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**Libyan EFL Teachers and Students' Perceptions towards Online Classes at Private Secondary Schools in Tripoli**

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**ABSTRACT**

This paper explores Libyan EFL teachers' and students' perceptions towards online classes at private secondary schools in Tripoli. The study is grounded in the growing need to understand how online language instruction is received in a context where digital learning expanded rapidly during and after the COVID-19 pandemic, yet continued to face infrastructural and pedagogical constraints. Drawing on a mixed-methods perspective, the paper reviews relevant literature and proposes a classroom-based inquiry into the perceived benefits, challenges, and conditions for effective online EFL learning. The discussion highlights that both teachers and students may recognize the flexibility and accessibility of online learning, but they also frequently report weak internet connectivity, limited interaction, insufficient training, and reduced motivation as major obstacles. The paper concludes that online classes in Libyan private secondary schools are most likely to succeed when supported by stable infrastructure, teacher preparation, and interactive pedagogical design.

**Keywords:** EFL, online classes, perceptions, private secondary schools, Tripoli, Libya.

**1. Introduction**

Online learning has become an important part of educational practice in many countries, including Libya, especially after the COVID-19 period accelerated the use of digital tools in schools. In the Libyan context, however, the move to online classes has often been shaped by unstable internet access, limited institutional support, and uneven digital readiness among teachers and students. Studies conducted in Libya show that perceptions of online teaching are often mixed, with participants acknowledging some advantages while also emphasizing serious practical barriers.

The present paper focuses on private secondary schools in Tripoli because this setting is particularly relevant for understanding how English as a Foreign Language is taught in semi-formal and resource-sensitive contexts. Private schools often have more flexibility than public schools, but they still operate within the broader national constraints of infrastructure and educational policy. A recent Libyan project specifically examined teachers' and students' perceptions of online classes in seven private schools in Tripoli and reported that both groups

had clear views about online instruction, while also identifying obstacles to effective implementation.

### **1.1 Problem Statement**

Although online classes are now widely discussed as a viable supplement to traditional teaching, little is known about how Libyan EFL teachers and students in private secondary schools actually perceive this mode of instruction in day-to-day practice. Existing Libyan studies suggest that online teaching is often hindered by poor internet infrastructure, limited communication, and lack of preparation, but most of the available evidence comes from higher education or international schools rather than private secondary schools.

This gap matters because secondary school learners are at a formative stage in their English development, and their attitudes toward online learning may strongly affect participation, engagement, and achievement. Teachers' perceptions are equally important because their beliefs shape classroom decisions, task design, and willingness to use digital tools. A focused study on Tripoli private secondary schools can therefore offer context-sensitive insight into the conditions under which online EFL classes are accepted, resisted, or adapted.

### **1.2 Literature Review**

Previous research in Libya indicates that teachers' perceptions of online teaching are often influenced by infrastructure and training. In a 2024 study of teachers in international schools in Libya, participants reported that online teaching during the pandemic was frequently stressful and unproductive because of poor internet quality, weak communication with students, and inadequate prior preparation <sup>(1)</sup>. At the same time, some teachers in better-supported schools expressed more positive attitudes, suggesting that institutional support can shape perceptions significantly <sup>(3)</sup>.

Student-focused research has shown similarly mixed attitudes. A 2023 study of Libyan EFL undergraduates found a moderate level of positive perception toward online learning and its effect on English language development, but the results also showed that familiarity with computers and frequency of internet use influenced students' views <sup>(4)</sup>, <sup>(5)</sup>. This suggests that digital confidence may mediate how learners evaluate online instruction.

Beyond Libya, research on online EFL learning in comparable contexts frequently points to the same pattern: students often appreciate flexibility and convenience, while teachers and learners alike worry about interaction, motivation, and assessment quality <sup>(8)</sup>. A broader post-COVID line of inquiry also notes that hybrid and online classes can support language learning when they are intentionally designed, but they may fail when reduced to passive content delivery. This is especially relevant to secondary education, where learner engagement depends heavily on teacher scaffolding and classroom interaction <sup>(10)</sup>, <sup>(7)</sup>.

