

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The literature review on the learner-centered approach addresses the strong foundation for the philosophy of its development and application to education under the influence of Dewey's (1859-1952) democratic notions and Rogers' (1902-1987) humanistic ideas. The review also points out Freire's (1921-1997) significant contribution to the application of these notions in non-western contexts. Therefore, this study is based on these scholars' concepts.

A humanistic approach highlights that the aim of education should be to create self-directed learners and build humanistic relationships based on mutual respect and understanding between teachers and students. Another fundamental value of this approach concerns providing students with care, trust and encouragement in schools. Therefore, it is vital for humanistic teachers to promote positive feelings about students' learning and respect the value of every student with her/his ability to direct their own learning (Jacobs et al, 2006; Rico, 2008).

2.2 Humanistic Education

Rogers' (1950) notions mainly addressed the progression of psychotherapy, he pointed out the opportunity to apply them in education, particularly by teachers who have a

strong child-centered philosophy. Rogers (1983) provided the characteristics of his 'person-centered' model of teaching and learning, and presented some teachers' successful experiences with this model.

Brandes and Ginnis (1986, 1990) explained the way Rogers' notions could be developed into teaching approaches and practices in their books 'A Guide to Student-Centered Learning' (1986) and 'The Student-Centred School' (1990). In 1994, Freiberg advanced new ideas and involved his own working experience in schools along with the results of research related to implementing Rogers' 'person-centered' model in schools. Subsequently, Rogers' humanistic notions become very general and influential in the field of education. School has an important role in creating a humanistic atmosphere for promoting student learning. A humanistic school should be a place where facts, ideas, and feelings can be expressed openly and where students' curiosity and creativity can be cultivated. Rico (2008, p.56) recommended that creating such atmosphere in schools would require teachers to adopt a methodology encompassing their understanding and consideration of students' affective factors.

Rogers (1983) clarified the humanistic notion in terms of the differences in characteristics between the teacher-centered and student-centered approaches. At the same time, Rogers presented the facilitation notion as an alternative to traditional instructional approaches and explained that its implementation implies a variation in the roles of teachers, students, parents, headmasters and educational authorities.

2.2.1 Teacher-Centred Versus Learner-Centred Approaches in the Teaching and Learning Process

Rogers (1983) described that the conventional teacher-centred teaching method is in sharp contrast to his proposed student-centred model. With a student-centred approach, teaching does not depend on teachers all the time, waiting for teaching, corrections and words of approval (Jones, 2007; Ozsevik, 2010; Chang, 2011). Teachers and students do not disregard each other, but look at, and communicate with each other. It is clear there are huge differences between the features of the old and new methods. In a traditional or conventional system of language teaching and learning, teachers are the processors of knowledge. They are the classroom authorities who determine whom they rule, while students are the recipients of anything teachers teach (Rogers, 1983). In fact, students are silent listeners with a passive role of being language receivers and do not take responsibility for their learning. In other words, teachers dominate all classroom activities.

Furthermore, different studies report that teaching in EFL classrooms is still based on traditional approaches (Liao, 2000; Roa, 2002; Nunan, 2003; Littlewood, 2007; Sakui and Cowie, 2012; Salma, 2014). This feature offers a clear picture (as portrayed in the questionnaire items) of the general practice in a teacher-centred classroom that avoids or neglects the students' role in sharing classroom activities. This is one of the difficulties that Libyan students face. Within the traditional teacher-centred framework, the lectures, textbooks, or other sorts of verbal intellectual instruction are the main devices for conveying knowledge to learners. Meanwhile, examinations are intended to

evaluate students and their level of understanding the knowledge conveyed. These features were included in constructing part of the questionnaire (see Appendix 1). With this method, there is little or no trust and communication between teachers and learners. Teachers exert their power to govern classes and students are governed by being kept in an intermittent or constant state of fear. This is deemed one of the difficulties that students face in learning well. The teacher-centred approach allows for no democracy in class, as the power hierarchy places teachers in higher, superior positions. Therefore, democratic principles are ignored in teachers' practices and teaching procedures. Rogers (1983) illustrated that within such conventional education system, the person is ignored or devalued entirely. The only factor that matters is a person's intellect. The features of this teaching method are therefore still present in the teaching and learning processes in Libya.

Most teachers still depend on memorization, repetition, and applying learner-centred activities by means of methods that teachers are used to and learned with themselves, for example pair work communication activities. These teacher-centred features helped the researcher construct statements in the questionnaire about difficulties that Libyan teachers face with reading comprehension (see Appendix 1).

On the other hand, Rogers (1983) identified the person-centred approach as a reaction and response to the limitations of conventional teaching and learning approaches. In fact, Rogers (1983) developed a person-centred model as a humanistic method and argued that his model is applicable and suitable for all education levels and subjects. He argued that in the person-centred framework, teachers share the responsibility of the

learning process with students and sometimes even with students' parents or community members. In this case, teachers motivate students to improve cooperation in the learning process.

Similarly, Ozsevik (2010), Chang (2011) and Sakui and Cowie (2012) argued that with this method, learners are supposed to participate in classroom activities. Accordingly, it is wise to maintain both teachers' and students' roles in the classroom as a dynamic feature, which would thus tend to differ continuously (Jones, 2007; Ozsevik, 2010; Chang 2011; Kreiba, 2012). Sawani (2009) pointed out that applying this type of approach is not easy in the Libyan teaching and learning context for various reasons:

- Most EFL teachers use silent methods such as the grammar-translation method (GTM).
- Poor teacher training programs do not support or inform teachers in terms of the latest techniques and theories of EFL teaching.
- Teachers' overall proficiencies tend to be low.

Latiwish (2003) and Fatma (2014) posited that some teachers try to shift learners' attitude from teacher-centred to student-centred, and this shift is clearly seen at many schools in Libya and in some university classes. Irmawati (2012) discussed that applying the communicative approach can effectively improve students' reading ability. This is evident from the enhancements in reading, vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, and communication. For the current study, the researcher used some of these characteristics to construct statements of teachers' views in the questionnaire (see Appendix 1). The aforementioned characteristics of a person-centred classroom are the

criteria to evaluate and compare Libyan preparatory classrooms in order to investigate the ways teachers incorporate the principles of CLT in their instructional strategies.

According to modern studies on EFL in Libya, many teachers are beginning to adapt CLT and related activities but with extensive use of the Arabic language (Ali, 2008; Orafi and Borg, 2009; Saleh, 2002; Salam, 2014). One of the principles of CLT according to Richards (2006) is that students should discover grammar rules, but Libyan teachers are used to discussing grammar on their own with no student participation. Moreover, teachers ought to provide learning resources from their own experience, books, materials or community experience, among others, and teach students to develop their own learning program. Thus, it is advisable for teachers who are adapting the new method to use authentic teaching materials that meet the needs of their particular learners (Richards and Rodgers, 2001). Richards (2006) mentioned that CLT links different skills such as reading, as they usually occur in the real world.

Rogers (1983, p.198-190) explained that the learner should be at the “centre” and should have the “essential power and control” over their learning. However, research on LCA implementation, which is often classified as a product of Rogers’ humanistic ideas on education (Cornelius-White, 2007; Cornelius-White and Harbaugh, 2010; Sakui et al (2012) reveals that many psychological, cultural or contextual factors could interfere with the successful introduction and implementation of Rogers’ humanistic ideas in schools. Teachers and students’ lack of familiarity with Rogers’ notion of ‘facilitation’ is a significant issue for consideration.

2.2.2 Facilitation

Rogers (1969) introduced the concept of facilitation in a teaching environment. Later, Clifton (2006) found that facilitation is often proposed as an alternative to the teacher-fronted classroom. Similarly, Shihiba (2011) explained that the notion of facilitation entails a change in the teacher's role from a knowledge source and information transmitter to a facilitator who assists students in the process of acquiring language. Employing the "facilitation" approach in classrooms involves providing suitable situations to assist with independent student learning. The CLT feature can highly encourage teachers to act as facilitators, whereby they are not the only authority in the classroom but learners also receive autonomy, which eventually improves language learning quality (Brog and Al-Busaidi, 2012).

Changing the role of teachers to facilitators does not necessarily mean disempowering teachers. This is the point of weakness for Libyan EFL teachers, who find it difficult to adjust to being facilitators. They believe that CLT neglects their teacher role in the classroom. In reality, facilitators take on new responsibilities that differ from the ones teachers use when performing in a traditional teacher-centred learning setting.. Ozesvik (2010) and Sakui et al. (2012) for instance, explained the roles of teachers and students in the classroom and asserted that students dynamically interpret, express and negotiate meaning, while teachers take on more of a facilitator role.

Teachers may interpret these tasks from two different perspectives. Teachers who lack knowledge about these tasks and responsibilities, or lack the necessary skills to perform CLT, might perceive this approach as demanding and challenging. Brush and Saye

(2000) reported an example of such situation. In their study, a female teacher experienced certain difficulties in implementing student-centred learning because of her lack of understanding the facilitator role. Orafi and Borg (2009) gave the same reason for three Libyan EFL secondary school teachers having failed to implement English language learner-centred curriculum innovation.

O'Dwyer (2006) considered two significant responsibilities for English language teachers as learning facilitators. Facilitators' first responsibility is to provide a practice-based language study setting and atmosphere, with more alignment towards participatory experiential practices. Such practices "include planning group work activities in discussions, games and role plays, preparing listening, reading and writing activities that connect meaningfully with students' felt needs and with pedagogical aims, as well as allowing more spontaneous conversations to take place" (O'Dwyer, 2006, p. 11). Facilitators' second responsibility is to assist learners with using their prior personal experiences and background knowledge as learning sources in lesson organization, scheduling, and conducting. Students' past experiences and prior knowledge could make positive contributions to lesson content in the form of student observation, role play, and discussion suggestions (O'Dwyer, 2006; Martin 2014). Weimer (2002) and Martin (2014) regarded teachers' adaption of the facilitator role in the student-centred approach as an essential point in the teaching process. Consequently, students' improved knowledge of a language would assist teachers to find problem areas in reading and practice. All of these contributions help facilitators select the most appropriate content, often in ways traditional teachers could not anticipate.

Several studies prove that the process of shifting from the teacher-centred approach to the learner-centred approach (facilitator) is very demanding and difficult. Libyan teachers are used to being the centre of classroom activities and students remaining as knowledge receivers. In order to solve the problems of this shift of responsibilities and role from teacher to facilitator, Kasanda et al. (2005) recommended educating teachers through the learner-centred approach. Preparing teachers in this way would then lead to preparing genuine facilitators who may considerably promote students' autonomous learning.

Shihiba (2011) and Salma (2014) explained that training teachers through the learner-centred approach can enhance their self-esteem, ability to understand learners and their needs, and ability to handle difficult situations with responsibility and courage. Several researchers including Zeichner, Ndimnade, and Lyle (2008), Kasanda et al. (2005), Martin, (2014) and Yilmaz (2009) highlighted the importance of preparing teachers for undertaking the facilitator role with learner-centred instructional approaches by improving teachers' knowledge and understanding of strategies that promote dialogic engagement in classrooms through teacher training.

Preparing teachers through the teacher-centred approach leads them to think positively about the efficacy of teachers' traditional role. The negative impact of this belief on teachers' CLT implementation was reported by 29 Turkish respondents who were educators at teacher training colleges in Turkey. Subsequently, Yilmaz (2009) asked the following question: "what kinds of problems are likely to thwart or impede the realization of learner-centred instruction in secondary school classrooms in Turkey?"

Libyan English language teachers attempt to be facilitators for their students, but they are still strongly under the influence of their beliefs and prior knowledge. For example, teachers' positive views towards communicative activities are not translated into classroom practices, whereby teachers act as controllers rather than conductors. Besides, the lack of prior interaction between students hinders effective communication in the classroom (Orafi and Borg, 2009). Richards and Lockhart (1994) and Martin (2014) explained that teachers may adapt many roles such as those of facilitator and motivator for students to become active participants in the learning process. Libyan teachers try to be motivators to help students understand and learn the language.

