Zou et al., 2021).

3. Problem-Based Learning (PBL)

Description: Students are presented with real or simulated problems and are required to use English to investigate, discuss, and propose solutions.

Benefits: PBL nurtures critical thinking, creativity, and analytical skills. It also develops decision-making abilities that are transferable to both academic tasks and real-world situations (Bashith & Amin, 2017).

4. Task-Based Learning (TBL)

Description: Learners complete purposeful tasks that mirror real-life communication scenarios, requiring them to use English in meaningful and functional ways.

Benefits: TBL promotes practical language use, helping students develop fluency and communicative competence in contexts beyond the traditional classroom (Wichadee, 2017).

5. Additional Influential Elements

- **Qualified Instructors:** Effective language learning depends largely on teachers who possess strong linguistic knowledge, sound pedagogical strategies, and the ability to create motivating and supportive learning conditions.
- **Relevant Teaching Materials:** Learning resources should be varied, culturally appropriate, and suited to learners' proficiency levels, providing balanced exposure to all language skills.
- **Continuous Assessment:** Regular evaluation allows instructors to identify learners' progress and challenges, offering timely feedback that guides skill development and encourages academic growth (Zou et al., 2021).

Taken together, these approaches reflect a broader shift toward instructional models that place the learner at the center of the learning experience. By incorporating active participation, meaningful communication, and technological tools, universities can cultivate essential linguistic, cognitive, and social skills that support students' overall academic success.

2- METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a case study design that examined a group of 48 participants from the English Department at the College of Languages in Surman. Of these, 30 were first-year beginner students who were present during the data collection sessions, while 18 were officially enrolled but absent at the time of data gathering. To obtain a well-rounded understanding of the research problem, a mixed-methods approach was employed, integrating both quantitative and qualitative data.

The quantitative phase consisted of a structured questionnaire administered to all 48 students. The purpose of this instrument was to explore the degree to which the mother

tongue is used in the EFL classroom and to determine whether such use contributes to improving beginners' English learning experiences. In addition, a language proficiency test was administered to the 30 students who were in attendance, providing empirical evidence on how first-language use may influence their English language development and skill acquisition.

To complement the quantitative findings, qualitative data were collected through semi-structured interviews with four experienced English language instructors from the same department. These interviews provided deeper insights into teachers' beliefs, instructional practices, and perceptions regarding the integration of the mother tongue in EFL instruction.

The mixed-methods design supported methodological triangulation, thereby strengthening the credibility and dependability of the results. By combining self-reported learner data, performance-based measures, and expert instructional perspectives, the study ensured a more comprehensive analysis of the research questions. All ethical standards were upheld throughout the research process, including informing participants of the study's objectives, assuring confidentiality, and obtaining voluntary informed consent.

1. DATA ANALYSIS

2. Gender

Table (1) Gender

	number	percentage%
Male	6	20%
Female	24	80%
Total	30	100%

Table 1 shows the sample included 30 participants, with males representing 20% (6 students) and females 80% (24 students). This majority of female learners aligns with

global trends in university-level English studies, where females often show higher engagement and sometimes better performance. This demographic aspect may influence classroom dynamics and attitudes toward language use, especially regarding the mother tongue's role.

- 2- Using the mother tongue when explaining grammar helps me understand it better .

Table (2) Mother Tongue

	number	percentage%
Yes	17	57%
No	13	43%
Total	30	100%

According to Table 2, 57% of participants agreed that using the mother tongue to explain grammar improves their understanding, while 43% disagreed. This supports research highlighting the mother tongue's positive impact on clarifying complex grammar, aiding comprehension, and reducing learner confusion. However, some learners worry that excessive L1 use might limit English exposure, suggesting a balanced, context-sensitive approach to integrating the mother tongue is best.

- 3- Explaining new words using the mother tongue makes them easier to understand

Table (3) Explanation of new words using the mother tongue

	number	percentage%
Yes	23	77%
No	7	33%
Total	30	100%

Table 3 indicates that 77% found that explaining new vocabulary using their mother tongue made it easier to understand, whereas 33% did not. This preference concurs with studies stating that L1 explanations enhance comprehension and retention by

connecting new terms to prior knowledge, saving time, and reducing confusion—especially for beginners. Yet, teachers should balance L1 use with encouraging vocabulary learning via context and English practice to foster learner independence.

