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Problems English Majors Encounter in Learning Drama in English at Al Aqsa University in Gaza and Ways to Reduce Them

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Abstract

Drama courses are core at the English departments in the Palestinian Universities. Teaching drama properly will help students have an excellent command of English language and culture. The research aimed to find out the problems English majors at Al-Aqsa University in Palestine encounter in understanding drama. It also aimed to propose ways to reduce the problems students encounter in drama. In order to achieve the study objectives, the study used the descriptive analytical approach. A questionnaire consisting of (25) items was designed (25) items and distributed to (75) male and female English majors at Al Aqsa University. The researchers also conducted interviews with (3) drama teachers at Al Aqsa University to offer ways to help reduce problems in learning drama. The study revealed that more (73%) of the students believed that the major problem encounter them in learning drama is that there is no chance to act the play. The study also found that there is no statistically significant difference attributed to gender or the level of the students in learning drama, and English Language Education students face more problems in learning drama than English Language Literature students. The study offered a number of suggestions to reduce problems in learning drama.

Keywords: problems, English majors, teaching drama, learning drama

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1. Introduction

The aim of this study was to identify the main problems English language Majors encounter at Al-Aqsa University in dealing with drama. The study focused on English language Department students at Al Aqsa University in Gaza since it is the largest and one of the major universities in the Gaza Strip, Palestine. The two researchers witnessed many points of difficulty in learning drama among English Majors, as one of the researchers works as a teacher of English Literature at Al Aqsa University – Gaza, the other graduated from the English Department, Al Azhar University of Gaza. Both of the researchers have good background related to English literature courses. The difficulties in learning drama were also investigated by Shakfa (2012), Mourtaga (2004), and Keshta (2000); their studies were applied to the English Majors in the Gaza Strip.

Drama is an influential tool for the engagement of students with the scope of learning. Since leaning requires active context and lively involvement of students with their teacher, drama comes as an authentic source that engages students in social contexts. These contexts require learners to think, speak, employ concrete materials, and share points of view in order to reach decisions (Silks, 1983). Nowadays, there is a trend to make the educational process a more student-centered classroom strategy instead of teacher-centered. This approach requires teachers to give their students more opportunities to be the center of the teaching process. One of most appropriate strategies is to provide students with real opportunities to let them actively engage during drama classes.

Giving opportunities to students to be the center of the educational process does not require teachers /university teachers to take the lead in classes by doing the whole activities such as explaining, acting, presenting, and analyzing. Therefore, students are advised to interact with what they learn so that they become more confident users of English. In this regard, Benjamin Franklin said, "Tell me and I forget. Teach me and I remember. Involve me and I learn." This saying is truly reflected by using drama to be the students' way of involvement in the course they learn. In drama courses, students should act what they learn. They will discuss different points of thought when they analyze the play.

Dealing with difficulties facing students in drama is not tackled efficiently by English Departments in Gaza's universities. Most of the university teachers teaching drama in Gaza Universities are believed not to be qualified enough to teach drama in the right way. In the same context, Shakfa, (2007) stated that the process of selecting lecturers to teach English literature courses is not built on solid ground. Therefore, students cope with the problems they face based on their own poor experience in this field.

According to Ghosn (2002), there are four reasons for teaching literature in schools. First, it provides the learners with authentic language which enriches students' vocabulary. Second, drama is viewed as a great stimulator for oral language and it exposes young children to some aspects of the language culture. Third, drama promotes critical and creative thinking, and it helps students consider the gap between the two cultures, hence they can form their attitudes. Finally, literature gives a clear image of all aspects of life: social, religious, and political ones. This helps learners better understand life and it stirs them to establish emotional and sympathetic development towards other nations.

Using drama in classrooms is considered one of the effective methods in the teaching process. Mattevi (2005) argued that when language teachers use drama in their classes, this helps create interactive atmosphere for the students. The use of drama reflects authentic situations inside the classroom. He added that teaching drama consolidates the students' four skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing, in addition to body language and pronunciation. Blanch (1974) pointed out that drama assists in reinforcing other skills such as dialogue and action. She commented that the previous two skills already existed in languages as skills when making conversations, especially if they were culturally related. Thus, culture sparks ideas to speak and consequently dialogue and action takes place.