Rogers (1983) emphasized the importance of innovating teacher education and training programs in order to produce genuine facilitators who can sincerely promote students' independent learning. He believed that institutions undertaking the task of pre-service and in-service teacher training programs should play a significant role in this process. Moreover, Thanli et al. (2008, p.61) reported that "teachers managed to shift their traditional point of view to student-centred as a result of their attendance of learner-centered training programs." However, preparing and training student teachers through TCA may result in complicating the process of their implementing the facilitative approach according to Thanli et al. (2008)

Combining Rogers' humanistic ideas for foreign language settings can create a good environment for ELT. This environment may offer students in such contexts an atmosphere of care and constructive support in order to overcome the difficulties they

encounter. Libyan EFL teachers also struggle with changing their teaching approaches from instructing to facilitating. This can enhance teachers' motivation and has been empirically proven to have a positive impact on students' motivation to learn (Atkinson, 2000, Grada, 2014).

The current study investigates teachers' views on their understanding of CLT features and CLT implementation in the classroom, such as improving students' ability to read and opportunity to practice the language, proficient teachers, facilitation, the motivation behind CLT efficiency in teaching reading comprehension, and teachers' role in implementing CLT as transmitters rather than controllers. Rogers and Freiberg (1994) believed that learner-centred teachers find it difficult to fit in traditional schools. In contrast, Rogers (1983) emphasized that no one would reject the democratic principles and practices of his approach, but perhaps teachers would argue that it "is very commendable as a dream, but it just wouldn't and couldn't work in practice" (Rogers, 1983, p. 190). For example, Gadd's (1998) criticism of the implementation of Rogers' ideas in language teaching relates to the overemphasis of these ideas on exploring individuals' inner thoughts and feelings.

2.3 Democratic Education

Ideas drawn from sociology that emphasize the social function of educational institutions and their character in empowering individuals to be active citizens in their societies have influenced the development of the philosophy of learner-centeredness.

The name John Dewey (1916), a main figure in education, is often associated with 'progressive' movement and student-centered learning approaches. He criticized

traditional teaching practices and called for a change towards more democratic education.

Dewey (1916) believed that 'Democratic Education' could only be understood within a democratic society, which recommends equivalent chances for its members to participate in making decisions related to their own matters. This kind of education may lead to support of democratic relationships between teachers and head-teachers, teachers and students, teachers and inspectors, and educational authorities.

Ellis (2000) maintained that learning emerges not via interaction but in interaction. When learners are directed in doing certain tasks with the help of other learners or teachers, they internalize means of carrying out the same tasks by themselves. Hence, social interaction is supposed to facilitate or mediate the learning process. According to Ellis (2000), interactions that assist learners with their learning are those in which the learners scaffold new tasks. Dewey (1916) regarded language as a medium of social interaction and an active instrument for human learning. He thought that an association between communication and interaction would result in 'natural' learning. Establishing and satisfying democracy in any society demands a kind of education that can yield critical individuals.

Yilmaz (2009, p.43) felt that "learner-centered instruction is the teaching model best suited to the realization of democratic education." This can be related to the emphasis of this approach on students' connection in decision-making, on democratic dialogue and open communication, and on emancipating students' thinking, intelligence,

curiosity and creativity. Moreover, this approach is aimed at improving students' positive attitude towards participant democracy and creating individuals accountable for their learning (Rogers, 1969; Brandes and Ginnis, 1986).

The effective implementation of CLT involves applying both teachers' and students' intelligence and creativity (Rogers, 1969; Brandes and Ginnis, 1986). This is related to Dewey's (1916) concept of democracy, which involves freeing intelligence and creativity for independent effectiveness and emancipated thinking. A reflection on Dewey's concept of democratic education indicates that introducing it into schools would require teacher and student internalization of openness, confidence, trustfulness, cooperation, willingness and true responsibility. Both teachers and students also want to update their knowledge and to prepare themselves with new social skills. It is also vital to change the criteria for teacher evaluation.

Shechtman (2002, p.364) suggested that such beliefs can be improved and developed by equipping teachers with knowledge, skills and attitudes for shaping their instructional approach. Careful planning and proper management of adapting the new CLT method that represents these ideas are additional issues for consideration. These innovations can be introduced well through establishing an open democratic dialogue involving all education stakeholders. The Habermasian Ideal Speech Situation (1984-1987) may represent an appropriate model for solving communication problems that may arise during this dialogue.

2.3.1 Habermasian Model of Speech Situation

Jurgen Habermas (1919-) is a fine-known contemporary philosopher who advanced and developed a social critical theory by presenting a comprehensive critical analysis of the individual and interaction, structure of social institutions and force of modification, and change and development in societies. Habermas (1984-1987) presented significant insight into school structures and pedagogical practices, such as communication, knowledge and discourse. His theory presents useful guidelines for educational reforms with clear focus on human freedom, autonomy and emancipation.

Habermas (1987) pointed out some problems of modern society, such as life values, equal rights, individual self-realization, participation and human rights, and called for revising the ways plans and actions are conducted to solve these problems (Habermas, 1987, p. 392). He recommended agreeing on plans and actions through complete public participation to reach consensus during public dialogue. He criticized the practice of power by experts and bureaucrats, which results in authority based on actions and decisions (Habermas, 1984).

However, Habermas (1984) highlighted that certain conditions should be provided in order to make any communication act successful. Therefore, he presented the concept of an Ideal Speech Situation as a medium for any communication act pointing to an end with agreement among all participants. This means that everyone who participates in a given dialogue can debate, question or criticize any proposal raised. All participants should be given equivalent rights to express their wishes, attitudes, and needs relevant to the discussion topic. The participants should share mutual assurance and trust in order

to reach understanding. However, they should all be sensible in accepting the better argument or proposal to lead them to take actions that can in turn be questioned and reviewed again (Habermas, 1984).

Theoretically, a critical point is related to the tension potentially arising among individuals due to their desire to direct curricula to meet their interests and needs with plans pre-determined by policy-makers. But since schools should produce or create a “community life” (Dewey, 1916, p.358), the Habermasian Ideal Speech Situation can offer an appropriate model for communication between all school community members, particularly teachers and students. However, this would require a change in their conceptions about authority and control over the learning process, which can be a major challenge. Several scholars regard teachers’ resistance to give up their authoritarian role and control over the learning process as an influential reason for the failure of CLT implementation (Wimmer, 2002).

The difficulty with the practical application of the Habermasian model of an Ideal Speech Situation led Blake (1955, p.357-358) to criticize Habermas’ prescription of this idea. Blake supposed this model in an ‘unstructured speech situation’ that lacks careful management or rationality. He argued that the freedom given to participants to say anything could lead ‘selfish and narcissistic speakers’ to dominate and frustrate dialogue among others. Therefore, he excluded treating this idea as a criterion for teaching. Nevertheless, as all school community members share the same goal about providing students with suitable learning conditions, they may all agree on any proposal that can lead to the realization of this aim.

In the Libyan context where English is taught as a foreign language, learners face difficulties in learning the language, especially in reading comprehension. English has become the focus of attention for several years in Libya, and many studies have been conducted to investigate the most effective approach to teaching English as a foreign language (EFL). This chapter discusses the main points behind the role of teaching reading comprehension through CLT in the Libyan context: (i) EFL in Libya; (ii) the differences between EFL and ESL; (iii) difficulties encountered in CLT implementation in teaching reading comprehension in Libya; (iv) methods and approaches to language teaching using the communicative approach in the context of EFL in Libya; (v) the roles of students and teachers in CLT implementation in the context of EFL in Libya; and (vi) studies on the use of the CLT approach in teaching reading comprehension.

2.4 English as a Foreign Language (EFL) in Libya

Sabitha and Najeeb (2013) investigated EFL education in Libya and discovered that the country's system of teaching English is rather ancient and heavily based on the grammar-translation method (GTM). The curriculum requires students to master a series of five books and the related volumes that mainly emphasize learning vocabulary through reading and translation. However, the new curriculum "English for Libya" improves on the traditional approach via learning the basic pattern of constructing sentences rather than vocabulary (Sabitha and Najeeb, 2013).

This teaching and learning method that was introduced in the 1990s is called communicative language teaching (CLT). The main aim of this new curriculum was to develop students' oral communication skills (Orafi and Borg, 2009, p.251). It facilitates

English language learning and assists students to use English in their interactions through group discussion and role play (Orafi, 2008). Teachers act as facilitators to prepare learners for effective interaction and discussion. They are also mediators who help students during active learning, whereby they engage in authentic, meaningful, and contextualized discourse (Shihiba, 2011). However, the change in method from grammar-translation to communicative language teaching is not without challenges, for some teachers are still reluctant to apply CLT in the classroom. Sabitha and Najeeb (2013, p.1249) elaborated that “the teachers use Arabic, which is the first language, to explain grammar and the meaning of EFL texts, and the students are asked to translate English sentences to Arabic or vice versa.” The reason is that teachers are not well-trained to teach the new curriculum with the communicative teacher-learner approach.

Moreover, the absence of technology has a negative impact on teaching the target language. Teachers are not familiar with advanced technologies to be applied in teaching, such as projectors and the Internet. Consequently, students become bored with the same teaching style that merely focuses on reading, translating, and memorizing, hence losing interest in learning the language (Shihiba, 2011). Sabitha and Najeeb (2013) further argued that students lack interest in mastering the language, as their purpose of study is only to fulfil the requirement of passing exams.

Genç and Bada (2010) explained that English is now a language of this modern world in the fields of science, aviation, computing, diplomacy, and tourism. It is the official or co-official language in over 42 countries and is spoken extensively in other countries without official status. The process of teaching and learning English has a crucial role

in acquiring this second/foreign language. Reading comprehension is one of the important skills for understanding language. Mustafa and Zamzam (2013) explained that reading comprehension is among the most significant skills and has long been the focus of attention for foreign language professionals, pedagogues, researchers and teachers. It thus has a crucial role in learning and mastering a foreign language.

2.5 EFL vs. ESL

Both EFL (English as a foreign language) and ESL (English as a second language) involve teaching English to speakers of other languages. The learning process takes place in different teaching environments for ESL and EFL. ESL basically refers to learning English as the target language in an environment in which it is spoken as the primary language of interaction, communication, as well as business. Libyan students learning English in Libya represent the notion of EFL learning. Hence, EFL differs from ESL in that EFL entails learning English in the environment of one's native language, e.g. Libyan students learning English in Libya or Russian students learning English in Russia. It is worth identifying the fundamental differences between ESL and EFL to better understand their implications to CLT use in each different learning and teaching environment.

First, ESL learning might or might not take place in a classroom setting, yet learning English in an EFL environment implies that it is very likely to occur in the classroom context. The main point is that learners in an ESL environment have access to speakers of the target language and consequently, an abundance of exposure to English in its natural use outside the classroom. However, this is typically unusual for EFL learners.

Next, the English language classroom in an ESL setting typically functions on the principle of immersing learners in the target language society. Hiep (2007) argued that it is, therefore, essential in the ESL classroom to establish what Holliday (1994, p. 54) called “the optimum interactional parameters, within which, learners, by interacting with each other on meaningful things, could best develop the communicative skills they immediately use in their real life.” Additionally, learners in an ESL setting generally have a different native language from their peers. This being so, using the target language becomes salient for ESL learners in interacting and making friends with classmates in and outside the language classroom.

A further distinction can be made between the ESL and EFL contexts in terms of motivation. Motivation could be conceptualized as being either integrative or instrumental in second language learning. Integrative motivation refers to the desire to learn the target language for communication purposes, identifying with the target language community, and having an interest in the target language culture. Instrumental motivation, on the other hand, has to do with the desire to learn the target language for practical reasons, such as passing an exam or obtaining a high-paying job (Gardner, 2001). It is argued that successful second language acquisition depends on integrative motivation. Language learning in an ESL setting is by and large considered to entail integrative motivation because learners in ESL environments need to function in the target language community. ESL teaching in such environments is predominantly designed to help learners develop their communicative competence.

On the contrary, learners in EFL contexts are often instrumentally motivated to learn English. They usually learn English either because it is a school requirement or they need to pass a certain university entrance examination (Gorsuch, 2000; Liao, 2000). EFL in Libya is instrumental, whereby students learn it merely to pass exams. It means English is one of the school requirements to pass to another level.