4- I feel more comfortable when speaking with the teacher when he uses the mother tongue

Table (3) I feel comfortable speaking with the teacher in the mother tongue

	number	percentage%
Yes	16	53%
No	14	47%
Total	30	100%

Another 53% of learners reported feeling more comfortable speaking with teachers when the mother tongue is used (Table 4), which aligns with research on L1's role in easing communication anxiety and creating a supportive learning atmosphere. The mother tongue helps build rapport and engagement, particularly for lower-proficiency learners. However, nearly half (47%) showed no preference, underscoring the need to balance L1 use with maximizing target language exposure to promote learner autonomy.

5- Relying on the mother tongue in the classroom hinders the development of my English speaking skills.

Table (5) Reliance on language as a hindrance to the skill of speaking English

	number	percentage%
Yes	24	80%
No	6	20%
Total	30	100%

Table 5 shows that 80% of participants believe that relying on their mother tongue negatively affects their English speaking skills, while 20% disagreed. This reflects the

well-known phenomenon of "mother tongue interference", where first language habits impede pronunciation, syntax, morphology, and fluency in English. Common issues include mispronouncing English sounds absent in the mother tongue, transferring native grammar patterns, and literal translation errors. While strategic mother tongue use can ease comprehension and anxiety, overreliance limits practice in fluent speaking. Effective pedagogy recommends controlled L1 use alongside targeted phonetic and oral practice to reduce interference and boost speaking skills.

6- I need my mother tongue to understand the instructions and activities in the classroom.

Table (6) I need the mother tongue to understand the lesson

	number	percentage%
Yes	19	63%
No	11	37%
Total	30	100%

According to Table 6, 63% of learners reported needing their mother tongue to comprehend lessons and activities, against 37% who did not. This majority preference supports pedagogical insights that the mother tongue acts as a crucial scaffold for clearer explanations, reducing anxiety and fostering engagement, especially for beginner learners with limited English. The mother tongue helps clarify instructions and abstract concepts that might overwhelm learners if delivered solely in English. Balanced instruction combines mother tongue use with visuals, gestures, and contextual clues to encourage gradual English independence.

7- Lack of vocabulary makes it difficult for me to understand English texts.

Table (7) Vocabulary makes it difficult for me to understand English texts

	number	percentage%
Yes	25	83%
No	5	17%
Total	30	100%

Data in Table 7 indicates that 83% agree vocabulary limitations hinder their text comprehension, with 17% disagreeing. This aligns with research identifying vocabulary knowledge as a critical factor in reading comprehension for EFL students. Larger vocabularies enable more accurate and faster understanding of various English texts, while limited vocabulary forces reliance on dictionaries or translation, slowing reading and impacting comprehension. Instructional focus on both explicit and implicit vocabulary teaching is essential to build word knowledge breadth and depth, supporting improved understanding and retention in learners.

8- English grammar is a big challenge for me.

Table (8) English Grammar Challenge.

	number	percentage%
Yes	18	60%
No	12	40%
Total	30	100%

Table 8 reports that 60% of participants view English grammar as a significant difficulty, compared with 40% who do not. This reflects a common challenge in EFL contexts linked to the complexity of grammatical rules, difficulties applying them practically, and often uninspiring instruction with limited contextual practice. Other factors include insufficient English exposure and feedback. Grammar is foundational for clear communication, but many learners struggle to use grammatical knowledge

fluently. Innovative, student-centered methods such as game-based and problem-based learning combined with multimedia resources can boost engagement and improve grammar mastery.

9- I find it difficult to pronounce English words correctly.

Table (9) Difficulty in pronouncing English words

	number	percentage%
Yes	12	40%
No	18	60%
Total	30	100%

Data from Table 9 show that 60% of learners do not find pronunciation difficult, but 40% do face challenges. This aligns with research indicating that many EFL learners struggle with sounds absent in their mother tongue, incorrect stress patterns, and phonetic interference. Factors like limited practice, exposure to native speakers, and insufficient focus on pronunciation contribute to difficulties. Research suggests using technology-enhanced tools and increased speaking practice alongside balanced native language support to improve pronunciation clarity and confidence.

