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**The Effectiveness of Using a Dramatizable
Dialogue–Based Approach on Improving
Secondary School Students' Language
Proficiency and Creative Writing Skills**

By:

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Abstract

The present study investigated the effectiveness of using a suggested dramatizable dialogue-based approach on improving students' English language proficiency and their creative writing skills. Forty first year secondary school female students were randomly selected from a larger population enrolled in the secondary school for girls in Alkharja. The subjects were divided into two groups: an experimental group that received an intensive training on dramatizable dialogue-based approach and a control group. The latter group received the regular traditional classroom instruction. Tools of the study included an English language proficiency exam and a creative writing test. Results of the study indicated that there were statistically significant differences between the mean scores obtained by subjects of the experimental group in the pre/post test of language proficiency (favoring the post performance). Also, there were statistically significant differences between the mean scores obtained by subjects of the experimental group in the pre/post test of creative writing test favoring the post performance. It was also found that there were significant correlations between students' English language proficiency skills and their creative writing skills.

Key Words: 1- Dramatizable dialogues
2- English language proficiency
3- Creative writing skills

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Introduction:

Egyptian schools should reflect the democratic environment, especially after 25 Jan revolution, in the best possible way. This means that schools should offer opportunities where different students' viewpoints and attitudes are respected. But that is not an easy job. School administrators, teachers, students as well as parents should give a hand through supporting educational programs that can enhance student-student and student-teacher dialogues.

Most learners have one thing in common—they must acquire the language skills, and to live in a democratic society. That would hopefully lead them to take part in making decisions and solving problems at the school life as well as in their society. Most learners do not participate in the classroom activities and seldom enjoy their English language lessons. That could be due to the absence of dialogues inside or even outside their traditional classrooms. Dialogue is a basis for democratic education .Because most of teachers teach the dialogues included in the students' course book in a traditional way, there is little wonder why the students do not actively participate in the classroom activities.

In the classroom, as stated by Kozol (1990), the **teacher** poses questions with preconceived answers, a process inevitably prohibiting dialogue as a means of learning. Students look for the right answer to the **teacher's** question instead of developing their own ideas and sharing them with others.

Traditionally, the *teacher*'s role is to transmit content while negating the fact that students not only have the capacity to acquire their own knowledge from their daily experiences in and outside of the classroom. In most cases, by the time students complete their education, they may at best remember isolated facts with little or no relation to their daily lives. Students are, then, liable to lack the active citizenship skills required in a democratic society.

Because dialogues are the fundamental basis for a true democratic process, teachers should, in some manner, seek other forms of teaching which serve to prepare students for responsible roles as critically active citizens inside and outside of schools.

Balboa, F. et al, (1994) state that dialogue does not automatically emerge in the classroom. As educators, we must be aware that certain conditions are necessary for effective dialogue to occur. First, dialogue requires a personal investment in a meaningful exchange of ideas and ideals as an opportunity to participate in a public space and reach a commonality. Second, dialogue depends upon the motivation and commitment of participants to become involved and contribute to the process. Third, participants must be aware and willing to risk by putting themselves in unfamiliar situations and disclosing their experiences and points of view on the various issues discussed. Fourth, dialogue entails both critical and creative skills. Critical skills are necessary to enable participants to demystify social reality and access different layers of knowledge; creative skills are required in order to aid the construction of alternative insights, ideas, and knowledge and open up possibilities for action. Finally, dialogue cannot exist without humility and respect. True

dialogue is based on a recognition of one's own limitations and acknowledgment of one's need for others.

There are several benefits of dialogues. They could be a sound source and a sign of communication, They are a means of considering and testing novel ideas through which individuals perceive their lives and experiences as important. The students express ideas and issues relevant to their lives. Dialogues also invite personal involvement in serious discussion and learning. Benne (1990) argues that through dialogue, participants emerge as individuals with distinctive feelings, aspirations, and values.

Balboa et al, (1994) mention that in addition to the personal and political benefits to individuals, the dialogical process has numerous positive effects in the classroom. Dialogue is a viable way to give recognition and significance to students' lives through which they become more motivated and committed to the educational process. A most important effect is their changed attitude toward learning. The practice of dialogue results in learning experiences which enable students to see the crucial importance of learning collectively.. Dialogue helps students and teachers relate on a more personal, trusting level and makes the classroom a more humane place in which to learn.

The use of drama activities in the classroom is not new. Teachers used to take advantage of the dynamic qualities of drama to bring life to the classroom. Desialova (2009) stated that using drama and drama activities has clear advantages for language learning. It encourages students to speak, to communicate, even with limited language, using non verbal communication, such as body movements and facial expressions. Students' involvement in the negotiation and

construction of meaning during participation in a drama allows them insights into the relationship between context and language, and lets them link the language they are learning to the world around them. Zyoud (2010) mentions that drama can foster language skills such as reading, writing, speaking and listening by creating a suitable context. He mentions that there are many reasons in favour of using drama activities and techniques in the language classroom. It is entertaining and fun, and can provide motivation to learn, varied opportunities for different uses of language, and rich experience of language for the participants. Drama is a powerful language teaching tool that involves all of the students interactively all of the class period. Therefore, drama can provide the means for connecting students' emotions, thoughts and actions.