Moreover, Ellis (1996) maintained that the teacher's role in ESL settings is more of a facilitator, since a great deal of language learning takes place outside the classroom. In contrast, the teacher in EFL contexts is regarded as the "sole provider of knowledge and experience" in terms of the target language and its culture. This is mainly due to the fact that EFL is "a cultural island" for learners, who basically depend on their teacher to learn the target language and its culture.

2.6 Implementation of CLT in Libya

Despite the popularity of the communicative language teaching (CLT) method, not all countries have embraced and implemented it successfully. Researchers have made many attempts to study these constraints. In different third-world countries, Libya included, these are inherent CLT constraints. Various existing factors have in one way or another led to communicative approach constraints (Shihiba, 2011; Orafi and Borg, 2009).

In an article, Orafi (n.d., p. 15) was quoted as saying "in the Libyan communication style lots of features are often left unsaid; Libyans leave these features to their culture

to explain. Even a few but well-selected words could already communicate vast and complex messages very effectively. Libyans are not fast to explicit forms of communication or complex reasoning. Libyans tend to employ high context communication styles and prefer routine interaction.” Accordingly, it is argued that Libyan students tend to learn more by repetition rather than reasoning. Many Libyan teachers have therefore become over-reliant on textbooks and hold on to practices more parallel with the audio-lingual method that involves drilling, repetition, and habit formation, instead of venturing into the communicative approach. Their school curriculum and the teaching methodologies have remained traditional, attached to the structures with which they are familiar.

Besides, because of the characteristics of the structure-based approach, teachers continue to likewise employ GTM. The curriculum has remained limited because with this method it is not necessary to create new things. Another constraint is the fact that Libyan students only begin learning English by seventh grade (Shihiba, 2011; Orafi and Borg, 2009). The mother tongue is not allowed for all communication in the teaching-learning process. The teachers facilitate the students to obtain language knowledge by using the target language as the interaction and communication means. With GTM, students memorize vocabulary by translation it to their native language.

The education system, schools, culture and environment are among the problems that restrict and affect CLT implementation (Wedell (2003)). Shihiba (2011) and Ntirienganya (2015) discussed that the lack of support from schools, managers and parents is one of the main difficulties that limit the success of implementing the new

curriculum. In the same time Ntrienganya (2015) argued that contextual problems may affect the content and quality of classroom teaching and learning in any effort to implement a student- centered approach. These include limited resources, exam pressure and large classes (O'Sollivan, 2004). Teachers face many difficulties in implementing CLT due to internal and external factors (Surafel 2002; Wang, 2009). Internal constraints relate to teachers themselves, such as lack of professional knowledge. External constraints on the other hand are factors that teachers cannot control and relate to the education system, such as large classes, lack of resources and time constrains.

There are other difficulties inherent to CLT itself, including lack of effective instruments (Li, 1998), time-consuming activities (Sato and Kleinsasser, 1999) and unsuitability to the local context (Chang, 2010). The questionnaire in the current study lists these problems to explore whether Libyan teachers encounter the same difficulties in CLT implementation in their way of teaching reading. The problems were also drawn from other sources (Rao, 2002; Sato, 2002; Sato & Kleinsasser1999; Su, 2002).

Hung (2009) developed a survey in Taiwan in a study to identify the difficulties and obstacles that university English teachers encounter in their implementation of CLT. Hung's study indicated that Taiwanese university teachers encountered various CLT teaching difficulties, which were related to teaching approaches, students' heterogeneous levels of proficiency, teachers' beliefs about teaching English, and school structure in terms of time and class size. The utility of the survey is supported since it has been used in similar contexts of CLT implementation in countries where

English is taught as a foreign language. However, the researcher double checked the survey reliability by piloting the study in the same setting where the actual study was conducted. Shihiba (2011) developed a survey to identify the difficulties and obstacles that secondary teachers of English face in their implementation of CLT. In the current study, the researcher attempts to identify the difficulties Libyan teachers encounter in implementing CLT in preparatory schools.

Shihiba indicated that there are many difficulties that prevent secondary school teachers from implementing CLT in their classes. These are associated with low student proficiency levels, mismatch between the curriculum objectives and exam content, large classes, limited time, lack of teaching facilities and resources, and students' resistance to participate in class. Learning English in Libya is completely based on the teacher-centered method and students do not usually have any opportunity to control their own learning (Orafi and Borg, 2009; Shihiba, 2011). There is also very little chance for Libyan students to exercise such approach, as they need to abide by the structure. In this case, they have little or no opportunity to speak other languages in the society they live in, with either close-circuit or family-focused groups.

They also lack the necessary motivation because they are yet to fully realize the ultimate importance of language learning (Libya Education, n.d.) given the very limited opportunity to speak or use other languages. This is because Libyans have remained closely knit people and their political history is such that it has left no room in Libya except for Libyans. The number of students per class might also be a deterrent to the communicative approach where interaction is highly necessary but may be impossible

given such large classes and limited amount of time. “The Libyan education system is suffering from a shortage of qualified English language teachers at present. Learners are taught collectively in large classes and they are experiencing a lack of English language interaction in the classroom” (Sawani, 2009, p. 31).

Furthermore, Shihiba (2011) stated that although several communicative language materials are served in the form of text book series published for the communicative curriculum, teachers feel pressured to create their own materials and activities that are appropriate or effective for their students. Teachers reported that they already had so many tasks, that any kind of additional work was a burden. At the same time, teachers were reluctant to use CLT because it was time-consuming to design their own communicative materials and activities. Most teachers did not even try using and developing CLT activities. The current study also attempts to identify CLT activities for teaching reading comprehension.

Teachers’ low oral English proficiency is a big obstacle in implementing CLT in Libyan EFL classrooms. Since the reason the Ministry of Education in Libya decided to implement CLT is that Libyan students’ oral proficiency in English is insufficient even after several years of studying English, educators have hoped that CLT would have a significant role in developing students’ oral English. However, although highly proficient in English grammar, reading, and writing, Libyan teachers are not competent enough to conduct communicative classes, which require teachers to also have high levels of English speaking and listening abilities. This indicates that teachers’ low oral skills challenge Libyan EFL teachers in implementing CLT. From this specific point,

the second research question is designed for this study to investigate the difficulties that Libyan teachers have in applying the CLT approach to teach reading in class.

Shihiba (2011) investigated the communicative learner-centered approach implemented by a sample of Libyan English foreign language teachers as part of the Libyan innovative English language curriculum implemented in secondary schools. Shihiba explored 14 conceptions, namely student-centered learning, independent learning, facilitation, active learning, communication and interaction, learners' responsibility, cooperative learning, motivation and accounting for students' needs and interests, as well as some misconceptions about the communicative learner-centered method, such as free learning, empowering students, disempowering teachers, a new way of teaching, lack of discipline, and an approach that cannot be implemented.

Before constructing the questionnaire in the current study, we reviewed previous studies and literature about teachers' views and difficulties. The literature includes measurements and questionnaires produced to describe teachers' views and problems they face in implementing CLT. The difficulties were listed to investigate whether they are also faced by Libyan teachers during CLT application in their way of teaching reading. The problems were also derived from other sources (Rao, 2002; Sato, 2002; Sato and Kleinsasser, 1999; Su, 2002).

Additional difficulties can be linked to teachers. There is a tendency in literature on LCA to recognize teachers' resistance to implement LCA as a major obstacle to its effective implementation. This resistance is often linked to teachers' fear of losing

control or power over the class (Rogers, 1969; Wimmer, 2002; Garret and Shortall, 2002), also Pusuluri, (2015) discussed that teachers' resistance to implement CLT is one of their main problems. Weimer (2002) also felt that the notion of giving up control or having students make decisions often terrifies many teachers because they believe their role in teacher-centered classrooms dominates their role in student-centered classrooms.

Shihiba (2011) concluded that teachers' conceptions and misconceptions about the communicative learner-centered approach significantly affect their in-class teaching methods and consequently influence and reduce the success of applying the English language curriculum innovations adapted in Libyan secondary schools in 2000. According to Shihiba (2011) and Ataieb (2013), factors related to contextual and cultural considerations are the main limitations to the success of teachers implementing CLT. Yet less experienced teachers exhibit a more positive attitude towards CLT approach implementation compared to more experienced teachers. However, Shihiba believed that the current approach in Libya still contains weaknesses in curriculum designers' intentions, whereby teachers remain inclined to use traditional methods. They also fear losing face and authority in the classroom. An attempt is also made in the current study to identify how significant differences in teaching experience length affect the difficulties that Libyan teachers face in implementing CLT.

Al-Nouh (2008) studied and investigated how Kuwaiti primary EFL teachers perceive CLA and its implementation as a CLT-based, learner-centered method in their classes. To achieve this objective, Al-Nouh first made a classroom observation scheme for 23

primary EFL Kuwaiti female teachers using COLT (Communicative Orientation of Language Teaching) with its four categories derived from literature on CLT. This scheme served to understand whether the methodology implemented was communicative. Second, Al-Nouh examined curriculum documents, textbook materials, and assessments. Moreover, she conducted a teacher training program to determine whether the participants worked continuously in harmony towards the curriculum goals. In the end, she interviewed the participating teachers to learn more about their knowledge and beliefs regarding CLT and their perceptions of their own practice. A mixed method analysis of the data indicated that Kuwaiti EFL teachers did not implement the CLT-based learner-centered method for many reasons.

In order to investigate English language teaching, Golombek (1998, p. 448) suggested "starting with what a teacher knows and what type of knowledge he/she needs." Relative to this argument is the complex interaction between teachers' knowledge and experience and the teaching context in which they work. It is important to this research to consider how teachers teach and how their learning influences the way they teach. EFL teachers are usually affected by their previous experience as students (Xu and Connelly, 2002) under the effect of 'apprenticeship of observation' (Loreti, 1975). Teachers' knowledge and cognition reflect in their teaching in the classroom (Borg, 2003). The following discussion traces how teachers' cognition and knowledge deeply influence teachers' teaching methodologies

2.7 Teacher Cognition

Teacher cognition is "the store of beliefs, knowledge, assumptions, theories, and attitudes in all aspects of teachers' job scope and it has a powerful impact on classroom practices" (Borg, 1998, p.19). Teacher cognition is a term referring to teachers' thoughts, beliefs, and mental lives. Borg (2003, p.81) also mentioned that it is an "unobservable cognitive dimension of teaching what teachers know, believe, and think." In other words, it is the process of acquiring and organizing information, as well as the process of applying and conveying knowledge. Cognition influences teaching behavior and methods. According to Freeman (2002: p.6), "teachers' cognition plays an important role in their teaching practice, because it bears on the teachers' decisions such as the appropriate teaching materials for their students." Furthermore, Borg (2012) stated that under "teacher behavior" are belief, knowledge, and related constructs that influence teachers.

The definition of teacher cognition indicates that it has a significant role in the teaching method applied and directly affects classroom activities. This study examines if teacher cognition influences teacher behavior and teaching approach. Teacher cognition directly affects how Libyan English language teachers implement the communicative approach in their classes. They typically employ the communicative approach according to their stored knowledge, experiences, personal beliefs, and attitudes. In this sense, Libyan teachers are governed by their previous cognition and beliefs of the traditional method.

Nonetheless, teachers are guided to apply suitable teaching methods in various class activities. In this sense, this study aims to investigate the difficulties teachers face when applying the communicative approach. Therefore, the researcher aims to focus on teachers' knowledge and beliefs, and their influence on classroom practice because "beliefs are the filter that teachers use to adapt the knowledge, i.e. teachers modify and adapt the new knowledge according to what they believe is good for their students" (Richard and Lockhart, 1995, p. 31). Accordingly, Libyan teachers try to adapt CLT when teaching reading comprehension, but their belief is deemed one of the difficulties that restrict CLT implementation.

2.7.1 Teacher Belief

Personal belief significantly affects teacher belief, which has a deep influence on teaching methodologies and how teachers employ or apply the methodologies. Kuzborska (2011) and Kadriye (2015) posited that learning, teacher belief, and understanding of teaching play an important role in teachers' classroom practices and professional growth. Teacher belief affects their teaching and learning objectives, teaching method, material selection, classroom interaction, and communication with students. Teachers' ideas and assumptions about language and language teaching steer their language instruction process. In short, teachers' beliefs direct their overall actions (Richard and Rodger, 2001). Teachers' beliefs directly affect both their awareness and judgments of teaching and learning interactions in class, resulting in a variety of classroom practices (Clark and Yinger, 1987 cited in Li and Walsh, 2011; Kadriye, 2015).