Al-Breem (1999) stated that studying English literature in the Palestinian universities has some characteristics: (1) teachers follow the traditional way in selecting the literary texts, (2) literature teachers adopt previous criticism and consider it as their major reference for texts analysis use, (3) teachers follow the teacher-centered strategy in their classes, (4) students depend on pure memorization of information for scoring higher in exams; whereas students ideas are not evaluated, (5) there is avoidance by teachers to tackle linguistic issues during literature classes, (6) it is difficult for the students to be creative and produce their own ideas since the teacher's notes are the only source they depend.

In order to reduce the difficulties, drama teachers should be highly qualified to teach drama. Richard Bausch cited in Shaqfa (2007, p.12) stated "*When I teach sophomore literature, before I give any assignments, I ask my students to do an annotated bibliography about Hamlet. They must find ten critical essays about the play, read them, and then summarize for me, merely to show that they have indeed read the essays. This is less to teach them about Hamlet to*

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expose them to the ways and means of critical speech about that great play, and, by extension, about any other work of literature." This is the role of drama: helping students to maintain high level of thinking and performing complicated mental operations (students need to think creatively and critically and evaluate the text on their own way).

Drama teachers should be equipped with the methods used for teaching literature, including drama. The researchers attempted to explore the most recent approaches used for teaching literature: Author-Oriented Approach, Communicative Language Teaching Approach, and Language Based Approach. The researchers made a brief explanation of each method approach as follows:

Author-Oriented Approach is the way of teaching literature with direct connection to the author of the text. The theme, facts, plot, and analyses ought to be linked with the conditions that made the author write the texts. Students should focus on their analysis, on the reasons and conditions in which the author wrote the text. One of the literary genres that could be classified as the best one that fits this approach is autobiographical (Klarer 2003).

Communicative Language Teaching Approach is one of the recent approaches of language teaching. The approach appeared in Britain in 1960s as a reaction to the structural approach. The aim of this approach is to provide students with communicative competence. The presentation of ideas and the discussion between teachers and students about a point in the literary text is the source of communication. Therefore, literary texts are triggers for communication among students, especially if the point of discussion attracted the students' attention (Richards & Rodgers, 2004). Language Based Approach is mainly concerned with the process of reading, not the literary text. It is a student-centered approach. It attempts to connect the events of the literary text with the students' experience. This approach encourages students to go inside the text and read between lines (Carter & Long, 1991).

Students who study drama gain lots of experience, benefits, and advantages. In this aspect, Bayliss and Dodwell (2010) stated that drama is one of the supporters for the development of students. It is one of the sources supporting people politically and socially. Drama assists students in developing their empathy and tolerance. Shakfa (2007) shed the light on a very significant issue that, when a student or a person is going to act a role, he or she will imitate the character and live the same conditions of the real character. Hence, teachers are advised to teach students plays that have good characters and heroic stories in order to live the same ethical conditions. Thus, students will lead a moral life, follow decent behaviors and demonstrate their fine manners and good deeds.

Drama is divided into two main categories: tragedy and comedy. While tragedy is a type dealing with agony and suffering of people such as grief and death, comedy is a type of entertainment and amusement (Morgan, 1987). In addition, there are several types of drama, some of which are melodrama, chronic plays, moral plays, interlude, well-made plays, problem plays, tragic-comedy plays, documentary drama, absurdist drama, epic drama, and problem drama. In order to present a well-taught play, it should have certain elements. Sajjad (1991) confirmed that a play should include the plot, the manner that the playwright follows in the story; characters, diction, the language of the play; thought, the faculty of saying what is possible and pertinent to given circumstances; spectacle, a term refers to the apparatus employed in dramatic representation; and songs, divided into opening song and close song.

2. Review of the Related Literature

The researchers presented two domains of previous studies, the first domain was related to the significance of drama in teaching process, and the second domain was related to difficulties facing students in learning drama and literature. Drama is a tool for developing students in many areas. It could be used in different courses. It is not languages-bound strategy. It is a strategy for enhancing students' communication, creative thinking, values, and developing concepts.