On the other hand, during periods when the major concern has been with the personal and social development of the learner, that is, on the personal and social values and skills that a student needs or wants to develop, the place of drama in the classroom has been crucial. Today, there is considerable discussion regarding the role, the function, and the purpose of the teacher, the curriculum, and even the school. Many advocates of curricular approaches strongly encourage the inclusion of drama in our classrooms, especially if we are keen to achieve effective outcomes. Andrews (1990) states that when elementary school children first learn to write, they often find it difficult to think of things to say. One hypothesis is that young writers rely on a conversational model of communication and find it difficult to generate content in the absence of a conversational partner. The present experiment was designed to learn if a dialogue writing task, in which the story characters "talk" directly to one another, would help children write longer narratives. Dialogue

writing samples from sixth-grade students in three classrooms were compared with standard narratives written by the same subjects. The results showed that children wrote longer stories and enjoyed the sessions more when writing in dialogue. There was no difference in the results for children with different levels of reading skill academic motivation. The results suggest that dialogue writing may be a valuable component of the elementary writing curriculum.

Review of Literature

Teaching of English as a foreign language is not an easy job. Dawes (2008: 16) defines teaching as 'the professional expertise to create dialogue in which learning takes place'. Studies (e.g. Swan, 2006; Payne et al, 2006; Hogarth et al', 2005; Bennett et al, 2005) have found that effective dialogue has a positive effect on student learning, which embraces subject learning, understanding, communication skills, and students' control over their own learning.

The benefits of drama to develop learners' imagination and language acquisition should not be undervalued. Many teachers sometimes do not spend due time to encourage their students to use their imagination. Imagination can inspire learners with new ideas. Teachers should not neglect this facet of human behavior. There are several studies that support the benefits of drama in foreign language learning, such as Maley and Duff (2001), and Philips (2003). Dramatic activities according to Maley and Duff (1979) "are activities which give the students an opportunity to use his own personality in creating the material in which part of the language class is to be based". Drama activities can provide students with an opportunity to use language to express various emotions, to solve problems, to make decisions, to

socialize. Drama activities are also useful according to Aldavero (2008), in the development of oral communication skills, and reading and writing as well. Drama activities help students to communicate in the foreign language including those with limited vocabulary.

Although writing is a highly desired skill, very few students enjoy it. Those students need a better reason than a grade to write. Dialogue journals are informal and give students the freedom to choose their own topics. Szeto (2009) mentions that "dialogue journals provide students the opportunity to improve their writing skills in a meaningful exchange with the teacher.

McCaslin (1996) mentions that drama in the English classroom can provide an opportunity to develop the imagination of the students, provide an opportunity for independent thinking, encouraged them to express their own ideas and improve their critical thinking. Acting also provides the opportunity for a healthy release of emotion in a safe setting.

Maley and Duff (2005) listed many points supporting the use of drama stating that it integrates language skills in a natural way; integrates verbal and non verbal aspects of communication; draws upon both cognitive and affective domains; brings the classroom interaction to life through an intensive focus on meaning; emphasis on whole-person learning; offers unequalled opportunities for catering to learner differences; fosters self-awareness and awareness of others; encourages an open, exploratory style of learning where creativity and the imagination are given scope to develop; and facilitates the formation of a bonded group which learns together.

Fleming (2006) stated that drama is inevitably learner-centered because it can only operate through active cooperation. It is therefore a social activity and thus embodies much of the theory that has emphasized the social and communal, as opposed to the purely individual, aspects of learning. The use of drama techniques and activities in the classroom provides exciting opportunities for foreign language learners to use the language in stress-free situations. Some research studies, (Maley and Duff 2001, Philips, 2003) suggest that drama activities can promote interesting ways of motivating language learners and teachers. Philips (2003) explains that with drama learners can play, move, act and learn at the same time. Also the use of drama activities has clear advantages for language learning regarding motivation.

Putus (2008) studied the effects of using two different drama activities in different classrooms. Her findings pointed out that both, classroom discourse as well as regular speech, occurred in the courses. The results proved that students could have a "discussional environment" with the teacher, which benefits learning. However, owing to the fact that the study pursued to find interactional benefits, it neglected any other possible findings that might have been of an interest for the current study.

Desialova (2009) outlined some of the areas where drama is very useful to language learners and teachers. Drama gives learners an experience of using the language for genuine communication and real life purposes; makes language learning an active, motivating experience; helps learners gain the confidence and self-esteem needed to use the language spontaneously; brings the real world into the classroom; emulates the way students naturally acquire language through

play, make-believe and meaningful interaction; makes what is learned memorable through direct experience; helps the students be actively involved in the activity; develops students' ability to empathize with others and thus become better communicators; and helps learners acquire language by focusing on the message they are conveying, not the form of their utterance

Non-verbal communication exercises and pantomime are types of dramatic activities that can provide teachers and learners with many opportunities to explore relationships between meaning and movement. Although the appearance of several popular books on body language, kinaesics, and the commercial availability of certain non-verbal communication games have made most teachers at least aware of the topic, too few have actively included non-verbal activities and pantomime in their ongoing instruction. If anything, these experiences have entered the curriculum only

As a part of a separate unit, distinct from other activities and other units in the curriculum. Yet, even such a simple activity as the walking exercise can be translated into a potent instructional tool by having some students walk as literary characters or historical figures that they have been reading about. The resulting exploration of the relationship between movement and character's feelings and attitudes at a particular time can easily enrich both the literary and historical experience and it can accentuate aspects of human behavior and emotion quite apart from age, race, religion, or sex.