In order to acknowledge the role of belief in the teaching and learning process, teachers must acquire and develop their own beliefs about teaching. Some beliefs are rather simple, for example the belief that teachers should correct their students' grammar mistakes (see 6.2.2.1). This is one major difficulty that Libyan teachers encounter in adapting CLT in their teaching, whereby they strongly focus on grammar rather than teaching the reading skill. Other beliefs are even more complex, for example the belief that the learner-centered approach enhances learners' opportunities more than the teacher-centered approach. Teacher belief affects the manner in which teachers communicate with their students. This discussion offers a clear picture of teacher belief and has guided the researcher to construct further questionnaire statements (see Appendix 1).

One part of teacher cognition is teachers' beliefs, which is a prominent research topic. Numerous studies indicate that teachers' beliefs influence their pedagogical practices in the classroom (Borg, 2003; Ng and Farrell, 2003; Farrell and Kun, 2008 cited in Li, 2012). Furthermore, teachers' beliefs also largely affect their classroom actions. This draws attention towards the notion that teachers instruct in the manner they were taught. All teachers were once learners themselves, and their beliefs about teaching are often a reflection of their personal learning experience. When student teachers come into the classroom, they already hold a set of profound beliefs based on their own experience as learners. Some researchers suggest that strong beliefs built during teachers' early education generate certain dispositions that hinder pre-service teacher education from having a crucial impact on teaching (Orafi and Borg, 2009; Kadriye (2015). The above

discussion assisted the researcher to construct questionnaire statements regarding participants' knowledge and experience (see Appendix 1).

Kadriye (2015) explained that teachers' beliefs mostly affect their classroom actions. Furthermore, teachers' beliefs also influence their training. Many previous studies investigated the effect of teacher education on teacher cognition. The results highlight that "the anticipated transfer from course input to practice is greatly affected by teachers' prior knowledge and beliefs" (Kuzborska, 2011, p.103).

Libyan English language teachers are influenced by their beliefs with respect to the traditional method. In this case, the researcher believes that the new approach cannot be applied if previous beliefs still exist and if there is no desire to change owing to the obstacles faced by teachers in implementing the CLT method. This clarifies teachers' views and beliefs in helping construct and guide the questionnaire statements (see Appendix 1). It is clear that teacher belief is among the difficulties that restrict CLT adaptation in teaching reading comprehension.

2.7.2 Teacher Belief and Classroom Practice

In acknowledging the role of teachers' beliefs in determining classroom practices, several studies have examined the extent to which the teacher belief aspect affects what happens in class. For example, Kadriya (2015) concluded there is a relative connection between teacher belief and what they practice in the classroom. Teachers' beliefs directly affect their perception of teaching and learning in the classroom, resulting in a range of classroom practices (Clark and Peterson, 1986; Clark and Yinger, 1987 cited

in Li and Walsh, 2011). However, a number of studies have found inconsistencies between teachers' beliefs and practices. Borg (2003) referred to a number of studies that highlight some matters hindering teachers from implementing practices consistent with their beliefs.

In short, the aforementioned studies provide evidence that teacher belief influences teacher practices in many ways, as reflected through the overall nature of teacher classroom practice. The studies also show that what teachers admit to believe and what they actually do in class may or may not be consistent, and that various contextual factors influence the degree of congruence.

2.7.3 Teacher Knowledge

Teachers are often regarded as sources of knowledge as part of the school curriculum, with their role being to impart that knowledge to their students. In the context of teaching English in Libya for example, teacher education primarily focuses on enhancing teachers' knowledge of the English language, while the teaching methodology is often considered secondary. The notion behind focusing on developing teachers' knowledge of English is that if teachers are well-equipped with the right knowledge of their subject matter, they will better impart knowledge to their students. This reflects the profound idea in the education culture that "education is a process of transmitting knowledge." Teacher knowledge is a vital aspect of teaching English. There are various definitions of teacher knowledge. For instance, Verloop et al. (2001) utilized teachers' knowledge as an overarching notion referring to all knowledge that

influences teachers' teaching practice, including knowledge about learning difficulties, subject matter and teaching strategies.

Libyan teachers' past experience with education and teaching for example, contributes to their personal knowledge. From their education, teachers learn subject content, pedagogical techniques used by their teachers and pedagogical theories from their education courses (Crandall, 2000). It is clear that teachers' past experience is dynamic -- it changes as new experiences interact with the store of ideas and skills that teachers have (Verloop et al, 2001).

Teacher knowledge in the present study refers to subject knowledge of the English language. Choosing and applying the right method to teach reading, for example, is considered difficult by many teachers in Libya. The current teaching situation affects teachers' practices by imposing some constraints on what techniques teachers may use. Students' expectations, levels and large numbers all affect the teachers' choice of implementing CLT in teaching reading comprehension. Hence, this present situation has led the researcher to construct additional questionnaire statements accordingly (see Appendix 1).

Mangubhai et al. (2004, p.293) noted "what teachers do in the classrooms is largely shaped by this practical knowledge, a premise that is well-established and widely accepted." Verloop et al. (2001) explained that knowledge derived by teachers from their teacher education is somewhat absorbed and integrated into their practical knowledge. This concept has led the researcher to construct corresponding statements

in the questionnaire (see Appendix 1). Literature on teaching shows that rich theoretical knowledge is a basic part of teaching expertise, but evidence also indicates that reorganizing knowledge is a difficult task (Tsui, 2003). It has also been discovered that any changes in teachers' conceptions or mental models require modifying the entire organization of their theoretical knowledge, which is not easy.

Procedural knowledge or theoretical knowledge is seen as an essential but deficient factor in developing knowledge of teaching. This was confirmed by Tsui (2003), who discovered that teachers who learn many teaching activities cannot develop their knowledge of EFL teaching. In this sense, Libyan teachers should have good knowledge of new teaching methods like CLT with its activities to implement the concept correctly. Moreover, Tsui (2003) confirmed that theoretical knowledge is important in learning, as it helps improve teacher cognition to focus and better understand the right ways to teach in class. This kind of knowledge concerning teachers' routines is a mental resource for their "investment" in the pursuit of new goals and problem-solving methods at higher levels, which teachers do not initially have the capacity to deal with. It is not only helpful for teachers but also for learners. Therefore, the present study explores this type of knowledge in more detail with regards to teaching English reading

2.8 Types of Teacher Knowledge

It is essential to point out how scholars, researchers, and teachers understand the required knowledge in order to become competent or qualified for the teaching process.

Ofsted (2000) showed that several researchers have studied and grouped several types of teacher knowledge, among which content or subject matter knowledge, curriculum

knowledge, pedagogical knowledge, etc. Teachers' knowledge, curriculum knowledge and prior experience are essential factors affecting their classroom practices in teaching reading. This is because background knowledge shapes teachers' new learning and eventually influences teachers' practical knowledge (Arioğul, 2007).

2.8.1 Content Knowledge

Content knowledge refers to the amount and organization of knowledge that teachers possess (Suwaed, 2011; Yusef, 2014). In Libya, content knowledge is conveyed in undergraduate and postgraduate courses where students learn about the English grammar rules. Furthermore, according to (McMeniman et al., 2003; Pusuluri, 2012) the main sorts of knowledge that teachers should bring to their lessons or classes are content knowledge, curriculum knowledge, general pedagogical knowledge, and knowledge of learners and their characteristics. Teachers must also have some knowledge of educational objectives and values.

In the context of this study, Libyan English language teachers bring knowledge into the classroom, which influences their practices and methods of teaching. Therefore, they should have sufficient and accurate background or knowledge of the subject matter, which is the English language, as well as a complete understanding of the CLT method. Teachers depend heavily on their experience when teaching. Experience develops views to help them teach in a way that students can understand (see 6.2.2.6). Next, syntactic knowledge is the means by which new knowledge is presented to students, i.e. knowing how to convey and teach substantive knowledge to others (Turner-Bisset 2003). Teachers' beliefs about a subject influence what and how they choose to teach. In other

words, teachers have knowledge, beliefs, and assumptions about what works best for their classes (Richards and Lockhart, 1995). Verloop et al. (2001, p. 454) indicated that “knowledge and beliefs function as filters to interpret new experiences or select new information about teaching approaches.”

In the present study, it is important to acknowledge the beliefs associated with Libyan teachers’ views of teaching reading comprehension. Teachers must generally understand matters related to the CLT method that they think are true and good for them and their students. Teachers typically focus on maintaining control over students, whereby discipline is the main feature in teaching reading in Libya. This is related to the culture and beliefs that teachers initially formed about their role in the classroom.

Teachers’ knowledge on a subject matter also underlies their pedagogical strength. When students face difficulties in learning complex tasks, teachers are required to simplify and make them comprehensible. Nevertheless, teachers’ ability to develop, expand, or modify their understanding of subject knowledge is directly influenced by their personal understanding of the subject matter that they bring into the classroom.

In addition, Verloop et al. (2001) indicated that several labels are employed in literature on EFL teachers’ subject knowledge. Action-oriented knowledge denotes subject knowledge for immediate use in teaching practice. In contrast, content- and context-related knowledge are mostly tacit sorts of knowledge (Van Driel et al., 1998) or based on the reflection of experience. Generally, it is essential to recognize that different components of teachers’ knowledge directly influence what they actually do in class.

Consequently, teachers who teach L2 are required to equip themselves with some

theoretical knowledge of learning as well as an understanding of the social, psychological, and cognitive development of students.

2.8.2 Curriculum Knowledge

Desimone (2009) reported that the curriculum presents knowledge of which specific subject parts teachers are supposed to convey to students at specific grade levels, and on what students are going to be tested and how. This includes “horizon knowledge,” which explains how the subject matter in the current grade curriculum is going to be developed as students are progressing to higher grades, as well as what they have already learned in earlier grades.

At the preparatory level in Libya, there are general outlines of the subjects that students should study each year but no clear guidelines on the content of each subject. The education system did not take teachers’ knowledge and views into consideration when the new curriculum was first introduced to Libyan schools. In this context, one of the main roles of preparatory teachers is to present new teaching and learning materials for students. In such situations, curriculum knowledge enables teachers to understand that materials are not only available via textbooks, but also from what they generate themselves for a particular topic or student.

2.8.3 General Pedagogical Knowledge

Teachers generally require pedagogical knowledge with focus on the understanding of broad teaching and learning principles, including class management (McMeniman et al. 2003). Teachers also require understanding of the organization and planning of teaching strategies and research methods, all of which contribute to teaching reading effectively.

Libyan English language teachers should have pedagogical awareness of how they can teach the reading skill and apply activities through the CLT method. Additionally, teachers should possess some knowledge about the objectives of education, as well as how to integrate education rules and their own ideas while teaching reading. The present study explores these issues to find out whether Libyan EFL teachers who teach reading have at least some general information related to the pedagogical aspect, like applying certain techniques, strategies, and other elements related to classroom management.

This discussion gives a clear picture of the information that Libyan teachers must have, which also serves as a guideline to construct questionnaire statements (see Appendix 1). Teachers of reading should have curriculum knowledge to know how to use teaching materials like new textbooks. According to McMeniman et al. (2003), general pedagogical knowledge is divided into four components: learners and learning, classroom management, curriculum, and instruction. Teachers' knowledge about classroom management and lesson delivery is influenced by their knowledge and beliefs about learners, teaching, and learning. Theories of how students learn affect how teachers make decisions about their roles and how they interact with students, often implicitly.

For example, teachers who are influenced by the behaviorist theory understand the students' role in the classroom as being "recipients of knowledge." Passive knowledge recipients are taught differently than active participants. The former usually presents information that students are expected to learn followed by practicing the presented information, while the latter may involve presenting problem-solving tasks designed to

stimulate students' thinking and knowledge building (Pollard and Triggs 1997). Beliefs about how students learn implicitly affect how teachers interpret their role in the class. In a class with passive knowledge recipients, teachers often possess the role of controller, while in a class with active recipients, teachers usually opt for the role of facilitator (Schunk, 2004). This discussion elucidated what Libyan teachers must do with passive students and was also used as a guideline to construct questionnaire statements (see Appendix 1).

