Teachers' Perspectives of Using Group Discussion
in Teaching Drama

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Abstract:

This study explores the teachers' perspectives of using group discussion in teaching drama at faculty of Art University of Aden. The population of the research was eight teachers who taught at faculty of Art University of Aden. The researcher used a quantitative and qualitative method to collect data of this study. The quantitative analysis of the data was by using the questionnaire to reveal the teachers' perspectives of using group discussion in teaching drama. On the other hand, the qualitative analysis of the data was by using the follow up semi-structured interview to support the result of the questionnaire. The results of the questionnaire showed that group discussion still can be applied, but with problems such as students' shyness, the large number of students in the classroom, and not creating equal chances in getting marks. On contrary, the results of interview revealed that the teachers' perspectives of using group discussion in teaching drama were effective because they simplify the teaching and provides good environment of communication and interaction by dividing students into groups. The main recommendations of the study were to provide the students with the chance to interact with by using group discussion as well as providing classes with the space to allow the students to move in order to act in the role plats or the plays. For the teachers it is recommended to adapt new teaching methods and strategies to encourage the students to use group discussion in the classroom.

1. Introduction

Within the development of education and the students' need to be more active and to participate as a vital factor in the learning process. Thus, the need to put the students' in-group discussion is very important to raise their motivation to be active. Using group work discussion can enhance the students' creativity and critical thinking, build stronger

interpersonal skills, and enhance their relationship. Some researchers conducted by (Barcelona and Rockey, 2010; Nayan et al, 2010) explained the need to use group work discussion as an effective method to enhance the learning process as well as to raise the experience of students in the classroom. Kuech (2004) pointed out that collaborative learning means using discussions in the classroom among students in which students interact with each other to share and understand the concepts being learned. This method is effective because it enhances the students' critical thinking as well as their inter-subjectivity where students use their knowledge of other subjects in their conversations to help themselves to learn better.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

Generally, using lectures as a teaching process used in many college classrooms for teaching literature (Bligh 2000; Burgan 2006). Despite the benefits of using lectures in teaching literature, students will not be active or interact in the classroom. That is why there is a need to use new strategies in teaching literature to activate the students' motivation in reading and discussing literature courses.

Researchers such as (Davis and Murrell 1993; Rabow et al., 1994; Bender 2003) who support active learning highlight the advantages of discussions, their studies found that discussions in lectures improve learning and considered an active learning technique and improve critical thinking and help them to gain the knowledge.

Nicol and Boyle (2003) stated that using discussion in small or large groups leads to the improvements of students' understanding. Occhipinti (2003) clarified that the advantages of using discussions are many such as encouraging students to be active and engage them in participation and sharing opinions, but this will be effective in small-group discussions better than in large- group discussions because small -groups offers more frequent participation. Unlike, large- groups offer fewer opportunities to participate in the discussion. However, Nicol and Boyle (2003) provided a solution for the difficulties of using large- group classes in discussion that is dividing these large groups into smaller groups.

1.2 Objectives of Study

This study aims at exploring the teachers' perspectives of using group discussion in teaching drama. The researcher hoped to find some encouraging results that may enhance the way of teaching drama and other literatures courses at Art faculty of University of Aden by using group discussion.

1.3 Research Question

The study focused on answering one question:

What are the teachers' perspectives of using group discussion in teaching drama?

1.4 Limitation of the Study

This study was only limited to dramas' teachers of Art faculty, University of Aden. In addition, the study only explored the teachers' perspectives of using group discussion in teaching drama. Thus, the findings are not generalized to other Art departments of the faculties that are teaching drama at Aden universities of Aden.

2. Literature Review

There is a need to create new methods of teaching by sharing the students as a part of the learning process. Using old methods in teaching by making the teachers the dominator in the classroom is not accepted nowadays. Students need to participate and express what they want by indulging them in activities such as discussion in order to speak and learn effectively. Haber (1994) clarified that using collaborative learning is effective for students, which are not prepared enough for college level courses. Students help each other to interact and respond well to classroom by using group work. He added that this approach gives students the chance to interact with the content from their context and to share their ideas with others in their groups, teacher's role in collaborative learning is only as facilitator to provide the guidance when necessary.