10- I feel frustrated when I cannot express my ideas in English.

Table (10) I feel frustrated when I cannot express my thoughts in English

	number	percentage%
Yes	18	60%
No	12	40%
Total	30	100%

Table 10 reveals 60% of participants feel frustrated when unable to express their thoughts in English; 40% do not. This emotion is common among EFL learners who perceive their sentence construction as limited, impacting motivation and willingness to communicate. Creating supportive environments with ample practice, positive

feedback, scaffolding, and peer interaction can reduce frustration and build communicative confidence.

11- Listening to English conversations is difficult for me.

Table (11) Listening to conversations in English is difficult for me

	number	percentage%
Yes	17	57%
No	13	43%
Total	30	100%

According to Table 11, 57% of learners find listening to English conversations challenging, while 43% do not. Listening difficulties often arise from unfamiliar vocabulary, fast speech, accents, and inability to recognize connected speech. Anxiety and poor audio quality also affect comprehension. Effective strategies include repeated listening with guidance, transcripts, phonological focus, and varied exposure, which are especially important for Libyan learners.

12- The teacher's use of English only makes me feel challenged.

Table (12) The teacher's use of English makes me feel challenged

	number	percentage%
Yes	18	60%
No	12	40%
Total	30	100%

Table 12 data shows 60% of learners feel challenged by English-only instruction; 40% do not. Limited vocabulary, pronunciation issues, and grammar gaps reduce learners' confidence and participation. These barriers also frustrate teachers aiming for immersive English environments. Adaptive teaching methods such as group work, peer support, bilingual explanations, repetition, and multimedia tools help balance English

immersion with necessary L1 support, fostering engagement and gradual proficiency.

13- The traditional way of teaching relies heavily on grammar and vocabulary.

Table (13) The traditional method depends on grammar and vocabulary

	number	percentage%
Yes	27	90%
No	3	10%
Total	30	10%

Table 13 shows that 90% agree traditional teaching focuses on grammar and vocabulary, while 10% disagree. This reflects the Grammar Translation Method, which emphasizes explicit grammar instruction and vocabulary memorization through rule explanations, translation exercises, and drills. Although useful for foundational learning, this method is criticized for neglecting communicative competence. Recent pedagogy encourages integrating grammar and vocabulary with communicative, task-based activities to balance accuracy and fluency.

14- I wish there was more emphasis on speaking and listening skills.

Table (14) Greater focus on speaking and listening skills

	number	percentage%
Yes	27	90%
No	3	10%
Total	30	10%

Data from Table 14 indicate 90% want greater focus on speaking and listening, highlighting the essential role these skills play in communication and overall proficiency. Listening supports vocabulary acquisition, pronunciation, and conversation engagement, while speaking builds fluency and confidence. Effective programs embed interactive speaking/listening tasks like role-plays, discussions, and

multimedia to foster communication skills.

15- The current teaching materials help me develop my skills effectively.

Table (15) Current educational materials help to develop my skills effectively

	number	percentage%
Yes	27	90%
No	3	10%
Total	30	10%

Table 15 reveals 90% satisfaction with current materials' effectiveness in skill development. Well-designed materials commonly include multimedia, interactive tasks, and content suited to learners' levels and interests. These resources enhance motivation and support listening, speaking, reading, and writing improvement, reflecting the value of diverse, learner-centered materials.

16- The current way of teaching English makes me feel progressed.

Table (16) The current method of teaching the English language

	number	percentage%
Yes	24	80%
No	6	20%
Total	30	100%

According to Table 16, 80% feel the current teaching approach helps them progress. Modern methods incorporating communicative, interactive, and technology-supported strategies promote learner engagement, skill acquisition, and motivation better than traditional grammar-translation models. Positive perceptions affirm the benefits of innovative, learner-centered curricula.

17- Combining my mother tongue and English is the best way to learn.