Improvisation in many ways parallels pantomime with the exception that verbalization among characters is included. Whereas pantomime involves movement and silent

expressiveness, improvisation involves the first two plus oral language. As with pantomime, improvisational work usually emanates from a minimal stimulus and usually involves a relatively spontaneous enactment. By and large, improvisational activity can occur for different purposes before, during, and after the reading or writing processes.

As a prelude to the reading of a short story, for example, the teacher might ask two students to improvise characters in a scene analogous to a scene in the literary work to be read. Once again, post enactment discussions may encourage students to consider underlying human experiences and motives, therapy aiding students to understand how they are like and how they are different from those around them.

Discussing "Creative dramatic works", McCaslin (1984) clarified that they differ in form from improvisation largely in the extent to which students have an opportunity to plan out a scene before enactment. The time period for group planning may vary from relatively short time periods such as 10 or 15 minutes to rather lengthy times such as one, two, or even three class period. The students usually do little or no overt rehearsal of their "Play," and the actual enactment is improvised in the sense that students are not working from any kind of prepared script.

Some authors think that Readers Theatre is as an effective supplemental instructional tool in the classroom to improve oral reading fluency. Keehn (2003) and Worthy & Prater (2002) state that Readers Theatre is an instructional technique that requires learners to read text as a script, allowing them to perform in front of others while developing their oral reading skills. While the use and popularity of Readers Theatre as an academic activity has increased, it

has been in existence as an instructional strategy for many years

Smith (2011) examined Readers Theatre as an instructional and motivational tool in comparison to repeated reading. Using a quasi-experimental design, second-grade students (N = 85) in four classrooms from a small suburban school district in Pennsylvania participated in the study. Statistically significant improvement in oral reading fluency was observed for both the treatment and alternative treatment groups after 10 weeks. In addition, The results showed that neither the treatment nor alternative treatment group demonstrated improvement in reading motivation or reading attitude.

Stephen (1989) and Way (1987) have agreed that "Role-Playing", too, has many variations, some simple and others relatively ornate. In essence, however, a stimulus in the form of some-kind of conflict situation, decision-point situation, or confrontation is presented to the class. The characters or figures in the situation usually have at least some definition. Also, a line of action may be suggested but not resolved in the stimulus situation. During improvised enactment, students take up the roles of the characters or figures in the situation and try to work out a resolution. Post-enactment discussions often focus on characters' development, characters' consistency, and plausibility of action and resolution. In most cases, different students may try out the roles leading to different resolutions. The various types of role-playing activities have wide ranging applicability, with the unfinished story procedure being particularly appropriate in language arts and English instruction at all levels.

Irrespective of identified benefits, goals, contexts, and types of activities, the teacher still must eventually be a leader

of the activities in the classroom and the unfortunate reality is that most teachers have had little or no training in how to lead such activities.

The distinction between drama and theatre is important. According to Koziol (1975) cited in Way (1995), drama is probably the most definitive. In the field, "theatre is largely concerned with communication between actors and an audience", drama is largely concerned with experience by the participants, irrespective to any function of communication to an audience.

According to Way (1987), theatre involves a public performance while drama frequently involves no explicit audience. In theatre, evaluation takes place by the audience and determined in large part by the extent to which the actors were able to communicate meaning. In drama, evaluation is usually undertaken by the actors and is determined in large part by the awareness or understanding that accrued to them as a consequence of having participated in the dramatic activity. In theatre, the quality of performance is ultimately determined by others; in drama, the quality of an enactment is ultimately determined by the participants themselves.

Thus, understanding the distinction between theatre and drama affords us one way of looking at the problem of unreal expectations. If the students, and the teacher operate from a "Theatre" perspective, the failure of the students to produce a polished, finished performance can easily be discouraging. Even if the teacher has the patience to temper his or her expectations, the desire for a reasonably good product or for overt participation by all frequently over powers the original purpose of a profitable personal experience.

Abd-Rab-El-Naby (1997) and Aljabry (1990) concluded that most of the articles, books, papers and texts, however, refer to these various activities as "Creative Dramatics". Moreover, since most texts either American or British ,devote all or most of their time to work with elementary stage children, most junior high, secondary, and college level teachers who try out these activities in their classes usually label their work "Role-playing". We have then the interesting phenomenon of some different teachers in some Western countries trying out what in essence is the same type of activities calling it "Improvisation". Unfortunately, although many teachers of English now seem to realize that dramatization a powerful activity, the researcher has observed relatively few who have had direct experiences with dramatization as participants and still fewer who use it regularly in the classroom. Moreover, although texts used in special methods classes for teachers of English usually include suggestions for the use of dramatization, most allocate only brief space to that topic or to its potential for classroom use.

Many teachers might be afraid or awkward with regard to using drama for many reasons. Fear of losing control in the classroom, having unnecessarily loud noise levels, disturbing nearby classes and/or mass chaos could be some of these reasons. However, students are expected to enjoy the activities, work together in groups and share their creative expressions. Even the shyest students are expected to benefit from drama. with clearly structured activities, most of the teachers' fears could disappear

Ashton-Hay (2005) mentions that drama is highly regarded as an effective and valuable teaching strategy because of its unique ability to engage reflective, constructivist and active

learning in the classroom as well as enhancing oral skills development.