In addition, Aoumeur (2017) in her study supported the importance of using discussion by explaining that teachers should not use lecturing only or at least the lectures should be followed by discussions. Nowadays, students need to participate in the lesson and engage themselves in class discussion. Cooper, et al (1994) stated that in each group learners maximize the chances of success; they try to work together to complete the task, in other word, they swim or they sink together. Students try to take the responsibility to make his/ her group successful by working hardly; this spirit provides positive interaction among the group members to produce the chances of participation and avoid negative opinions. However, using group work discussion as a tool to enhance students' learning have some difficulties such as the individual differences among students, in which students with high-level work, but low-level students depend on them. Thus, the assessment of their achievement is not accurate because half of the assessment is for group work while the other half is based on the individual effort (Haber, 1994). Barcelona and Rockey (2010) pointed out that students differ from each other and may not always share the same opinions.

In addition, when students are given some activities they may face a problem, which is how to manage the amount of time and work effectively in-group work. Nayan, et al, (2010) clarified

that in collaborative learning, it is a teacher responsibility to take into consideration the type of task, the group organization, and type of evaluation involved. That is why some teachers avoid using collaborative learning because they find it difficult to control the class.

Some opinions refused to apply the discussion technique as a main part of the learning process and they gave the large number of the students as an excuse. On the other hand, some researchers such as Pedder (2006) who clarified that since teachers can take some of responsibilities such as teaching more than one subject and taking the burden of these responsibilities, and then they are able to manage the problem of having large number of students to create different ways of teaching.

This view is supported by (Wanous, Procter and Murshid (2009, 79) who explained, "large class size is increasingly less accepted as an excuse for not adopting new more effective approaches".

2.1 Teaching Literature

Stern (1991) pointed out that teachers should adopt an effective method such as student-centred approach in order to understand the literary work; the students should first understand the scripts of literature regarding setting, characters, and plot. After the students master the literal understanding; they move to the inferential level, they should think about speculations and interpretations concerning the characters of the script, setting, themes of the scripts, and what is author's point of view. After they fully understand all the elements of the literature work. Then, students are ready to do a collaborative work by using different techniques such as acting or role-plays.

2.3 Drama

Drama course is one of the coursers given to the students of department of Art at Art faculty in the third year for two semesters and in the fourth year for one semester. According to Sarıçoban (2004), teaching drama is important because it raises the students' awareness towards the culture of other foreign countries; the context of the drama course should integrate with language learning process as well as the students' interest. The students should make use of drama course to enhance their understanding of life experiences and get full understanding of the world.

2.4 Group Work Activities in Literature Classes

Johnson and Johnson (1990) defined collaborative learning as a strategy used small groups in which the students work together to share and complete the activities. Studies presented by (Johnson et al, 1990, 1994, 2003; Sharan and Sharan, 1990; Slavin, 1990, 1996, 2010; Kagan,

1995, Sharan, 2010) to investigate the effectiveness of using cooperative learning proved that cooperative learning has number of positive results such as raising the students' motivation for learning, improving the positive relationship among students, improving the academic achievement and improving social development. Scholars such as (Pillay, 2000, Sharan, 2010; Bafile, 2008) explained that students' interaction in the classroom helps to improve the cooperation, interpersonal skills, and effective communication skills and this prepare the students to participate effectively in the society.

As Stern (1991) clarified usually teacher's duty in collaborative learning is to create group work discussion by encourage each student to interact and share ideas. Class discussion motivates students to participate in discussion; grouping students can be such as small-group work, panel discussions, and debates. All of these group activities techniques can develop the speaking abilities of the students. Studies presented by ; (Davis and Murrell 1993 ; Bender 2003) found that discussions improve learning process since discussion encourages the students' critical thinking as well as provides active learning methods. According to Garside (1996), an active learning considers as a key component for developing the students' critical thinking skills, discussion considers as skill where students "elaborate, defend, and extend their positions, opinions, and beliefs" (Garside 1996, 219). Garside (1996) stated that by comparing the outcomes of the learners when they learn by lecturing and discussion, the results found that learning by discussion is more effective than lecturing because student-to-student interaction considers as a crucial component of critical thinking and deep learning. This result was supported by the study presented by (Philips 2005). Ellis et al. (2004) clarified that using discussion, as a method of teaching is effective because it enhances students' learning.