Drama is a way for communication among students. It motivates them to speak boldly. It provides students with a communicative and interactive environment. Batah (2016) investigated the effectiveness of using dramatized lessons to develop oral expression skills among 3rd Palestinian graders. The study made a list of oral expression to be used for making observation list for students' performance in oral expression. The study showed the effectiveness of using dramatized lessons for the development of oral expression.

Drama plays an integral role in each field, especially curricula field. There is a trend nowadays to make everything in the curriculum dramatized one. Some of the researchers used drama as a tool for developing students' values. In the same context, Abu Moor (2016) conducted her study to find out the effectiveness of using dramatized curricula in developing values in National Education among the 6th Palestinian graders. The study consisted of (78) students who attended National Education course. The study was quantitative and qualitative in nature. It used an achievement test

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and the analyses card to collect data. The researcher found that students got more values when they learnt by using dramatized curriculum.

In the same line, Darweesh (2016) carried out a study in mathematics to show the importance of using theater to teach mathematics. The study aimed to show the effectiveness of using theater in enhancing mathematical concepts and mathematical communication for 8th graders in Gaza. The researcher used the experimental approach. The study consisted of 82 female students in grade 8. The study results showed that there were significant differences attributed the experimental group that was taught by drama. The study also confirmed that drama reduces the difficulties in learning math and encourages students to show their talents in the class. El Taweel (2011) conducted a study titled "*The Impact of implementing Drama Method in the development of Concepts and Some of Processes of Science in Science Course for Fourth Grade Students.*" The researcher approved the effectiveness of drama to develop both concepts and process of science. The results were in favor of the experimental group which taught by applying drama method.

The previous studies in this section confirmed the effect of drama on different fields. The studies revealed that drama can be used as a reformer of society, and can help improve understanding of many subjects. Habeeb and Firwana (2015) carried out a study to examine the attitudes of the English language female students majoring in TEFL at the Islamic University of Gaza towards literary courses. The study found out that the majority of the respondents, 131 female students, had positive attitude towards literature courses. The study also revealed that there were no statistically significant differences at (α $\alpha \leq 0.05$) level between junior and senior students. In addition, the findings revealed that female students' English writing skills and vocabulary were enhanced and improved by literature courses. Finally the two researchers recommended that lecturers should select pleasurable literary texts that are close to students' minds and hearts in order to maintain their positive attitudes.

A similar article that has almost the same title of the current article is Shakfa's study (2012). The study is titled "Difficulties Students Face in Understanding Drama in English Literature at the Islamic University of Gaza (IUG)". The study aimed to identify the most frequented difficulties IUG students face in learning drama. According to the findings of this study, lack of fun in teaching drama, having so many non-English words in the text, having negative attitudes about drama, having no excitement while reading drama were the most common problems students encounter.

El-Helou (2010) attempted to determine the difficulties facing English teachers in teaching literature (poetry, short story and drama) to 12th Palestinian graders. This study shed light on the difficulties students and teachers face. The researcher selected 184 male and female teachers and 20 English language supervisors to be the study sample. In order to collect the study data, the researcher distributed a questionnaire of teaching difficulties facing English teachers in teaching literature. It consisted of 25 items. The study revealed that there were no statistically significant differences attributed to teachers' gender related to the difficulties. The majority of the teachers identified a number of major difficulties facing them in teaching drama: (1) there is no benefit of studying drama because its language is not modern, (2) drama is unrealistic and full of ambiguity that makes it difficult for students to grasp, and (3) drama content and language are not in harmony with students' age and interest.

Alsofi (2008) conducted a study to find out the difficulties of teaching English novel of 11th Palestinian graders from teacher's perspective in Gaza. This study was much related to literature difficulties students face, especially the Palestinian ones. The study used a questionnaire consisting of 43 items on the difficulties face students in learning novel. The questionnaire was distributed to 25 male teachers and 18 female teachers. The outcomes of the study showed that there were no statistically significant differences attributed to teachers' gender or to students' gender, students' specialization (scientific and literary sections).