Teachers' knowledge about learners is an essential part of the knowledge they acquire (Mullock, 2003; 2006). Mullock's (2003) study confirmed that understanding students' strengths and weaknesses as well as needs is an essential aspect of EFL teachers' work. Knowledge of the learners is considered a part of the pedagogical knowledge held by teachers. In the case of Libyan EFL teachers, having knowledge of students' levels of understanding helps teachers understand the difficulties that students encounter and offer the right ideas to overcome these problems. Knowledge of the teaching and learning processes includes theoretical knowledge about learning. Teachers already have knowledge of learning because they were once students themselves at school and university.

Nonetheless, teachers should be familiar with different learning theories and the steps involved in learning. Altrichter (2005, p.44) stated that "without support of regional administrators, change might happen with individual teachers or single schools but it would most likely remain isolated in some innovative pockets without affecting the broader system." The administration, family and parents must support teachers in implementing the new method successfully.

2.8.4 Teachers' Prior Experience as Language Learners and Language Teachers

According to the literature, teachers' prior experience is another key factor influencing their knowledge of teaching English reading (Arnoğul, 2007). Researchers including Borg (2003), Breen et al. (2001), Freeman (1991) and Meijer et al. (2001) confirmed that prior experience and knowledge of learning are vital for teachers' classroom practices and teaching. Meijer et al. (1999) considered this prior experience as one of the background variables that influence teacher knowledge. Borg (2003) also argued that teachers' prior language learning experiences establish cognitions about learning and language learning, which form the basis of their initial conceptualizations of L2 teaching during teacher education. According to the present study, experience influences the way teachers teach reading (see 6.2.2.6).

Breen et al. (2001) found that prior learning experience during the early years highly influences the classroom activities teachers apply. Teachers are likely to use the same learning approaches if they feel they would work well with their students. However, this is not always the case, as different students have varying needs.

Various studies on second language education and applied linguistics also indicate that language teachers' knowledge of teaching is influenced by their own prior experiences with teaching and learning (Borg, 2003; Freeman and Johnson, 1998; Meijer et al., 2001). Borg (2003, p. 81) posited that "there is ample evidence that teachers' experiences as learners could inform cognitions about teaching and learning, which continue to exert an influence on teachers throughout their careers." This means that

teachers' teaching experience is considered one of the main factors that influence their knowledge in teaching English reading or any other language skills. Tsui (2003) explored the experiences of four teachers, and found that those who lack disciplinary knowledge are influenced by their own learning experiences. In summary, it is apparent that teachers' prior experience and knowledge of learning and teaching English are essential factors affecting their classroom practices in teaching reading. This is because background knowledge shapes teachers' new learning and eventually influences teachers' practical knowledge (Arioğul, 2007). Therefore, teachers' prior knowledge affects their way of teaching reading and is deemed one of the difficulties teachers encounter in implementing the CLT method to teach reading.

2.9 Language Teaching Methods and Approaches

The field of foreign language teaching is impacted by educational theories such as behaviorism, functionalism, and cognition. Education specialists have improved a number of methods and approaches to determine more successful means of language teaching. With respect to foreign language teaching methodology, there is a clear difference between "methods" and "approaches." The former refers to variable teaching styles, while the latter refers to the teaching of philosophies that are interpreted and practiced in diverse ways. An approach obviously involves beliefs and principles, while a method is "an overall plan for orderly presentation of language material" (Richards and Rodgers, 1986, p. 15). A method is an implementation that takes place in the classroom either in the form of exacting a trick, stratagem, or machination. Techniques must be reliable and have proper methods, and must thus be in agreement with a given approach.

The “what is taught” and “how it is taught” partly depend on students’ needs and their prior knowledge and experiences, or basically on other sources. For example, the relative significance of speaking over writing and reading, or grammar over pronunciation, does have impact in terms of the teaching method the instructor selects. Teachers interpret these methods in their own ways – some use only one method while others combine methods. In the present study, the researcher is concerned with examining teachers’ perspectives on the CLT method, and why they prefer this method over others.

The paradigm shifts over the past century in the language teaching field have brought to light how cyclical this field is in terms of methods and approaches utilized. The dominant language teaching methods among Libyan teachers are: (i) grammar-translation method, (ii) direct method, (iii) audio-lingual method, and (iv) communicative approach. Meanwhile, subsequent sections introduce and explain the four main teaching methods conquering the field over the last century. These methods are: (i) the grammar-translation method that emerged from the classical language teaching field; (ii) the direct method rooted in modern language teaching; (iii) the audio-lingual method based on the theory of behaviorist psychology and structural linguistics; and (iv) the communicative method based on the notions of sociolinguistics.

2.9.1 Grammar-Translation Method

The grammar-translation method came to distinction as the Renaissance era approached its end. Subsequently, especially the United States started requiring a successful foreign language teaching method. Consequently, taking into account the paucity of class time,

education institutions were recommended to focus on language teaching and learning, particularly reading as the most reasonably learnable skill (Richards and Rodgers, 1986).

Based on this theoretical explanation of foreign language teaching and the recommendations made, the grammar-translation method was adopted. It henceforth controlled the field of language teaching, particularly in the United States, for the first half of the last century. The focus of this language teaching method is on the reading skill, but little awareness is directed to the communicative aspect of language. Teachers employ translation as the main instructional strategy. They translate the target content and match it to its equivalent in the learners' first language.

Students are taught to memorize rules, errors are not tolerated, and teachers are likely to correct errors every time they occur. In this case, the role of L1 in the process of foreign language acquisition is obvious. In addition to the characteristics mentioned above, Richard and Rodgers (1986) defined the major characteristics of the grammar-translation method in teaching the target language through a detailed analysis of its grammatical structure. Teachers are expected to employ knowledge by translating sentences and texts from and to the intended language using the learners' L1 to understand the morphology and syntax of the foreign language. Reading and writing are not focused and little attention is paid to the social and communicative language aspects. A bilingual vocabulary list, dictionary, and memorization are the only plans utilized to teach newly selected vocabulary items. Students are expected to memorize the new words by translating them into their corresponding words in L1. In contrast to

earlier approaches of language teaching, this method uses and highly depends on grammar, with the impression that it eases language learning. Accuracy is preferred and errors are unbearable, grammar is taught deductively, and most syllabi based on grammar-translation have a sequence of grammatical rules and structures for each lesson. Teachers highly rely on the students' L1 as the instruction medium. However, this type of language teaching is not without criticism. It remained a general method until the middle of the last century, when a new method was introduced in an effort to fill the gap.

2.9.1.1 Grammar-Translation Method in the Libyan EFL Context

Reza et al. (2007) argued that in many foreign settings such as Libya, the grammar-translation method is still believed to be the best way to teach and learn English because it is teacher-centered and creates less noise in the classroom. Arab students in general and Libyan students in particular are acclimatized to such teaching and learning methods, as they are familiar with learning the Quran and famous poems via memorization and low communication. This approach indicates that it is prevalent among teachers who feel that language learning ought to be done by following the behaviorist paradigm.

Latiwish (2003) conferred that learning English as a foreign language in Libya is viewed as a matter of mastering grammar rules and vocabulary; numerous English language curricula and accompanying course books are designed to encourage this by memorization. Many Libyan teachers are also influenced by a particular belief or culture of learning in the traditional Libyan classroom, where teachers have more control over

students' interaction and contribution in class. In other words, GTM is practiced in the Libyan EFL context for two major reasons.

First, Libyan EFL teachers themselves learned through GTM and conventional approaches to memorize the Quran, old Arabic poems, and national proverbs. Consequently, the way teachers instruct influences students' learning styles. Thus, an interest of this study is to investigate teachers' views on CLT method implementation in teaching reading comprehension, as well as the extent of teachers' tendency to use GTM and their reasons for doing so. Is it because they believe that teaching with memorization and translation are the best ways to learn English?

2.9.2 The Direct Method

As a reaction in opposition to GTM, numerous alternatives have been developed, one of which is the direct method. The direct, or natural method is based on making learning L2 similar to learning L1 (Richards and Rodgers, 1998). The direct method is also the result of a growing interest in teaching language for speaking purposes. This method focuses on communication practice; however, grammar and vocabulary are also taught by gradation and material sequencing.

By adopting this method, EFL teachers do not use translation, and postpone reading and writing skills to later stages. Teachers who employ this method are expected to construct a communicative classroom environment without focusing on rules and deductive thinking. However, grammar is taught sequentially through artificial contexts, and no authentic natural communicative settings are provided for learners. The value of this

method is in the notion that in order for a person to learn a foreign language easily and efficiently, the mechanism and process of L1 acquisition must be adopted and followed as an alternative to memorizing the rules and new vocabulary items. Hussein (1989) stated that like other methods, the direct method has unique features as follows:

- The application of daily vocabulary and structure;
- . Grammar and vocabulary are taught orally according to circumstance;
- Numerous new items are used in the same lesson to make the language sound natural and build confidence for normal conversations;
- Concrete meanings are taught through object lessons and abstract meanings through the association of ideas;
- Visual presentations are used to exemplify grammar;
- Extensive listening and imitation are employed until forms become automatic;
- Most work is done in the classroom; and
- Pronunciation is emphasized starting from the first weeks.

The strengths of this method lie in its potential to present learners with the opportunity for intensive immersion in a foreign language, particularly if they have no chance to practice or experience the language in its natural environment. Also, there is no authenticity in classroom practices to reflect the real context of the target language. These criticisms and observations have led researchers to develop new methods that better meet the learners' needs and serve as efficient language teaching methods.

2.9.2.1 The Direct Method in the Libyan EFL Context

Suleiman (2003) argued that many Arabic EFL teachers understand the direct method extensively but do not often use it. Teachers talk about the direct method because it

requires total use of the target language between teachers and students. Some EFL teachers prefer using their first language (Arabic) in their classes for two reasons. First is the traditional teaching and learning style, where there is a restricted amount of interaction and students only perform as receivers of teachers' instructions. The second involves teacher performance in the target language, whereby many Arabic EFL teachers were taught with GTM, which reduces their speaking performance.

Latiwish (2003) illustrated that some Libyan teachers try to support their students to further use the target language during classes as part of obligatory work, mainly in specialized classes of advanced level English. Besides, due to globalization many university students are more open to various ways of doing things, thus encouraging interested teachers to try different efficient methods such as the direct method.

However, as Sawani (2009) argued, the direct method is rarely applied in the Libyan education system on account of several influences. For one, the majority of EFL classes at Libyan schools contain huge numbers of students, hence teachers refrain from applying any related activities. Second, the students themselves are accustomed to receiving information, memorizing, and preparing for exams rather than using an interactive learning method. Third, most teachers select materials depending on grammar construction and structure rather than class performance. Fourth, teachers' and learners' beliefs and culture of learning lead to weak classroom interaction, which tends to decrease any activities in the target language. Teachers who apply such methods also encounter sensitive issues like gender. Libyan students study in mixed gender groups, which is another limitation to direct and inductive methodologies, because for instance

male teachers find it hard to help or discuss matters with female students. Many Libyan students, especially females, prefer to be silent and shy away from practical activities. The Libyan EFL culture and style of teaching and learning are influenced by traditional Libyan ways of teaching and learning English like GTM. In this case, teachers are the central source of information and students are used to having L1 help during most EFL classes. Furthermore, many Libyan classes are influenced by a number of cultural boundaries that constrain most direct method activities.

2.9.3 The Audio-Lingual Method

In line with criticisms of preceding methods and advancements in the fields of psychology and linguistics, there is a need for approaches that best fill the gap. The two theories were developed in the United States during World War II due to the continuing development of L2 teaching and learning programs. Both behavioral psychology and structural linguistics provide a theoretical baseline for the audio-lingual method. The fruit of this mix between the merits of structural linguistics and behavioral psychology is what is termed the “audio-lingual method” (Valdes, 2001).