3. Research Methodology

3.1. Research Design

This study is an exploratory study that aimed at surveying the teachers' perspectives of using group discussion in teaching drama. The researcher collected the required information about the research by using the suitable research instruments i.e. the questionnaire and the semi-structured interview.

3.2. Population and Sample

The research used a convince sampling, convenience sampling or the non-probability form of sampling is less objective than the full sampling in which the researcher uses sampling that does not provide for each member of a target population (Stratton, 2023). Eight instructors

from Art faculty of University of Aden who taught drama course were chosen to participate in this study. The sample was selected based on their availability and willingness to participate in this study.

3.3. Research Collection Instruments and Analyses

For collecting data of this study, a mixed method design, quantitative and qualitative methods used to collect the data of the study, the researcher used two instruments the questionnaire and the follow up semi-structured interview. The quantitative instrument the 'questionnaire', used a four scales (*strongly agree, agree, disagree and strongly disagree*) in order to survey the teachers' perspectives of using group discussion in teaching drama. The questionnaire consists of twelve items deal with teachers' perceptions of using group discussion in teaching drama as following:

1- Using group discussion in teaching drama raises students' motivation to learn.

2- Using group discussion in the classroom gives students better understanding of the lesson.

3- Group discussion means sharing the different ideas of the students.

4- Group discussion helps to break students' shyness in the classroom.

5- Group discussion in big classes can be applied with problems.

6- Group discussion in small classes is better than big classes.

7- Students face problems when they use group discussion.

8- Group discussion gives the students chances to interact better in the classroom.

9- Using group discussion is not providing equal chances in getting marks unlike working individually.

10- Using group discussion can improve the learning process.

11- Group discussion makes students more responsible and independent.

12- Group discussion creates a positive atmosphere for learning.

 The questionnaires were distributed to the eight instructors who taught drama at faculty of Art in order to collect the data of this study; the data of the questionnaire were analysed by using numerical analysis.

 For the qualitative instrument the follow up semi- structured interview, the researcher interviewed the eight teacher to gather more ideas and information about their perceptions of using group discussion in teaching drama.

The main themes of the questions of the interview were categorized as follow:

1- The effectiveness of using group discussion in teaching.

2- The method teachers followed when they taught drama.

3- The difficulties (challenges) teachers faced when they used group discussion.

4- The benefits students obtained from using group discussion.

5- The disadvantages of using group discussion.

6- Teachers' perspectives of giving equal chances for all the students in using group discussion.

The follow up semi-structured interviews answers were analysed by using content-based analysis in order to obtain the main themes of the study from the teachers' answers of the interviews.

4 .Results and Discussion

The quantitative analysis of the data collected by the questionnaire showed the teachers' perspectives of using group discussion in teaching drama, the questionnaire of this study consists of 12 statements that were answered as below:

1. Using group discussion in teaching drama raises students' motivation to learn

Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
50%	50%	0%	0%

(50%) half of the teachers strongly agreed that they using group discussion in teaching drama raises students' motivation to learn. While (50%) of them also agreed that using group discussion in teaching drama raises students' motivation to learn. None of the teachers disagreed or strongly disagreed. Freeman (1986) stated that students should be motivated to use the language effectively in situations that were given to them.

2. Using group discussion in the classroom gives students better understanding of the lesson.

Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
50%	30%	20%	0%

Half of the teachers (50%) stated that they strongly agreed that using group discussion in the classroom gives students better understanding of the lesson. Whereas, (30%) of the teachers strongly agreed that using group discussion in the classroom gives students better understanding of the lesson. Also, (20%) of them disagreed that using group discussion in the classroom gives students better understanding of the lesson. None of the teachers (0%) strongly disagreed. This as Garside (1996) explained that discussions are a part of cooperative learning, that supports the students' understanding and help them to develop new

ideas and information. Supporting this also, Nicol and Boyle (2003) stated that using discussion in small or large groups leads to the improvements of students' understanding.