Another study was conducted by Shakfa (2007), in which he aimed to identify the problems facing junior and senior students majoring in English literature at the Islamic University of Gaza in learning drama. The study showed that 80% of the respondents agreed that reading the paly, not acting it, is the major difficulty. 70% of them agreed that the plays they study are too long. The results of the study found that there were no statistically significant differences attributed to gender, classification (senior or junior students). In addition, oldness of the play, its irrelevance to reality, unfamiliarity of some words, and the strangeness of some expressions and strange names were the most remarkable problems students encounter in learning drama, according to the teachers.

Some of the researchers wet far to investigate the benefits of drama in scientific courses. Arieli (2007) conducted a Ph.D. thesis aimed to check the effectiveness of integrating generative drama into science teaching. The researcher

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designed activity-based science instruction integrated with creative drama to the treatment group and used two tools to collect the data, observation and achievement text. The results of the study showed that students enjoyed learning science with drama activities, and also the teachers stated that using drama for teaching science is good one as it made an interactive class.

Hişmanoğlu (2005) submitted a paper titles as "Teaching English through Literature" to Journal of Language and Linguistic Studies. The article aimed to emphasize the use of literature in teaching. The researcher considered literature as one of the popular techniques for teaching students major skills and sub-skills such as vocabulary, grammar, and vocabulary. The article also shed light on the problems make students face difficulties in understanding literature. The main reasons, as the article mentioned, are that teachers do not prepare for literature classes, there is no clear objectives for teaching literature, the absence of well-organized materials, and teachers are not trained well to teach literature. The second section of the previous studies sheds light on the major obstacles students face in English literature and specially drama. There were different views and they will be used in discussing the results of the article**.**

3. Statement of the Problem

Teaching drama does not seem to be very easy; it is shrouded by lots of difficulties, which may range from the nature of text; some texts are in old English, i.e. Shakespeare's plays, the kind of teachers; their teaching strategies may be traditional and not up to the expectations of the students, some students are not familiar with such new genre. In recent years, teaching drama has become of great importance in the educational field in the Gaza Strip. It was included in the Palestinian curriculum in 2008. It is also taught as a core course in the English language Departments in Gaza universities. As for Al-Aqsa University, English Department, there is drama (1) and drama (2). One of the researchers works there and has been teaching drama (1) for two years. The researchers encountered some problems during teaching drama and students' marks were not satisfactory. In the second semester of the year 2016, a drama teacher from another university taught drama (1) for female students. It was unfortunate that the majority of the students failed in course. The blame for this failure was put on the teacher. But, the teacher argued that the great majority of the students were not good enough to understand and deal with drama. He alluded to their immense weaknesses in writing analytical essays.

Hence, the researchers feel that this subject matter is worthy investigating since the real reasons for students' facing difficulties in drama have not been identified. The researchers understand that teaching drama does not seem to be very easy. During a discussion held by the researcher and some students who studied drama (1) and (2), in the second semester in the year 2017, the students revealed that the problems may range from the nature of the text as being in old English, to the kind of teachers and their traditional teaching strategies. Some said they were not familiar with such new genre and felt bored with reading some plays due to the cultural gap between English cultures and the Arab one.

Furthermore, the researchers think that many students face difficulties in understanding and analyzing drama texts because the university does not provide them with a preliminary course on how to deal with different kinds of drama, especially psychological plays. In addition, some drama teachers keep regurgitating the same ideas. Neither do they enrich nor update their information, which only forces students to keep information by heart for exams. This, unfortunately, kills the skill of creativity among the students and deprives them from having higher level of metal operations. As a result, students are not motivated to search for different analyses; they only stick to the teachers' analysis. In fact, drama, part of literature, is taught to give all students an opportunity to reflect upon different kinds of genre and develop their way of thinking. Some instructors do not associate drama with reality, which contradicts with the main goal of teaching drama: the reflection of reality. Therefore, the researchers took upon themselves to conduct a study which will investigate problems English Majors encounter in understanding drama in English literature at Al Aqsa University in Gaza and ways to reduce them.