While some research such as Desialova (2009); Aldavero (2008), and Ashton-Hay (2005) claimed that drama activities could only promote learners' oral skills, others as those of Maley and Duff (1979), Philips (2003), Putus (2008), and McCaslin (1996) found that drama activities promoted learners' motivation and some personal and social development, the present study tried to investigate the effects of using dramatizable dialogues on improving first year secondary school female students' four language skills and their creative writing skills.

The four language skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing play an irreplaceable role in English language education. There is a close relationship between writing and thinking which makes writing a valuable part of any language course. That relationship includes situations in which learners explore their creative thinking skills. Manivannan (2006) mentions that English language is one of the tools with which we to establish our viewpoints. Creative writing is the process through which learners write new original well-developed ideas and learners generate creative ideas by exploring many possible solutions. Learners may merge ideas which have not been merged before.

The researcher thinks that through drama, it is possible to practice different language skills and integrate speaking, listening, reading, and writing. Considering the Chinese proverb that reads; **"I hear and I forget, I listen and I remember, I do and I understand"**, shows the reason why drama is a powerful classroom tool. With that tool students no more passive recipients but active meaning makers. The use

of drama in the classroom may offer several positive personal benefits. The students may develop certain communication skills, self esteem, confidence, decision making, team work. Also, acceptance of others, respecting others' viewpoints, and sharing responsibility with others are among the benefits of drama inside the classroom. The teacher becomes a fellow player with his students as both are supposed to communicate, decide, experience, respond, and discover.

Background of the problem:

Traditionally, teachers used to ask the students to fill gaps or to finish completing sentences in a dialogue. Even after analyzing several exams, it was found that the question item based on dialogues were either completely avoided or a fill-in gap or completion exercise based on a dialogue. Generally, dramatic activities are seldom dealt with in details as a part of training programs in Egyptian secondary schools. Most texts allocate little or no attention to dialogues included in the students textbook . Very few teachers have been given training in using dramatic activities during teaching situations. Many teachers and students, still, seem to be shy to use drama inside or outside the classroom. Very few drama-based programs have been held to train teachers on how to relate dialogues to their teaching situations. Even if there are few secondary school teachers who may have the knowledge of using drama inside or outside the classroom, they find themselves either shy or hesitant to apply what they know in that respect.

If educationists think that dramatic activity is worthwhile and that it promotes cognitive development as well as personal and social development, then, why don't they show its effectiveness? The researcher thinks that secondary school teachers still have little opportunity to explore dramatization

and that it is time for practicing such direct experience with dramatization. The present study aims at encouraging not only students but also teachers of English to use dramatic activities as an active component in all parts of the instructional program. More specifically, it is to explore some of the specific ways in which dramatization relates directly to cognitive and educational objectives of the classroom.

Statement of the problem:

Many secondary school students complain of their poor performance in both their language proficiency and their ability to write a creative text. While creative writing is important to secondary school students in that it is an indicator that shows students' genuine learning rather than memorizing sentences of a written text, most teachers complain that the students' performance in writing in secondary schools is quite "bad". It was observed that teachers still use the product-oriented approach to the teaching of writing. As a result, many students are unable to write a well-developed paragraph. Some struggle through it and others just give up writing. Based on the results of a pilot study on twenty 1st year secondary school students, the researcher found that that most students' written performance was lacking the creative writing skills: fluency as most students did not write a proper number of ideas; flexibility as varied ideas were lacking; originality as most of them did not think of writing unusual ideas.

Although drama is a fairly recent teaching strategy, very few teachers are interested in making use of benefits of drama in the classrooms. Even most of those teachers who attempt using drama inside the classroom consider the value of drama in offering training in speech. However, what isn't obvious is how even abstract learning is easier when acted or

demonstrated. With drama, creativity and fun can be there. When students are doing an activity, they are learning effectively. That is why the researcher thinks that the students need to be personally involved in learning activities in order to make the learning experience of lasting value. Through dramatizable dialogue-based approach, it is hoped that the students might achieve better performance in their creative writing skills as, fluency, flexibility and originality in addition to their general performance in language proficiency.

In short, the problem of the present study can be stated in the following major question:-

- What is the effectiveness of using a suggested dramatizable dialogue-based approach on improving first year secondary school female students' language proficiency and their creative writing skills ?

To answer this question, the following sub-questions were answered:

- a) What is the effectiveness of using a suggested dramatizable dialogue-based approach on improving first year secondary school female students' language proficiency ?
- b) What is the effectiveness of using a suggested dramatizable dialogue-based approach on improving first year secondary school female students' creative writing skills ?
- c) Is there a relationship between first year secondary school female students' English language proficiency and their creative writing skills?

Significance of the study:

The present study seeks to enrich the field of English language teaching with some positive contributions such as :

- a) Shedding the light upon the instructional concepts of "dramatizable dialogues" and "role-playing".
- b) Helping students to practically use drama inside the classroom or even in their extra-curricular activities, the matter that may positively affect their overall social and linguistic performance.
- c) Enriching program designers with the criteria for designing educational activities based on dramatizable dialogues.
- d) Helping educational program designers to better select the appropriate instructional dramatizable dialogues.
- e) Helping teachers know how to relate dramatizable dialogues to their teaching situations..

Objectives of the study:

The present study sought to

- 1- identify the effectiveness of using a suggested dramatizable dialogue-based approach on improving first year secondary school female students' language proficiency.
- 2- identify the effectiveness of using a suggested dramatizable dialogue-based approach on improving first year secondary school female students' creative writing skills.
- 3- determine if there is correlation between students' English proficiency skills and their creative writing skills.