3. Group discussion means sharing the different ideas of the students

Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
30%	30%	30%	10%

Some of the teachers (30%) strongly agreed that group discussion means sharing the different ideas of the students. Whereas, (30%) of the teachers also agreed that group discussion means sharing the different ideas of the students. In addition, (30%) of them disagreed that group discussion means sharing the different ideas of the students. The minority (10%) of teachers strongly disagreed that group discussion means sharing the different ideas of the students. Schmitt (2002) pointed out that in the learning process when there is a feedback among the learners.

4. Group discussion helps to break students' shyness in the classroom.

Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
30%	20%	20%	30%

Some of the teachers (30%) strongly agreed that group discussion helps to break students' shyness in the classroom. On the other hand, (20%) the minority of teachers agreed that group discussion helps to break students' shyness in the classroom. Same, (20%) of teachers also disagreed that group discussion helps to break students' shyness in the classroom. Whereas, (30%) of teachers strongly disagreed that the group discussion helps to break students' shyness in the classroom. Ur (1991) supported this issue of shyness, he said students are afraid of 'losing face' when they made mistake. Therefore, their shyness sometimes hinders them from participating.

5. Group discussion in big classes can be applied with problems.

Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
60%	30%	10%	0%

Most of the teachers (60%) strongly agreed that group discussion in big classes can be applied with problems. Whereas, (30%) of the teachers agreed that group discussion in big classes can be applied with problems. (10%) the minority of the teachers only disagreed that

group discussion in big classes can be applied with problems, and (0%) of the teachers strongly disagreed. This is as Aoumeur (2017) clarified that in large classes it is difficult for the students to get equal chances and participate because of the big number of the students in the classroom.

6. Group discussion in small classes is better than big classes.

Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
100%	0%	0%	0%

All the teachers (100%) strongly agreed that group discussion in small classes is better than big classes. On the other, none of the teachers disagreed or strongly disagree that group discussion in small classes is better than big classes. Aoumeur (2017) explained that applying group discussion would be better in small classes only.

7. Students face problems when they use group discussion.

Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
60%	30%	10%	0%

Some of the teachers (60%) strongly agreed that students face problems when they use group discussion. (30%) of the teachers agreed that students face problems when they use group discussion. While, (10%) of them disagreed that students face problems when they use group discussion. (0%) of teachers strongly disagreed that students face problems when they use group discussion. As Turk (1985) mentioned variety of problems might occur while using group discussion such as noise and redundancy. Supporting this, Aoumeur (2017) stated that class size could affect the students' opportunities in participating. In addition, the reliance on others considered as an important problem in which some students work and others depended on them (Haber, 1994).

8. Group discussion gives the students chances to interact better in the classroom

Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
60%	30%	10%	0%

(60%) of the teachers strongly agreed that group discussion gives the students chances to interact better in the classroom. While, (30%) of them agreed that group discussion gives the students chances to interact better in the classroom. (10%) of them disagreed that group discussion gives the students chances to interact better in the classroom. (0%) of teachers

strongly disagreed that group discussion gives the students chances to interact better in the classroom. Aoumeur (2017) explained that not all students get equal chances in participation by using group discussion.

9. Using group discussion is not creating equal chances in getting marks unlike working individually.

Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
60%	30%	10%	0%

The majority of the teachers (60%) strongly agreed that using group discussion is not creating equal chances in getting marks unlike working individually. Moreover, (30%) of teachers agreed that using group discussion is not creating equal chances in getting marks unlike working individually. (10%) the minority of teachers disagreed that using group discussion is not creating equal chances in getting marks unlike working individually. While, (0%) none of teachers strongly disagreed that using group discussion is not creating equal chances in getting marks unlike working individually. Fiechtner and Davis (1992) explained that in-group work sometimes the whole group obtained the same marks, this is not fair as high-level students work and other passive or low-level students get the same marks. Therefore, some students preferred to work individually to get their real mark according to their efforts.