The Libyan educational environment adds another layer of complexity. Recent situational reporting on education in Libya highlights persistent barriers such as weak infrastructure and urgent resource needs, which affect schools' ability to sustain effective digital learning <sup>(2), (9)</sup>. These barriers are not merely technical; they also influence trust in online learning as a legitimate and stable instructional option <sup>(6)</sup>.

### **1.3 Theoretical Framework**

This paper is informed by the technology acceptance perspective and by the broader view that perceptions influence adoption behavior. In practical terms, if teachers believe online classes are useful, manageable, and supported by the school, they are more likely to use them effectively. If students perceive online classes as confusing, disconnected, or technically burdensome, their participation and achievement are likely to decline. This framework is useful for explaining why the same online class may be welcomed in one school and rejected in another.

The framework also aligns with classroom-based EFL research showing that pedagogical success depends not only on the tool itself but on the interaction between technology, teacher preparedness, and learner readiness. For that reason, the present paper treats perceptions as socially and institutionally shaped rather than as purely individual opinions.

### **1.4 Methodology**

This paper is designed as a mixed-methods study suitable for a 4000-word research paper in applied linguistics. The quantitative component uses a questionnaire for students, while the qualitative component uses semi-structured interviews with teachers. This design reflects the approach used in a recent Tripoli private-school project that combined questionnaires and interviews to examine perceptions of online classes.

The target population includes EFL teachers and secondary school students in private schools in Tripoli. A purposive sample may be used to ensure that participants have direct experience with online classes. The student questionnaire can measure perceptions of usefulness, ease of use, interaction, motivation, technical access, and preference for online versus face-to-face classes. Teacher interviews can explore classroom experience, instructional challenges, assessment practices, and views on long-term feasibility.

Data analysis may include descriptive statistics for questionnaire responses and thematic analysis for interview data. Such a design is suitable because it captures both the breadth of student attitudes and the depth of teacher experience. It also allows triangulation, which strengthens the credibility of the findings.

### **1.5 Findings**

Based on the available literature, several patterns are likely to emerge. First, both teachers and students recognized some advantages of online classes, especially flexibility, reduced travel time, and the possibility of accessing materials outside school hours. Second, many participants expressed concern about weak internet connection, limited live interaction, and difficulty monitoring student participation. Third, teachers reported that online EFL classes are more effective for content explanation than for productive skills such as speaking and writing.

Students also reported that their engagement depends strongly on the teacher's style and the quality of the digital platform. Since classes are interactive, well-organized, and supported by clear tasks, learners viewed them positively. The classes were largely lecture-based and interrupted by technical problems, perceptions became negative. This fits the broader evidence that online learning succeeds only when pedagogy and infrastructure work together.

### **Discussion**

The likely value of the study lies in its ability to show that perceptions are shaped by both educational and material conditions. In Tripoli private secondary schools, online classes should not be judged only by whether they are available, but by whether they are pedagogically meaningful and technically reliable. The evidence from Libya suggests that when infrastructure is weak, even motivated teachers may feel that online teaching is stressful and ineffective <sup>(2), (7)</sup>.

At the same time, the positive or moderate views reported in some studies suggest that online learning is not inherently unsuitable for Libyan EFL learners. Rather, it becomes viable when schools provide training, stable platforms, and clear expectations. This is particularly important for private schools, which may have greater autonomy to introduce blended models or platform-based support <sup>(8)</sup>.

From a pedagogical perspective, the study would likely recommend that online EFL classes at secondary level should focus on interaction, short tasks, feedback, and manageable digital workload. Teachers need training in online lesson design, while students need orientation in digital learning routines. Without these supports, online instruction risks becoming a temporary emergency response rather than a sustainable educational practice.

### **Conclusion**

This paper shows that the perceptions of Libyan EFL teachers and students toward online classes at private secondary schools in Tripoli are likely to be mixed rather than uniformly positive or negative. The available evidence suggests that acceptance depends on infrastructure, training, interaction, and the learner's digital readiness. Online classes can support English learning in Libya, but only if they are implemented with strong pedagogical and institutional support.

The study is significant because it addresses a context-specific gap in Libyan applied linguistics research and provides a basis for improving digital EFL instruction in secondary schools. Its

main contribution is practical: it helps explain what teachers and students think about online classes and what schools need to do to make them work better.

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