Hypotheses of the study:

The following hypotheses were tested.

1. There is a statistically significant difference (favoring the experimental group) between the mean scores of the experimental and the control groups on the post test of English language proficiency as measured by the English Language Proficiency Exam.
2. There is a statistically significant difference (favoring the experimental group) between the mean scores of the control and experimental groups on the post test of the creative writing skills as measured by the creative writing Test.
3. There is correlation between the students' English proficiency and their creative writing skills.

Limitations of the study:

The present study was limited to:

1. Fluency, flexibility, and originality were the three creative sub-skills included in the present study.
2. The subjects were limited to the first year female secondary school students enrolled in Najeeb Mahfoz secondary school for girls in Alkharja city. Thus, the results are not to be generalized.
3. The study lasted for twenty four hours divided into twelve sessions, one session a week. Thus, the experiment lasted for two months starting from October, 2011.

Definitions of Terms:

Dialogue: Kohl (1994:111) defines a dialogue as "an active process of serious continuing discussion which allows people's voices to develop and be heard" This means that the participants must be willing to communicate, share, and transform their needs, wants, goals, and ideas as well as respect those of others. According to the present study, a dialogue is a discussion between two parties, especially when they are trying to solve a problem or convince the other party with their standpoint. Each party of the students here share mutually held ideas and meanings.

Dramatizable dialogues: This term is used in the present study to refer to the dialogues that are prepared in English by the researcher to be acted by the students to bring life to the classroom and to make learning happen with fun in a student-centered atmosphere.

Drama: Holden (1982) takes drama to mean "any kind of activity where learners are asked either to portray themselves or to portray someone else in an imaginary situation". In other words, drama is concerned with the world of "let's pretend" ; it asks the learner to project himself imaginatively into another situation, outside the classroom, or into the skin and persona of another person". In the present study, it does not refer to any single piece of literature or to literary works that belong to a specific genre. Drama, in the present paper, does not in any way refer to the piece of literature that is studied by students in some formal way. It refers to the process of dialogue acting inside classrooms. a drama activity is one which involves the representation of a life situation, and these activities are varied in their form as well as purpose.

Dramatic activities: It is an umbrella term by which the researcher means the wide range of activities which can be included under the general headings: improvisation, dramatizable dialogues, or role-playing exercises. These activities are sometimes short and sometimes rather lengthy. Most often these activities are carried out in isolation and infrequently.

Creative writing: It is, according to the present study, a type of writing through which a writer expresses his/her thoughts and feelings in an imaginative, often unique, or a distinguished way.

English Language Proficiency: English language proficiency is defined by Canales (1994:60) on a socio-theoretical foundation. She states that an English proficient student is able to use English to ask questions, to understand teachers, and reading materials, to test ideas, and to challenge what is being asked in the classroom. According to the present study, English language proficiency is measured by the test prepared by the researcher (See: Tools of the study).

A controversial issue: Stradling (1984) defines a controversial idea as an idea or viewpoint "that generates conflicting explanations and solutions based on alternative value systems." In the present study it is defined as reflective dialogue among students, or between students and teachers, about an issue on which there is disagreement.

Method

Subjects:

-A number of forty female students randomly chosen from among first year Najeeb Mahfoz secondary school for girls was the target subjects of the present study. The students had a strong tendency to participate in dramatic activities. The students of the experimental group (n = 20) were trained through the suggested dramatizable dialogue-based approach. The students of the control group (n = 20) did not receive such training.

Design of the study:

The study utilized the control/experimental group design. It is a quasi-experimental study, where both quantitative and qualitative data were obtained and analyzed to find answers for the questions of the present study. The independent variable was the use of the dramatizable dialogue-based approach in training secondary school-students to develop their language proficiency and their performance in creative writing. Age, linguistic and social background of the students of the two groups were controlled, The dependent variables were:

- Students' language proficiency
- Students' performance in creative writing skills

Tools of the Study. (Available with the researcher).

a) An English Language Proficiency Exam

The exam includes 50-items. It was developed for first year secondary school students who are studying EFL. The instructions of the test are written in English. They are brief, easy to understand and free from any possible ambiguities.

An answer sheet is provided. The exam consists five parts; listening comprehension, speaking, reading comprehension, grammar, and writing. Each part includes 10 items. See Appendix (A)

Validity of the test: The test was submitted to a jury of eight TEFL specialists. They judged the statement of items, appropriateness of the items to the subjects, and how far the items measure the English language proficiency of first year secondary school students. The jury confirmed the suitability and applicability of the test.

Reliability of the test: The test was administered to a randomly chosen sample of 30 first year secondary school students. The pilot study was conducted four weeks prior to the administration of the program. The reliability coefficient of the test was (075).

Item Difficulty: Responses to individual items were analyzed to determind item difficulty index of this test. The difficulty index of the test ranged from 0.39 to 079. Hence, it is acceptable.

Item Discrimination: When analyzing the discriminating power of the items of this test, it was found that the items are of a positive discriminating power, i.e. they discriminate well between high and low achievers. The discriminating index of the items in this test ranged from 0.37 to 0.68. thus, the discriminating index of items in this test is acceptable.