This method does not require memorization, and language is regarded as a collection of habits. Thus, learning a foreign language is a mechanical process of habit formation. As classroom strategies that teachers employ in adopting this method, students are led through a series of stimulus and response situations followed by reinforcement. Imitation and memorization are also required to build new target language habits. The method depends on speaking and listening by repeating dialogues, through which grammar and vocabulary are also learned. Translation is not a means utilized in this

method, but pattern drills, dialogue memorization, and repetition with stress on pronunciation are evident strategies.

The essential assumption of this method is that learners should learn how to speak before they know how to read and write. Thus, teachers are expected to expose their learners to “repeated drills” in the target language until it turns into a habit in the learners’ minds. Focus is also on accurate pronunciation and intonation, whereby language is viewed from the speech aspect rather than writing. According to this method, four language skills are presented, namely listening, speaking, reading, and writing. The influences of behaviorism and structural linguistics on this method are reflected via the approaches and instructional techniques adopted by its proponents. Richards and Rodgers (1986) listed the major characteristics of the approaches and instructional techniques of this method:

- Foreign language learning is a process of habit formation. This could be best attained through dialogue repetition and memorization and giving the correct response.
- Learning should be based on analogy rather than analysis. Thus, an explanation of the rules is not given until students have experienced and been exposed to the patterns in different contextual settings. Drills are also thought to help learners form new correct analogies.
- Speaking should be taught before writing.
- Language should be learned within the cultural context.

This implies that teaching a foreign language entails teaching the culture behind that language. The word meanings are understood better through a cultural context rather than as isolated items matching their equivalents in the learners' first language. Nonetheless, this method does not produce the desired results and provides little knowledge of the target language. Hence, the development of cognitive psychology and its influence in the field of foreign language teaching has encouraged the emergence of new methods that better meet learners' needs in terms of foreign language use for communicative and functional purposes.

2.9.3.1 The Audio-lingual Method in the Libyan EFL Context

The audio-lingual method is generally used in the Libyan EFL context. Imssaalem (2001) explained that many teachers and students favor learning through drilling, memorizing, and repetition activities, such as grammatical patterns, long words, and memorizing long reading paragraphs. Sawani (2009) argued that the audio-lingual method shapes Libyan teachers' attitude towards learning. Numerous teachers of larger groups of students prefer drilling, which also includes reading and grammar. However, Latiwish (2003) stated that some teachers who are aware of the criticisms of this method attempt to modify or integrate a few aspects of the audio-lingual method, for instance by means of drilling and memorization as well as adjusting the traditional Libyan learning style to a more modern, communicative method. Accordingly, the present study is aimed at investigating problems and challenges faced by Libyan EFL teachers in implementing CLT in teaching reading comprehension.

2.9.4 The Communicative Approach

Various researchers have conveyed their understanding in relation to communicative language teaching. Ying (2010) explained that CLT is an approach to teaching a second language that focuses on interaction as both the means and ultimate objective of learning a language. CLT is generally regarded as an approach to language teaching (Larsen-Freeman, 2000; Richard and Rodger, 2001). Larsen-Freeman (2000) argued that CLT is aimed largely at the theoretical perspective of a communicative approach by enabling communication.

This approach shifts the focus from grammar and structure towards the social aspects of language. Emphasis is on the way language is used by speakers in various communicative contexts. Pei-long (2011) argued that language teaching should focus on communication proficiency rather than sentence structure mastery. With a communication-based curriculum, the main purpose of language teaching and learning is communication effectiveness. This is specifically the primary objective of communicative language teaching (CLT). Moreover, Richard (1997) defined the communicative approach to language learning as an approach employed to learn a second or foreign language that focuses on communicative ability development. This means improving the ability to apply the language principle in order to construct grammatically correct sentences. Meanwhile, Richard and Rodger (2001) discussed how communicative language teaching can be applied to teaching any skills, at any level and with a wide variety of class activities.

Communicative language teaching (CLT) highlights language as a means of communication. It considers that communication has a social purpose, whereby learners have something to say or find out. Communication embraces a whole spectrum of functions and notions (Richards and Rogers, 2001). Besides, Zara (2012) stated that language learning approaches have a significant role in the procedure of language learning, while Aqel (2006) explained that the aim of the communicative approach is to prepare learners for meaningful communication and errors are tolerated. The kinds of school exercises and activities compatible with the communicative approach are limitless and closely linked to the constructivist theory of learning.

With the communicative approach it is assumed that people learn language through communication. It means that the communicative approach is suited for language teaching, as it stresses the importance of learning to use a language. In teaching using the communicative approach, learners are expected to be able to use the language they are learning. They should be able to master the language for daily communication in the classroom and express their thoughts to others. Furthermore, Zara (2012) analyzed a synthesis of previous research results on language learning strategies among EFL or ESL learners and emphasized the prominence of these strategies in acquiring a foreign or second language. Zara stated there has been a deliberate change from the teacher-centered to the learner-centered or communicative approach during the last decade. Therefore, students “received more attention and a more prominent place in research studies on second or foreign language learning, so did the engaged strategies and techniques they employed to learn the language and overcome its barriers” (Zara, 2012, p. 162).

Richards and Rogers (1986) argued that the teaching theory underlying the communicative approach is holistic, which means that language should be taught as a whole and different language components should not be taught separately. Language is organized from a communicational viewpoint in a social context, where it is regarded as a vehicle for internal interaction, egocentric speech, thinking, and as something that is used for meaningful purposes (Rosa, 2007). Also, Zara (2012, p.168) clarified and concluded that applying proper language learning approaches facilitate and develop the language learning process. Zara also mentioned that learning strategies oriented towards the main goals of communicative competence are to allow learners to become more self-directed and to support learning. In this case, it is highly recommended for teachers to incorporate the communicative approach in the teaching process to encourage students to improve their language skills.

Lantolf (2000) referred to the communicative methodology and constructivist theory of learning as “activity theories.” The reason is that teachers and learners are required to interact with the sources of ideas or knowledge in a social setting, in the sense that they should actively partake in reconstructing ideas or knowledge within their own minds. In other words, learners are information constructors, as people actively construct their own subjective representations of the objective reality. New information is linked to prior knowledge, thus mental representations are subjective. Moreover, with the communicative approach the teacher is not the center of all classroom activities, but emphasis is on the learner in language learning (Aqel, 2006). Ahmad (2013) explained that the communicative approach is superior to the Grammar translation method in teaching English at secondary schools in Pakistan. Teachers also displayed greater

willingness to teach using CLT activities in their classes. Salem and Youssif's results (2015) indicated that the mismatch between classroom realities, students' resistance and CLT curriculum principles produces significant challenges for teachers implementing CLT in Libyan classrooms. Furthermore, Zekariya (2010) showed that although Turkish teachers displayed keen interest to adapt CLT completely, there were still a number of significant problems preventing CLT implementation. Zekariya (2010) stated that teachers can apply CLT in class only by overcoming difficulties and by establishing more favorable conditions for the implementation of CLT.

One of the overarching features of communicative language teaching methodology is focus on real communication by providing learners with opportunities to try out and practice what they know (Richards, 2006). CLT implementation involves real-life situations that necessitate communication, where the teacher sets up a situation that students are likely to encounter in real life. Unlike the audiolingual method that relies on repetition and drills, the communicative approach could leave students in suspense as to the outcome of a class exercise, which would vary according to their reactions and responses. Real-life simulations change from day to day; hence, students' motivation to learn comes from their desire to communicate in meaningful ways about meaningful topics. Communicative activities mean motivated activities, topics and themes that involve the students in authentic communication. Yonghong (2008) explained that "in communicative activities, students find themselves in various real-life situations where the target language must be used. Because the focus is not on learning specific language features but on putting the language to use as the circumstances require."

Richard and Rodgers (2001) described that there is no limit to what can be considered a communicative activity, provided that the activity allows learners to utilize and understand their target language in communication. Littlewood (1981) distinguished between two types of activities, namely functional communicative and interaction activities. Functional activities include, for instance, learners comparing pictures, noticing differences and similarities, following directions, solving problems, and working out a set of pictures and giving instructions on how to draw maps or pictures. The functional activities implemented and observed by the researcher in class during the current study are discussed in Chapter 6 (see section 6.4). Social interaction activities include conversation and discussion sessions, improvisations, dialogues and role plays. It was noticed that teachers did not implement these activities due to students' low levels. Accordingly, the current study attempts to identify the difficulties Libyan teachers face in the implementation of CLT to teach reading comprehension at Libyan preparatory schools.

2.9.4.1 The Communicative Approach in the Libyan EFL Context

For decades, the majority of Libyan students have believed that their role in the classroom is to be receivers of information and knowledge from their teachers. Students sit quietly and memorize the knowledge and information that teachers convey. In other words, Libyan EFL teachers and students are greatly influenced by the “silent culture of learning” (Elaper, 2009). According to Imssalem (2001), the problem with this kind of language teaching lies in the teaching approaches and not the methods, because methods are typically a series of fixed teaching systems. Meanwhile, approaches from a particular theory allow teachers to exercise their creativity and innovation in the

process of teaching and learning. Traditional approaches do not provide Libyan English language teachers with sufficient guidance. However, applying new approaches like the communicative approach is very challenging and demanding in Libya.

Sawani (2009) identified four major factors affecting communicative approach implementation in the Libyan teaching and learning context that make it difficult to employ properly. Sawani considered Libyan English language teachers' inclination and tendency to use silent methods such as the grammar-translation method (GTM) as a major reason inhibiting teachers from employing the communicative approach successfully. Furthermore, poor teacher training programs also disrupt the successful implementation of the communicative approach, as Libyan English language teachers are not familiar and updated with the latest teaching techniques and theories. Third, Libyan English language teachers' overall competencies and language skills tend to be low. Finally, the dominant traditional learning system and students' cultural background do not support the communicative approach (Sawani, 2009).

Nevertheless, the tendency to employ the communicative approach in teaching and learning English is currently increasing in Libya. Orafi (2009) argued that applying communicative language teaching (CLT) in the context of Libya has started to emerge widely in many classes, and mostly in private classes. Simultaneously, the rapid globalization trend in Libya that necessitates learning English for communication and business aids this process along, as students need to learn communication skills to use later throughout their careers. In this case, the present study attempts to investigate whether Libyan English language teachers find CLT an appropriate approach to teach

reading comprehension, as stated in the third research question in Chapter One (see section 1.8).

2.10 The Roles of Students and Teachers in Classroom CLT Implementation in the Context of EFL

Teachers play a significant role in the implementation of the CLT approach. The effective application of communicative language teaching is considerably influenced by teachers as a major element of controlling this method. Several roles are assumed for teachers in Communicative Language Teaching, the importance of particular roles being determined by the view of adopting CLT. Breen and Candlin described that the first role of teachers is to facilitate the communication process between all participants in the class, and between these participants and the various activities and texts. The second role is in acting as independent participants within the teaching-learning group. Richard and Rodgers (2001) also identified that “the CLT teacher assumes a responsibility for determining and responding to learner language needs. This may be done informally and personally through one-to-one sessions with students, in which the teacher talks through such issues as the student's perception of his or her learning style, learning assets, and learning goals.” Libyan teachers seem to take a responsible role in the classroom, although they try to adapt a facilitator role.

Obviously, teachers with high fluency and oral ability can stimulate and motivate students as well as improve their interest to be independent learners and to participate in communicative activities. Therefore, successful CLT method employment requires capable and proficient teachers with high oral ability. In the Libyan context, English

learning lacks encouragement and contact outside the classroom, whereby the main focus is directed towards the teachers' role as "knowledge providers." With the CLT method, however, teachers are greatly encouraged to become facilitators who provide guidance and not merely instruct their students on what to do and what to learn.

The characteristics of CLT encourage learners to participate in class activities, hence turning them into independent learners. CLT is centered on a collaborative rather than individualistic learning approach, where learners are active participants in the process of language acquisition (Ozesvik, 2010; Chang 2011). Consequently, the teacher is not the only entity holding power in the classroom, and effective interaction is the ultimate teaching goal. In other words, all CLT approach practices are based on learners' participation and active class interaction with their facilitators and other classmates.