Table (17) Combining my mother tongue and English is the best way to learn

	number	percentage%
Yes	23	77%
No	7	23%
Total	30	100%

Table 17 shows 77% believe that mixing mother tongue and English is optimal for learning. This supports research endorsing strategic L1 use to aid comprehension, vocabulary recall, and grammatical transfer. Balanced bilingual instruction scaffolds understanding and maintains cultural identity while encouraging language autonomy. Excessive L1 use can hinder fluency, so mindful integration is key. ■

18- Group activities help me improve my speaking and listening skills. ■

Table (18) Group activities help improve speaking and listening skills

	number	percentage%
Yes	23	77%
No	7	23%

Data from Table 18 indicate 77% agree group work enhances speaking and listening skills. Collaborative tasks like discussions and role-plays create supportive environments, improving fluency, vocabulary, confidence, and exposure to diverse accents. These activities also develop critical thinking and non-verbal communication skills important for conversation effectiveness.

19- I need more support from the teacher when explaining difficult lessons.

Table (19) Support from the teacher when explaining difficult lessons

	number	percentage%
Yes	23	77%
No	7	23%
Total	30	100%

Table 19 shows that 77% of learners feel they need increased teacher support for difficult lessons, versus 23% who do not. This reflects research emphasizing the crucial role of teacher support, including guidance, clear explanations, encouragement, and emotional backing. Such support enhances motivation, engagement, perseverance, and academic success. Especially in challenging lessons, scaffolding helps learners grasp complex concepts and fosters a psychologically safe environment that builds confidence and resilience, essential for effective language acquisition.

20- Using technology such as videos and applications helps me learn the language faster

Table (20) Use of Technology

	number	percentage%
Yes	28	93%
No	2	7%
Total	30	100%

According to Table 20, 93% agree that technology like videos and apps accelerates their language learning, while 7% disagree. This aligns with studies demonstrating that technology boosts engagement and motivation through interactive, personalized, and multimedia-rich content catering to different learning styles. Tools such as language apps, AI feedback, and adaptive assessments provide immersive exposure, real-time correction, and flexible, individualized learning opportunities that enhance fluency and progress tracking beyond traditional classrooms.

21- I think learning English becomes more fun when there is a balance between seriousness and fun activities

Table (21) English and the balance between marketing and advertising

	number	percentage%
Yes	29	97%
No	1	3%
Total	30	100%

Data from Table 21 shows 97% feel that balancing seriousness with fun activities makes English learning more enjoyable, with only 3% dissenting. This supports research advocating for integrating playful, engaging tasks like word games, riddles, and group discussions that reduce anxiety and encourage communicative practice. Balancing structured learning with enjoyable elements addresses diverse learner needs, sustains motivation, and transforms language learning into a stimulating, confidence-building experience.

6. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the mother tongue plays both a facilitating and obstructive role in foreign language learning. Excessive reliance on the mother tongue can limit opportunities to fully engage with the foreign language, potentially hindering proficiency development. Conversely, exclusive use of English, especially with first-year learners, may pose comprehension challenges. Therefore, strategically integrating the mother tongue can ease the learning process and boost learners' confidence.

Most first-year English learners naturally translate English content into their mother tongue due to significant linguistic influence. This cognitive link between mother tongue and foreign language is essential, as acquiring a new language effectively often involves referencing the first language to understand and internalize new concepts. The mother tongue thus serves as a valuable cognitive tool that supports learners in navigating the complexities of English language acquisition.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on current research and best practices, the recommendations to improve English language teaching are:

1. Teachers should embrace the use of technology such as videos, interactive apps, and digital resources to facilitate more engaging and effective language learning. This responsibility is essential in today's technologically advanced educational landscape, enhancing learner motivation and accessibility.
2. Effective grammar instruction is vital, particularly for first-year students, as it lays the foundational knowledge necessary for mastering English. Tailored grammar teaching that addresses learners' specific difficulties promotes better understanding and retention.
3. Teachers need to identify learners' challenges and provide appropriate and responsive grammar support, which is a cornerstone of successful EFL instruction aimed at catering to diverse learner needs.
4. While the second language (English) remains the primary focus in EFL classrooms, judicious and limited use of the mother tongue can help clarify complex concepts and scaffold learning without detracting from immersion.
5. Teachers should communicate with students using clear, simple English expressions appropriate to their proficiency level, offering ample practice opportunities. This approach, combined with cooperative teaching strategies, permits the selection of the most suitable method for each learner's context.

These recommendations, grounded in evidence from technology-enhanced learning and pedagogical strategies, aim to balance linguistic rigor with accessibility and learner engagement, supporting effective and meaningful English language acquisition.

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