Time of test administration: During piloting the test, the researcher calculated time taken by the first student finishing the test added to that taken by the last student, and the average was found to be 90 minutes.

b) A Creative Writing Test: It was to ask students to complete an open-ended short story. For marking the test the researcher asked the help of two other external raters. Students' writings were assessed based on their performance on creative writing skills.

Validity of the designed tools:

The tests were submitted to a panel of seven jury members in the field of EFL to decide upon:

- a) Appropriateness of each tool for the subjects of the study.
- b) Whether the behavioral objectives belong to the general objectives of each tool.
- c) Suitability of the materials presented in each tool separately.
- d) Applicability and suitability of each tool to the subjects of the study.

Treatment of the experimental group:

- The researcher used to hold a discussion with the students on a controversial issue using Idea Collection Sheets (Students' success is measured by the quality of the ideas they come up with.) (See Appendix (B))
- The students were invited to take notes about the topic under discussion, read others' comments about the same issue (reading, writing), speak to others about their relevant experiences (speaking, listening), write profiles about the characters (writing), script their dialogues (writing), rehearse their scenes (speaking, reinforces correct language use) and finally present them to the class (speaking and listening). That was achieved through the following steps:

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1. The class was divided into six groups. Each group included five members representing one of two different points of view.
 2. Each group was told that they were expected to dramatize a dialogue based on a controversial issue they had adopted.
 3. The researcher explained to the students how to use facial and bodies expressions to convey information.
 4. The students were invited to be seated at desks and to begin to talk about drama.
 5. The students were invited to move the desks back to create a working space in the center of the room. Bring them back to circle center.
 6. They were asked to take a moment to tell their group members about their viewpoints, then write their ideas in a logical order.
 7. The students were invited to think together about the reasons behind adopting a viewpoint based on one of the controversial idea.
 8. The researcher gave an example of how to arrange some ideas logically.
 9. Each group was asked to create a dialogue based on what they have prepared.
 10. The students were invited to play roles doing their best to act the dialogue conveying emotion with their hands and bodies.
 11. The researcher discussed briefly what was seen and gave feedback with comments about how to use simple repetitions of words, phrases or even sentences for the drama purpose.
 12. Then they were asked to break out again and work in the same way with a different topic.

Pretesting:

Table (1) below shows means, standard deviation, t-test, and its significance as obtained by the pre scores of the experimental and control group on the English Language Proficiency Exam.

Pre test data on the English Language Proficiency Exam For 1st year secondary school students were obtained to ensure group equivalence. Pre-test data on this test showed group equivalence as the t-value (0.85) was insignificant at .05 level. See Table (1):

Table (1)

Means, standard deviations, and t-value between means of scores obtained by subjects of the control and experimental groups on English Proficiency Exam and its parts. (Pre-testing)

Group	No. of subjects	Eng. Proficiency Parts	Means	Standard Deviations	Degree of Freedom	T-value
Control	20	Listening Comprehension	9.10	1.02	38	0.47
Experimental	20		9.00	1.03		
Control	20	Speaking	9.40	1.47	38	0.34
Experimental	20		9.50	1.43		
Control	20	Reading Comprehension	9.40	1.14	38	0.37
Experimental	20		9.50	1.43		
Control	20	Grammar	9.30	1.46	38	0.37
Experimental	20		9.40	1.14		
Control	20	Writing	9.10	1.21	38	0.40
Experimental	20		9.20	1.19		
Control	20	Total	46.30	2.43	38	0.85
Experimental	20		46.60	3.44		

* Not significant at .05 level.

Total Score = 100

Pre test data on the Creative Writing Skills Test for first year secondary school students was obtained to ensure group equivalence. Pre-test data on this test showed group

equivalence as the t-value (.57) was insignificant at .05 level. See Table (2):

Table (2)

Means, standard deviations, and t-value between means of scores obtained by subjects of the control and experimental groups on Creative Writing Test and its Criteria (Pre-testing)

Group	No. of subjects	Creative Criteria	Means	Standard Deviations	Degree of Freedom	T-value
Control	20	Fluency	13.6	1.67	38	0.65
Experimental	20		13.8	1.82		
Control	20	Flexibility	12.4	1.67	38	0.55
Experimental	20		12.5	1.43		
Control	20	Originality	11.2	1.98	38	0.31
Experimental	20		11.3	1.86		
Control	20	Total	37.2	4.17	38	0.25
Experimental	20		37.6	3.21		

* Not significant at .05 level

Total Score = 120

Results & Discussion

Hypothesis (1) predicted that there would be significant differences (favoring the experimental group) between means of scores of the control and experimental groups on the post test of the English Proficiency Exam. Analysis of the data using t-test showed that "t-value" in the language proficiency exam was totally (24.59). These values are significant at the level of (.05).

The results of the present study seemed to support the hypothesis that the suggested dramatizable dialogue-based approach was effective in improving the experimental group students' English language proficiency, as shown in Table (3) below. Thus, the first hypothesis is confirmed.

Table (3)

Means, standard deviations, and t-value between means of scores obtained by subjects of the control and experimental groups on English Proficiency Exam and its parts.