The main objective of the CLT approach is to enable students to be self-confident learners through interaction and communication. Consequently, it can be maintained that the roles of teachers and students in any CLT setting have dynamic features and their roles constantly alter based on the learners' requirements. According to Deckert (2004), the CLT approach is typically learner-centered, so it features the following: (i) low-profile teacher role; (ii) frequent pair work or small group problem-solving; (iii) students responding to authentic English samples; (iv) exchange of ideas on substantially interesting topics; and (v) the integration of four basic skills, namely speaking, listening, reading, and writing.

On the one hand, the communicative learning approach disapproves of prevalent teacher-controlled drills, examinations of memorized material, and extensive focus on grammar. The emphasis is that new words should not be presented in isolation, but in the context of complete sentences and meaningful situations (Senel, 2002). Teachers must clarify vocabulary and expressions to accomplish communicative purposes by giving students questions and answers based on the topics. At times, real objects may also be used to clarify meanings (Mora, n.d.).

The characteristics of CLT with the new types of classroom activities involve a greater variety of roles in the language class for students and teachers than in more conventional second and foreign language classes. Therefore, CLT modifies the role of the teacher. At the same time, CLT as a methodology has much to do with interaction. This draws attention to a distinctive feature of CLT, which is a “learner-centered and experience-based view of second language teaching” (Richards and Rodgers, 1986, p. 69).

It is thus advisable for teachers implementing a communicative approach to make and employ authentic teaching materials that meet the needs of their exacting learners (Richards and Rodgers, 2001). Moreover, teachers need to stimulate and motivate their students, as well as provide a comfortable classroom atmosphere for language learning (Jones, 2007; Chang, 2011). The traditional image of the teacher as the dominating power figure in the classroom is dissolved into such a role that necessitates facilitating the communicative process in the classroom where students feel safe, unthreatened, and non-defensive (Ozsevik, 2010).

Almoghani (2003) stated that many past studies identified various problems and deficiencies in teaching English as a foreign language in Libya. This is partly attributed to the insufficient teacher preparation programs and lack of proper teaching environments and facilities. Almoghani (2003) also shared from personal experience having worked for a decade as an English language teacher at a Libyan secondary school that Libyan students were mainly low achievers. Accordingly, the current study is an attempt to identify the difficulties that Libyan teachers face in implementing CLT to teach reading comprehension at preparatory schools.

2.11 The Reading Comprehension Skill

The success of reading is determined by whether the reader can grasp the intended meaning. Reading is not only the activity of pronouncing printed materials or following each line on written pages carefully or quickly. It is more than that. Reading is a complex set of activities, such as looking, thinking, and understanding. Reading is defined as a lively process in which readers shift between information and sources, elaborate meanings and strategies, observe their comprehension and utilize the social context to reflect their responses (Walker, 2000). In addition, Alfassi (2004) defined reading as a vital activity for sufficient functioning and obtaining information in an existing society and requires a combination of memory and meaning instruction.

Teaching reading comprehension comes with difficulties too, and numerous studies have been conducted to identify and investigate the problems learners face when studying reading comprehension. Mustafa and Zamzam (2013) conducted a survey and analyzed the major problems that Libyan EFL teachers encounter in teaching reading

comprehension. Because Libyan EFL learners have difficulties with the reading comprehension skill, they develop a negative attitude and perception towards reading. In order to overcome this problem, Mustafa and Zamzam analyzed short stories as a form of remedial material to facilitate the reading comprehension process. Their research participants were 100 Libyan EFL learners studying in the first semester at the English language department of the University of Sebha. After collecting and analyzing data, the researchers found that 75% of the participants were unsuccessful at the reading comprehension skill, which was due to insufficient training and ill-preparation. Moreover, the students had limited or inadequate vocabulary. Furthermore, 80% of the participants had difficulties with pronunciation while reading and 75% were unable to comprehend and express the main ideas of the passages to deliver the meaning of the text. In fact, short stories make reading comprehension classes more interesting and motivate learners to master the language by integrating the reading comprehension skill with other main language skills in effective and innovative ways. However, strategic reading is an influential method that facilitates the reading comprehension process for EFL learners by overcoming comprehension breakdowns at both the word and sentence levels (Zoghi et al., 2010).

Strategic reading is commonly combined with cooperative learning, which means that language learners work in small groups and share their knowledge with group mates. Such combination prepares the basis for learners to interact and help one another to increase their understanding and overcome text comprehension problems (Zoghi et al., 2010). Such cooperation and team work during reading motivates students to develop reading competencies. From their survey, Zoghi et al. proved that their modified

collaborative strategic reading method is an effective, feasible, and responsive instructional technique for EFL learners at the tertiary level. The survey participants eventually developed a positive attitude towards the modified collaborative strategic reading (MCSR) approach. Zoghi et al. (2010) stated that EFL learners prefer communicative and collaborative methods of instruction as well as group activities much more than traditional learning approaches.

Moreover, Ibduar Rahman and Jameel (2011) conducted a study emphasizing the increasing levels of reading comprehension among EFL learners via the application of a new textual reading method. They asserted that implementing excessive reading can have a significant role in improving readers' literacy. Thus, textual or article reading emerges as a resource to promote readers' self-perception of reading (Rahman and Jameel, 2011). Zoghi et al. (2010) believed that the reason the majority of EFL learners at the tertiary level are ill-prepared in terms of the EFL reading comprehension skill is the conventional language teaching approaches such as GTM. The authors offered MCSR, an instructional practice in which cooperative learning is combined with reading comprehension strategies.

Ghuma (2011) studied Libyan EFL learners' ability to transfer reading strategies from their first language, Arabic, to a foreign language, English, and vice versa at the university level. In Libya, where English is taught as a foreign language, the text book is generally the only medium for reading practice in the target language, English. Libyan students can comprehend the reading lesson only by translating to Arabic. As every language has particular linguistic, phonological, morphological, syntactic, and semantic

features, language learning researchers have developed several types of analysis and comparison between linguistic components in the first language (L1) and target language (L2)

Ghuma's (2011) survey proved that reading strategies are transferred from L1 (Arabic) to L2 (English). This result is useful for authorities and writers who prepare textbooks and curricula. It directs them to offer the most appropriate material in the reading syllabus by considering the relationship between Arabic and EFL textbooks.

Elmadwi and Shepherd (2014) conducted a critical study on the main problem faced by Libyan students in EFL reading and comprehension. The study participants were students at the English Department of the University of Zawia, Libya. The study was designed to explore the reading strategy that Libyan university students utilize most, and especially to demonstrate how male and female strategize learning in terms of English texts. The study also showed the relationship between learners' strategies and their EFL proficiency. The results indicated the meta-cognitive strategy was the reading strategy that students used most. In this regard, there was a statistical difference between male and female learners in their use of language learning strategies.

Previous studies concentrated on the problems that Libyan students confronted at the university level in reading, including transferring reading strategies from Arabic to English (Ghuma, 2011; Elmadwi and Shepherd, 2014). The present study identifies difficulties that Libyan teachers have with implementing the CLT method to teach reading comprehension at the preparatory level. The reading skill is crucial for Libyan

students at the preparatory level, because they plan to continue studying English at the university level. Therefore, teachers must present and teach reading well. One good means to teach reading is with the CLT method. In this case, reading material students are able to understand the reading materials better and more easily .

2.12 Teaching Reading Comprehension through the Application of the CLT Approach

Zara (2012) claimed that when using the communicative approach to teach reading, the teacher's duty is to transpose the world of a text into a form recognizable to students and relevant to their real life experience. What is more important is to make students feel that communication takes place during a reading activity. The purpose of such communication is not to arrive at the right answer to any question on the text, but to give a chance for a variety of different answers to a question. As a way of motivating students, teachers should avoid negative and damaging comments to students' views expressed on a text

Another way to enhance the communicative approach in teaching reading comprehension is to expose students to various reading sources. Students should not be limited only to the textbooks prescribed for reading activities. Textbook content cannot equip students adequately for their reading needs in after-school life. Limiting students only to textbooks will cause them to feel that reading is unnatural, artificial and not relevant to their needs. Reading in a foreign language is particularly difficult, because the words, grammatical structure, text conventions, and cultural context are unfamiliar to someone from a contrasting culture. In fact, there is no flawless way to understand

most texts. Even something as apparently factual as a train timetable could be interpreted through different cultural lenses. Students need to understand that all readers construct meaning from texts differently, depending on their purpose for reading, individual and professional background, and even state of mind.

Zan (2012) explained that reading activity techniques are designed to develop basic reading skills. Learners are encouraged to increase reading speed and develop flexible reading strategies (in particular scanning for specific information and skimming for an overview of the text). The activities focus the learner on how writers convey their aims through text function and organization. Littlewood (2007) explained that CLT is introduced in EFL settings to improve students' abilities to use English in real contexts. CLT is an approach in which comprehensible input and task-based learning can exist. In order to achieve this objective, English language teachers must follow CLT reading principles especially when teaching reading comprehension. Harner (2007) suggested the following principles: (i) the focus of every task should be on performing some operations such as teaching learners to do something in the target language; (ii) use language beyond the sentence level, with real language in real situations and pay attention to both parts and the whole work in context; (iii) practice forms that should exist within a communicative framework; (iv) mistakes are not always mistakes, and fluency should be emphasized; and (v) what happens in class must involve the learners and must be judged in terms of the effects on learners.

CLT is intended to involve students in real or realistic communication through diverse activities. In this case, target language accuracy is less important than the successful

achievement of communicative tasks (Harmer, 2001). However, Libyan teachers focus on accuracy rather than fluency, as they want students to speak and communicate accurately. With CLT, language is viewed as a system of expressing meaning, whereby the main function of language is to permit interaction and communication (Richard, 2001). In addition, fluency development is another feature of CLT activities that has to be taken into account in language classes. According to Richards (2006, p. 4), fluency is described as “natural language use occurring when a speaker engages in meaningful interaction and maintains comprehensible and ongoing communication despite limitations in his/her communicative competence.”

Related literature (Brown, 2001; Grabe and Stoller, 2001) revealed that reading is taught in three phases: before-reading, while-reading, and after-reading. In this sense, reading activities could promote strategic reading behaviors and have a vital role in schema activation toward comprehending and interpreting text better (Grabe and Stoller, 2002).

2.12.1 Before-Reading Activities

Generally, most reading specialists agree that classroom activities should follow three phases (Brown, 2001; Grabe and Stoller, 2001). The first phase occurs before reading, when the teacher initiates the topic, encourages skimming and scanning, and makes active schemata. Students can bring the greatest of their knowledge and skills to a text once they have had a chance to ease into the passage. The overall aim of the before-reading phase is to get students ready to read by motivating them through eliciting previous knowledge and building a background. With regard to the reading text, this

phase often leads to the formation of hypotheses, which is the starting point in understanding text meaning (Pressley, 2002). The bottom line in activating learners' background knowledge is that a knowledge base is built, necessary for dealing with material content or textual information.

Zan (2012) also explained that this is the primary stage of reading, the aim of which is to activate the readers' background knowledge, arouse their interest in the text and establish a purpose for them to read on. It is intended to provide readers with opportunities to activate their own existing schematic knowledge and to use their imagination to make predictions. This stage can serve as the preparation stage. The tasks given in this stage will usually enable learners to engage in active purposeful interaction, which will fan their desire to read the text. Students may be motivated and prepare themselves better for the reading task and understand more about the passage if they immerse into a detailed study of the text.

Before-you-read activities are particularly useful for learners who do not engage in activities spontaneously (Anderson-Inman and Horney 1997). In these two studies, various instructional procedures were utilized to stimulate prior knowledge activation: i) brainstorming and encouraging a topic discussion; ii) making predictions by previewing the title, headings, or pictures for example, and iii) prior text questioning. Thus, prior knowledge has a part in reading comprehension with emphasis on the schema theory (Duke and Person, 2002). There are two possible explanations for this. First, comprehension failure might occur when learners lack special expertise in extracting new information according to the informational theory. Second, when

compared to the level of linguistic knowledge needed for text comprehension, background activation cannot seemingly facilitate comprehension.