10. Using group discussion can improve the learning process.

Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
80%	20%	0%	0%

The majority of the teachers (80%) strongly agreed that using group discussion can improve the learning process. While, (20%) of them agreed that using group discussion can improve the learning process. (0%) of teachers disagreed or strongly disagree. Studies presented by (Bender 2003; Davis and Murrell 1993) found that discussion improves learning process since discussion encourages the students' critical thinking as well as provides active learning process.

11. Group discussion makes students more responsible and independent

Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
50%	30%	10%	10%

Half of the teachers (50%) strongly agreed that group discussion makes students more responsible and independent. Whereas, (30%) of them agreed that group discussion makes students more responsible and independent. (10%) of teachers disagreed or strongly disagreed about this. Haber (1994) expressed that students themselves sometimes depend on others and not work by themselves and this a negative feature in-group work activities. Cooper, et al (1994) explained that students try to take responsibility to work hard to finish their group working.

12. Group discussion creates a positive atmosphere for learning

Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
50%	20%	20%	10%

Half of the teachers (50%) strongly agreed that group discussion creates a positive atmosphere for learning. While, (20%) of them agreed that group discussion creates a positive atmosphere for learning. Same, (20%) of teachers disagreed that group discussion creates a positive atmosphere for learning. Finally, (10%) of them strongly disagreed that group discussion creates a positive atmosphere for learning. This is as Schmitt (2002) assured the importance of environment in providing a linguistic source of learning.

The qualitative analysis of the follow up semi-structured interview also showed the teachers' perspectives of using group discussion in teaching drama as follow:

• Regarding the effectiveness of using group discussion in teaching, the majority of the teachers expressed that it was effective since it provided good environment of communication and interaction among students and simplified the teaching because they discussed the content together, shared ideas and the expanded their comprehension. Schmitt (2002) explained that the environment is crucial, because it provides a source of the linguistic stimuli the learners need in order to form associations between the words they hear and the objects and events they present, but also provides feedback on learners' performance.

• Regarding the method teachers follow when they teach drama the teachers pointed out that they explained the nature of the script, students listened and then teachers divided the students into groups to discuss and analyse the script of drama and then teacher asks them to perform by using role-plays or acting the characters. According to Larsen-Freeman (1986), students should be encouraged and motivated to practice and use the language with appropriate grammar and functions in such a situation and this will happen with the help of

the teachers' encouragement. This reflects the use of communicative approach, which encourages the use of discussion among the learners.

• Regarding the difficulties (challenges) teachers faced when they use group discussion, teachers explained that they faced many difficulties such as (1) redundancy and noise, this was in respect to Turk (1985) explanation of the communication channels that affect the purpose of communication, such as noise and redundancy. In any conversation, noise can interrupt the listener from listening to the speaker and prevent the message to be received.

• Noise can be like the buzzing or flies and the heat. On the other hand, using redundancy in any conversation is confusing because it is useless to repeat or use fillers in talking without going to main point. (2) Low level of the students, this result was in the line with Al-Haddad (2005) study who pointed out that the proficiency level in English for the Yemeni students in all levels is very weak. (3) Insufficient time was a challenge faced by teachers because sometimes the time was not enough to complete the group activities were given to the students, this finding was in respect to the study of Barcelona & Rockey (2010). These results were similar to the findings of Aoumeur (2017) study, which revealed that class size could affect teaching and learning process, the large numbers of students in one class could raise many issues such as lack of opportunities to share and talk. On the other hand, the benefits students get from using group discussion, teachers described that students got benefits such as learning how to share ideas with each other and how to think in critical way about the script as well as breaking their shyness, but not for all of them.