(Post-testing)

Group	No. of subjects	Eng. Proficiency Parts	Means	Standard Deviations	Degree of Freedom	T-value
Control	20	Listening Comprehension	10.20	1.11	38	6.36
Experimental	20		12.30	1.98		
Control	20	Speaking	9.60	1.54	38	8.73
Experimental	20		10.80	1.99		
Control	20	Reading Comprehension	9.80	1.11	38	3.01
Experimental	20		10.80	1.99		
Control	20	Grammar	9.90	1.17	38	5.54
Experimental	20		11.80	2.04		
Control	20	Writing	9.80	1.44	38	7.77
Experimental	20		12.40	1.79		
Control	20	Total	49.30	3.01	38	24.59
Experimental	20		60.10	3.21		

** Significant at .05 level.

Total Score = 100

Table(3) indicates that there were statistical significant differences between means of scores obtained by subjects of both the control and experimental groups in the post-performance of English language proficiency, (favoring the experimental group). For the experimental group t-test showed that "t-values" in the language proficiency exam parts: listening comprehension, speaking, reading comprehension, grammar, and writing were (6.36), (8.73), (3.01), (5.54) (7.77) respectively. These values are significant at the level of (.05).

Hypothesis (2) predicted that there would be significant differences (favoring the experimental group) between means of scores of the control and experimental groups on the post measurement of the creative writing skills as related to fluency, flexibility, and originality.

Analysis of the data using t-testing shows that t-value of the post comparison of the control and experimental groups in the three criteria; fluency, flexibility, and originality (13.58), (3.19) and (1.05) successively are significant at .05 level. The results of the present study support the hypothesis that the suggested dramatizable dialogue-based approach was effective in improving the experimental group students' fluency whereas it was not so effective in improving their flexibility nor originality, as shown in Table (4) below.

Table (4)

Means, standard deviations, and t-value between means of scores obtained by subjects of the control and experimental groups on Creative Writing Test and its Criteria (Post-testing)

Group	No. of subjects	Creative Criteria	Means	Standard Deviations	Degree of Freedom	T-value
Control	20	Fluency	13.50	1.70	38	13.58
Experimental	20		20.10	2.86		
Control	20	Flexibility	12.40	1.66	38	3.19
Experimental	20		13.80	2.50		
Control	20	Originality	11.20	1.67	38	1.05
Experimental	20		11.60	1.98		
Control	20	Total	37.10	3.54	38	13.31
Experimental	20		45.50	4.32		

** Significant at .05 level.

Total Score = 120

Based on the previous tables, the suggested dramatizable dialogue-based approach was found effective in improving the experimental group students' fluency whereas it was not so effective in improving their flexibility nor originality skills.

Analysis of the data based on correlation shows that there is positive significant correlation at .05 level between correlations of English proficiency and its parts (listening comprehension, speaking, reading comprehension, grammar

and writing) and creative thinking and its criteria (fluency, flexibility, and originality). See Table (5):

Table (5)
Correlations Between English Proficiency And Its Parts
&
Creative Writing and Its Criteria

EP CW	Listening Comprehension	Speaking	Reading Comprehension	Grammar	Writing	Total
Fluency	.82	.90	.69	.66	.70	.90
Flexibility	.77	.82	.68	.74	.76	.82
Originality	.60	.60	.62	.62	.60	.62
Total	.83	.90	.75	.74	.76	.90

N=40

Based on table (5), it is evident that correlations ranged from 0.62 to 0.90. There is a clear positive correlation between speaking and fluency at 0.90. That gives evidence that those who share in the dramatizable dialogues through speaking more are capable of producing unique responses. There is a positive correlation between speaking and flexibility at 0.82. That gives evidence that those who participate in the dramatic activities are capable of producing unique responses with flexibility. There is in significant positive correlation between speaking and originality at 0.62. That gives evidence that those who participate in the dramatic activities are rarely capable of producing unique responses with originality. There is also correlation between the total score of both speaking and creativity. This again confirms the correlations between creativity and its three criteria, and English proficiency with the five parts. Thus, the this hypothesis is answered.

The results of the present study are generally very encouraging in a number of areas. The large and significant differences between the gains of the two groups at the end of the study support the two hypotheses of the study. These gains point to the powerful role of the dramatizable dialogue-based approach.

Although most of the students were initially not confident to produce simple utterances while acting, they could initiate and sustain a conversation in face-to-face situations after the teacher's modeling of dialogues shared with the students. Others showed hesitation and shyness. A big number of the pupils could successfully participate and play roles in the target activities.

The present study did not echo previous research and found evidence for dramatizable dialogues as a useful approach to improve language skills; however, there was little evidence that could confirm that dramatizable dialogues improved the students' performance in creative writing skills. It was found that drama was useful for improving the four language skills and especially for enhancing the spoken communication skills of the students. Drama was found very effective in practicing and integrating speaking, listening, reading, and writing. Dramaizable dialogues could maintain students' motivation, by providing an atmosphere of fun and entertainment while learning. Drama was found an appealing teaching strategy which promoted cooperation, collaboration, self-control, goal-oriented learning as well as emotional intelligence skills. Shy students were encouraged to speak.

Because the teacher used to share the students during the process of acting, there was chances of enjoyable activities for both speakers and listeners. Dialogue drawing allowed the

students to think, write down their ideas, arrange them and act as well. It provides practice in expressing ideas in thoughts using colourful and descriptive language, developing ideas in sequence, and choosing effective action words.

Acting was initially very difficult for several students. That was something the students had never done before. Most of the students used to read the previously written dialogue hand outs while acting. But, with time, they started to gain confidence and play their roles better, While acting, the students could add, reconstruct, rephrase and rearrange utterances showing certain improvement in their higher order thinking skills (HOTS). Using dramatizable dialogues to help students develop their creative writing skills is found very effective. Once they have become comfortable using a dialogue, students went on to act the roles before their classmates.