2.12.2 While-Reading Activities

The second phase is while-reading, that is a wide global reading to obtain certain facts or rhetorical devices of which students should take note while reading. This gives them a sense of purpose rather than merely reading because the teacher instructed them to do so. The overall aim of the while-reading activity is to help students read strategically by focusing on decoding skills (Myriam, N.D). The activities could therefore help readers tackle texts by assisting them with linguistic and schematic knowledge (Alyousef, 2006) through active engagement with the text.

In line with CLT implementation, while-reading activities should be employed when teaching reading comprehension. Here, language is used for meaningful tasks that promote real communication between teachers and learners, as well as among learners themselves. These tasks are carried out in pair or group discussions, which might raise learners' interest, motivation, and confidence. Rana (2014) enumerated six strategic steps in practicing CLT effectively for students to develop their reading comprehension. The steps are: reading aloud, vocabulary (native and target language), problem solving activities, group activities, feedback and exercises. Libyan teachers already apply some of the six strategy steps to improve students' vocabulary in reading comprehension, such as reading aloud, vocabularies (native and target), pair activities and exercises at the end of the lesson. Brown (2001) outlined the advantages of pair or group work. First, it generates learner-to-learner interactive language exchange. If half of the while-reading

stage is spent on pair or group work, self-governing practice is increased five-fold compared to conventional teacher-talk dominated classes. In other words, small groups permit learners to spontaneously begin dialogue, interpret, and negotiate with a lesser degree of teacher-centered practices. Second, pair or group work enables learners to meaningfully interact during the reading lesson by reading texts. Learners' confidence also increases when they get involved in such activities.

2.12.3 After-Reading Activities

According to Myriam (N.D), after you read stage begins after students have read the text and completed the exercises. It is characterized by an opportunity to include skills integrating communicative activities. Here, numerous activities are used that deal with comprehension questions, vocabulary study, classifying the authors' purpose and discussing the authors' line of reasoning. Examining grammar structures or steering students toward follow-up writing exercises are considered as a re-utilization of the strategies applied in the pre- and while-reading stages.

Some general after-reading activities that facilitate readers to interpret the text are: thinking aloud, drawing conclusions or summarizing, follow-up writing, role-playing, note-taking, question or answer relationships (QARs), recycled stories, and meta-cognitive journals. Examples of post-teaching activities are drawing conclusions or writing summaries, which have proven effective among EFL readers in enhancing the overall text comprehension. Through summarization, Duke and Pearson (2002) argued that dual instruction purposes are met, in that students' ability to summarize text is enhanced and their comprehension competence is greater than before. In summary,

drawing conclusions and question or answer relationship (QARS) activities could be very effective, but the concern is whether students would be able to learn to summarize and make their own questions about the text. These are general after-teaching activities in a particular EFL reading class. Thus, as a first step in after-teaching activities it seems important to create different types of questions, particularly those that transcend simple “yes or no” answers and referential questions.

These activities reportedly have an abundance of advantages, such as providing authentic circumstances for interaction among students, allowing students the choice of learning tasks, promoting readability and offering equal opportunities for students to talk (Holiday, 2005; Iddings, 2006). Regan (2003) conducted a study and revealed that group work has a positive impact on directing students towards self-directed learning. Garrett and Shortall (2002) argued that revising various activities during group work can cater to various learner needs. Therefore, Philips et al. (2008), the authors of the new English textbooks for Libyan secondary and preparatory schools, also designed most of the activities to be performed in pairs or groups. They highlighted the usefulness of these activities in offering students the chance to produce a spoken language. Nonetheless, implementing pair and group work activities comes with some difficulties. Therefore, an attempt is made in the current study to identify CLT activities and how they are implemented in teaching reading comprehension at preparatory schools.

2.13 Studies on the use of the CLT approach in teaching reading comprehension

Several studies revealed that implementing communicative activities in teaching reading impact student' reading performance in the classroom positively. Day (2005),

for example, conducted a study on the use of various types of comprehension and five types of questions by EFL teachers. These were activities to help students become interactive readers. Day paid attention to the use of the comprehension questions designed that should encourage understanding text. Teachers employed a mix of teacher-fronted and group activities and were encouraged to provide a discussion space for all answers, both right and wrong, so students would be involved actively in creating meaning.

An experimental study of 19 first-year Turkish university students is another example of exploring the implementation of task-based writing activities (Tilfolioglu and Basaran 2007). The researchers found that task-based writing activities are appropriate and productive for EFL learners. Even beginners started developing their reading comprehension ability. The results also showed that learners' involvement in class activities amplified because they liked topical and pre-defined writing tasks. In line with Day (2005), Tilfolioglu, Basaran, (2007) and Gao (2002) explained that communicative activities as part of group work and role play in the classroom are successful ways for both teachers teaching reading and students learning reading if implemented appropriately. They also found that implementing activities in the reading class raises the probability of subconscious assimilation, and opens more communication channels to the target community at a personal contact level. Thus, teachers and students both benefit greatly from such activities.

Authentic teaching materials are a must for EFL teachers when implementing CLT, as learners are exposed to similar levels of language proficiency as native speakers. Using

real materials in the classroom is one of the major tools to expose learners to as much “real language” as possible. Even if the class is not a real-life situation, authentic materials do have a very important place within. A study by Berardo (2006) revealed that using authentic materials in the classroom benefited students, who were exposed to real language used in a real context. Thus, using authentic materials is another aspect that has proven to have a positive effect on high student motivation by giving a sense of success upon understanding and instilling confidence for further reading. Such materials reflect the shifts in language use if there are abundant text types that are also very flexible. Moreover, they can be used more than once and updated as well. Anything can serve as authentic materials, but to improve reading, one of the most useful resources is the Internet with its vast amounts of easily accessible materials.

The education process in any context is a set of conventions on making decisions about what happens between teachers and students. These conventions are determined by the social and cultural norms within a particular context (Tudor, 2001, 2003). Hiep (2005) conducted a study related to CLT restriction and identified the vital aspects of the CLT theory and characterized issues commonly raised when the CLT theory is set into practice. Hiep also redefined CLT to accommodate the theory in various settings. Orafi (2009) argued that “the social-cultural context where an innovation is to be implemented therefore will play a major role in the adaption or resistance to the innovation”. A study by Rao (2002) looked at Chinese students’ perception of communicative and non-communicative activities in the EFL classroom. Rao found that most students preferred a combination of communicative and non-communicative activities as far as the EFL situation in China permits.

The previous studies demonstrate that the difficulties encountered were mostly due to the cultural perspective, learner resistance to participate in the classroom, lack of authentic materials, as well as conflict between Eastern traditions and Western approaches to implementing CLT. In Libyan schools, teachers suffer from these problems and limit themselves against implementing CLT in teaching. Moreover, cultural factors are rooted in both learners and teachers and this might need to be taken into account over other possible factors.

Rana (2014) studied the effectiveness of CLT on ELT textbooks recommended to enhance students' reading comprehension. The research was aimed to gain a broader understanding of the effect of Communicative Language Teaching or the Grammar Translation Method on enhancing students' reading comprehension. Rana's study results showed that CLT proved better in enhancing students' reading comprehension. With regard to the current study, the researcher tried to observe how teachers implement CLT activities to teach reading comprehension.

Ria Handayani's (2012) article was mainly intended to find out how teaching reading comprehension by employing the communicative approach affected students' understanding. From the many types of methods and approaches employed to teach reading, including the communicative approach and GTM, Handayani endeavored to find the most appropriate. The author highlighted the communicative approach and compared the results of students' achievement from being taught reading with the communicative approach and a traditional method. The researcher utilized the pre-

experimental method to identify the most significant stage of treatment (communicative approach) on students' achievement.

Furthermore, in Handayani's study, students were tested before and after treatment to determine the influence or benefit of the treatment on teaching reading. The findings indicated that teaching reading comprehension was best accomplished by employing the communicative approach at SDN 1 Pangheotan. The observation was that students' levels improved after testing following treatment. A serious matter for consideration is students' different perspectives on these activities. Garrett and Shortall (2002) reported significant differences in an evaluation of 103 Brazilian EFL students using teacher-fronted and learner-centered classroom activities. Another matter is related to teachers' and students' various conceptions about such activities. Similar differences were found in the conceptions of successful classroom activities among 228 Italian EFL students and 37 EFL Italian teachers (Hawkey, 2006, p.142). Most importantly, these studies reveal the negative impact of various conceptions on students' motivation, engagement and participation during these activities. To account for these problems, Garret and Shortall (2002, p.48-49) suggested supporting students to 'weigh up' the advantages and disadvantages of their active participation in communicative activities to enhance their language proficiency.

Students' lack of attraction and interest in communicative activities is often seen as a hindrance to implementing teaching methods in the language class. The result challenges the common belief of teachers regarding students' tendency to adapt a passive role during communication activities. A similar occurrence was identified

among a sample of 1939 Libyan secondary school students (Alhamali, 2007). Time and space for the proper application of these activities is another challenge for consideration. According to Sarwar (2001), language teachers believe that implementing communicative activities through group work in large classes is not possible. Jones (2007), however, argued for the fallacy of this belief and described the necessity to implement LCA in large classes, as it would be the “only way to give all the students time to speak.”

Teachers’ lack of understanding of how to manage group and pair work activities properly can negatively affect the implementation of such activities. Brush and Saye (2000) described the difficulties that a teacher encountered in their case study in managing groups due to her inability to establish well-defined responsibilities and roles for students. They regarded this factor as a major reason for her failure to implement student-centered learning. Orafi and Borg (2009) found that three Libyan EFL teachers’ converged pair work activities into question and answer sessions due to their lack of understanding of their facilitative role during these activities. Also, Butler (2005) identified the perceptions of 46 Japanese EFL teachers, 22 Korean EFL teachers and 44 Taiwanese EFL teachers of communicative activities, such as songs, games and role plays. The findings of Butler’s study revealed that the challenges these teachers encountered in implementing the mentioned activities were related to their lack of understanding of three factors: “what constitutes teaching for communicative purposes, the roles that developmental factors play in EFL learning, and strategies for harmonizing learning-teaching and context” (Butler, 2005, p.423). The literature presented above gave the researcher insight into how the study should be conducted.

Therefore, for this study the mixed method research with triangulation was employed to look at how Libyan teachers implement CLT activities to teach reading comprehension in preparatory schools.

2.14 Summary

This chapter provided an overall view of some important topics concerning CLT method use in teaching English reading comprehension at Libyan preparatory schools. It shed light on the importance of the reading comprehension skill in the EFL teaching and learning process. Past studies highlighted that this particular skill provides a strong foundation and increases the competency level of English as a foreign language among students. Due to the significant role of the language acquisition process, all aspects related to teaching and learning reading comprehension must be designed and employed very carefully and skillfully.

The implementation of the CLT method in Libya was analyzed to offer deeper insight into the difficulties and problems with CLT implementation. The analysis of the differences between the “teacher-centered approach” (traditional method) and learner-centered approach” (communicative language teaching) in section 2.3.1 shed light in this research to better understand whether Libyan teachers find CLT an appropriate approach to teach reading comprehension.

Studies investigating CLT implementation for EFL in developing countries mostly concerned (i) teachers’ views and beliefs regarding CLT and testing out a new curriculum at the secondary level (Orafi and Borg, 2009); (ii) the extent of CLT

implementation in the classroom (Al-Nouh, 2008); and (iii) the most influential challenges encountered by teachers and students in this process (Yilmaz, 2009). Shihiba (2011) explored EFL teachers' understanding of the philosophy underlying the learner-centered concept at Libyan secondary schools. The researcher tried to integrate two components, i.e. communicative language teaching and reading comprehension with the implementation of CLT in teaching reading. The majority of studies did not mention the integration of these two components, while some studies mentioned difficulties with CLT and other methods in reading comprehension.

In the Libyan context, previous studies revealed that the effect of GTM is considered the main problem that prevents teachers from adapting CLT in teaching English. The current study attempts to identify the difficulties faced by Libyan teachers in implementing CLT, especially in reading comprehension. Whereas numerous studies concerned teachers at the elementary, secondary and university levels, the current research concerns preparatory school teachers. Identifying the implementation of the CLT method in teaching reading comprehension at the Libyan preparatory level represents filling a significant research gap, which makes this different from other studies. Besides, the difficulties these teachers encounter in implementing the CLT method at Libyan preparatory schools are also addressed.