• Regarding the disadvantages of using group discussion, teachers explained that some students work, but others unfortunately relied on them, this finding was in the line with (Haber, 1994) who explained that high-level students work and low-level students depended on them. Moreover, the problem of noise still happen among students when they discuss or get out from the main point of discussion, and this result agreed with Turk (1985) explanation of the communication channels that affect the purpose of communication. Shy students from the other hand may hinder the effectiveness of using group discussion.

• Ur (1991) stated that the students of English at Aden University are psychologically unwilling to verbally communicate with others in English due to their shyness from making mistakes.

• Regarding the teachers' perspectives of giving equal chances for all the students in using group discussion, teachers highlighted that if teachers divided the students based on the individual differences. However, sometimes, even if teachers divided them equally, some

students still depend on high-level students. This issue is still a controversial issue as Aoumeur (2017) in her study stated that in large classes, students sometimes got equal chances in participation and learning and few teachers indicated that sometimes they did not get equal chances. Therefore, applying group discussion is better in small classes only.

5. Recommendations

This section presents some recommendations for both teachers and students to improve teaching drama in the classroom.

- It is recommended to encourage the teachers to use a variety of teaching methods and strategies that encourage the students to use discussion in the classroom.

- It is recommended to provide teachers with little experience with some training courses from expert teachers in order to encourage them to use different effective and modern methods in the classroom.

  - It is recommended to encourage the students to use discussion in the classroom in order to break their shyness.

- It is recommended to provide classes with enough space that allow students to move around, to perform acting and role-plays.

- It is recommended that teachers should give each student a chance to participate in the discussion and not ignore them or let them rely on others.

- It is recommended to provide strict class management in which teachers should set rules of students' behaviour and try to manage some problems such as noise and side talk.

- It is recommended conducting a research into the students' perspectives of using group discussion in teaching drama and other literature courses.

6. Conclusion

This study tackled the teachers' perspectives of using group discussion in teaching drama at faculty of Art University of Aden. The findings presented showed that teachers agreed with using group discussion in teaching drama course because using group discussion can improve the learning process and make the students more responsible to learn as well as to raise the students' motivation and understanding by interacting and sharing different ideas. On the other hand, it is worth mentioning that teachers suffered from some problems when they used group discussion such as noise, redundancy, large number of students in the classroom and low proficiency level some issues, students' shyness, and not creating equal chances in getting marks.

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وجهة نظر المعلمين في استخدام المناقشة الجماعية
في تدريس الدراما

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الملخص:

ستكشف هذه الدراسة وجهة نظر المعلمين في استخدام المناقشة الجماعية في تدريس الدراما بكلية الآداب جامعة عدن لمقابلة اظهرت أن وجهة نظر المعلمين لاستخدام المناقشة الجماعية في تدريس الدراما ذات فعالية، وذلك لأنها تبسط التدريس فضلاً عن كونها توفر بيئة جيدة للتواصل والتفاعل، وذلك من خلال اعتمادها على آلية تقسيم الطلاب إلى مجموعات. فضلاً عن كونها تعمل على استخدام المناقشة الجماعية في الفصول الصغيرة تسهم في تشجيع الطلاب بشكل عام والطلاب الخجولين بشكل خاص على كسر حاجز الخوف والخجل، فضلاً عن كونها تسهم في تبادل الأفكار مع بعضهم، وعدم اعتماد بعضهم على بعض. فضلاً عن كونها توفر للمعلم قدرة على السيطرة والتحكم في الفصل والتخلص من الضوضاء والحديث الجانبي. وقد خلصت الدراسة إلى عدد من التوصيات تمثلت في الآتي : - إتاحة الفرصة للطلاب للتفاعل من خلال استخدام المناقشة الجماعية - توفير مساحة للفصول الدراسية للسماح للطلاب بالتحرك من أجل التمثيل في لوحات الأدوار أو المسرحيات. وبالنسبة للمعلمين، فإن الباحث يوصى بتكييف أساليب واستراتيجيات التدريس الجديدة لتشجيع الطلاب على استخدام أسلوب المناقشة الجماعية في الفصل الدراسي.

الكلمات المفتاحية:

وجهات النظر المدرسون ، مجاميع النقاشات، التدريس، الدراما.