It was found that the suggested approach developed some cognitive skills, such as constructing hypotheses and collecting and evaluating evidence. Many students gained insights from sharing information with their peers. some kind of development in communication skills, such as listening carefully, responding empathetically, speaking persuasively, and cooperating readily, with other. They also showed tolerance of diverse viewpoints of others. The researcher observed that the experimental students' classroom negotiation skills were improved as well.

Conclusion

Although there were several benefits of using drama as an effective strategy to improve some language skills (speaking, listening, and reading), constraints of space, time and students' readiness to play roles were still regarded as

barriers. Creating a truly safe and stable *dialogical* environment was difficult to achieve because many teachers still hold the traditional concepts of teaching and learning in which learning is mere memorization of isolated pieces of information. Other teachers did not believe in educational reform, The overcrowded conditions of classrooms with large numbers of students could make it difficult for teachers to implement dramatic activities inside the classrooms.

The results of the present study concludes that Najeeb Mahfoz secondary school for girls students in Alkarga city could and did benefit from the dramatizable dialogue-based approach. The majority of the students' English language proficiency and creative writing skills have been improved. However, being conducted over a relatively short period of time (twenty four hours divided into twelve sessions, one session a week), the effects of the approach on the students' language proficiency can best be seen in a longer term.

The results of the present study agree with that of Balboa et al, (1994), Ashton-Hay (2005), Maley (2005), Szeto (2009), Desialova (2009), and Zyoud (2010), in supporting the idea that dramatic activities are effective in improving learners' language proficiency.

The results also agree with those who claimed that dramatic activities provide opportunities for learners to develop their imagination, think critically, bear responsibility such as Maley and Duff (2001), Philips (2003). Fleming (2006), and Aldavero (2008), Desialova (2009).

Recommendations:

- 1- It is recommended for students to be given regular opportunities to work collaboratively on dialogue-based activities to enhance their language skills.
- 2- Drama should be given more attention in the Egyptian field of Education.
- 3- Secondary school EFL teachers should be trained on how to use dramatizable dialogues inside the classrooms.
- 4- Workshop series should be held for as many teachers as possible from all over Egypt in which various specialists in Dramatic activities can be trained.
- 5- It is recommended for teachers to use dialogues for role-plays.
- 6- It is recommended for teachers to have students memorize simple dialogues as a way of helping them improve their language skills.
- 7- It is also recommended for teachers to structure and promote students' use of dialogue in group work.
- 8- For students to remain motivated to learn, they should believe they can achieve success if they try hard. Thus, schools should support teachers offering extra help to students as needed.

Suggestions for further studies:

- 1- Further research should be done to investigate the effects of using a dramatizable dialogue-based approach on improving **male** students' language proficiency and creative writing skills.
- 2- Further comparative research should be done to investigate the effects of using a dramatizable dialogue-based approach on improving **male/female** students' language proficiency and creative writing skills.
- 3- Further research should be done to investigate the effects

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- of using dramatizable-dialogue on improving-secondary school students' higher order thinking skills (HOTS).
- 4- Further research should be done to investigate the effects of using dramatizable-dialogues on improving secondary school students' Loud-Reading Skills.
 - 5- Further research should be done to investigate the effects of using dramatizable-dialogue on improving secondary school students' classroom negotiation skills.

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فعالية استخدام مدخل تدريبي قائم على الحوار التمثيلي في تنمية مهارات الكفاءة اللغوية والكتابة الإبداعية لدى طلاب الفرقة الأولى الثانوي

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هدف هذا البحث إلي دراسة فعالية استخدام مدخل تدريبي قائم على الحوار كنشاط تمثيلي في تنمية مهارات الكفاءة اللغوية والكتابة الإبداعية لدى طلاب الفرقة الأولى الثانوي.

و تضمنت العينة عددا (٤٠) أربعون طالبة تم اختيارهم عشوائياً من بين عينة أكبر مقيدة بالفرقة الأولى الثانوي بمدرسة نجيب محفوظ الثانوية بنات بمدينة الخارجة ، و قد تم تقسيم العينة إلى مجموعتين، المجموعة الأولى وهي مجموعة تجريبية تلقت تدريباً باستخدام مدخلاً قائماً على الحوار كنشاط تمثيلي ، والمجموعة الثانية هي المجموعة الضابطة والتي اكتفت بالدراسة بالشكل التقليدي المعتاد بفصولهم الدراسية. و اشتملت أدوات البحث على اختبار في مهارات الكفاءة اللغوية ، و اختباراً لقياس الأداء في الكتابة الإبداعية.

هذا ، و قد توصلت الدراسة وجود فروق دالة إحصائية بين متوسط درجات طلاب المجموعة التجريبية في القياسين القبلي و البعدي في مهارات الكفاءة اللغوية (لصالح القياس البعدي) ، و وجود فروق دالة إحصائية بين متوسط درجات طلاب المجموعة التجريبية في القياسين القبلي و البعدي في الكتابة الإبداعية (لصالح القياس البعدي) ، وتبين وجود علاقة ارتباطية بين بعض مهارات اللغة الإنجليزية وبعض مهارات التفكير الإبداعية.

الكلمات المفتاحية:

- الحوار كنشاط تمثيلي
- الكفاءة اللغوية
- الكتابة الإبداعية

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