3.1 Questions of the Study

1. What are the main problems English languages majors at Al Aqsa University in Gaza encounter in learning drama in English?
2. Is there any statistically significant difference at ($a \leq 0.05$) among English languages majors (male and female) at Al Aqsa University in Gaza in learning drama in English?

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3. Is there any statistically significant difference at ($a \leq 0.05$) between English Language and Literature students and English Language Teaching students at Al Aqsa University in Gaza in learning drama in English?
4. Is there any statistically significant difference at ($a \leq 0.05$) among English languages majors (junior and senior students) at Al Aqsa University in Gaza in learning drama in English?
5. What are the ways possible for reducing problems English Majors at Al Aqsa University in Gaza encounter in learning drama in English?

3.2 Significance of the study

1. The study could be used as a field investigation and a guide for teachers teaching drama at Al Aqsa University and other universities.
2. The study could find out the major problems students encounter in learning drama, which may help teachers of drama to avoid them.
3. The study could be a true reflection and assessment to drama teachers in teaching drama courses.

4. Methodology

The study adopted the analytical descriptive approach to achieve its objectives. The study utilized the mixed–mode approach: quantitative, distributing a questionnaire about drama problems, consisting of 25 to 75 English male and female majors from Al-Aqsa university; and qualitative, interviewing 3 drama teachers at Al Aqsa University.

4.1 The Participants of the Study

In order to achieve the study objectives, the researchers distributed the questionnaire to 75 students, 73 of them responded to the questionnaire and the other two were excluded. The researchers also interviewed 3 drama teachers at Al Aqsa University.

Table 1. The distribution of the study sample according to gender

Gender	**Number**	**Percentage**
Male	18	24.7%
Female	55	75.3%
Total	**73**	**100%**

Table 1 shows that the number of male students was (18) up to (24.7%) and the female students was (55) up to (75.3%). This means that the majority of the participants are females.

Table 2. The distribution of the study sample according to sub-major

Sub-Major	Number	Percentage
English language and literature	27	37.0%
English language teaching	46	63.0%
Total	**73**	**100%**

Table 2 shows that the majority of students who registered in Drama Course are specialized in English Language Education with a percentage of (63 %) of the study sample.

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Table 3. The distribution of the study sample according to their level

Level	**Number**	**Percentage**
Junior	26	35.6%
Senior	47	64.4%
Total	**73**	**100%**

Table 3 illustrates that the majority of the sample was senior students (4th level) with a percentage of (64.4%).

4.2 Instruments

The instruments mainly were the questionnaire to find the problems of learning drama and the interviews with drama teachers at Al Aqsa University in Gaza to make some suggestions to reduce difficulties in teaching drama.

4.2.1 Questionnaire

The questionnaire consisted of (25) items. The responses of the participants were in five ranks: Strongly disagree (1), Disagree (2), No opinion, (3), Agree (4), and Strongly agree (5).

4.2.1.1 Validity of the Questionnaire

The validity of the questionnaire was checked by the referee validity and reliability.

4.2.1.2 Piloting the Study

The researchers distributed the questionnaire to 10 students whose major is English at Al Aqsa University. The 10 students were out of the participants of the study. The aim of piloting the study was to make sure of the validity of the tool of the study. To validate the questionnaire, the researchers used two types of validity: the referee validity and the internal consistency validity.

4.2.1.3 The Referee Validity

The preliminary questionnaire was distributed to five referees who are specialized in English language teaching, methodology, education, and English literature. Unclear items were revised and clarified according to the panels' suggestions. The researchers kept the items which were agreed at a percentage of 80%. In this regard, Droza (1997) mentioned that if the total degree among referees exceeded 75%, it will be acceptable.

4.2.1.4 Internal Consistency Validity

Al Agha (1996, p. 121) stated that "The internal consistency validity shows the correlation of the score of each item with the total average of the test. It also indicates the correlation of the average of each domain with the total average." This validity was designed by using Pearson Formula.

Table 4. Correlation coefficient for each item of the questionnaire

No.	**Scale**	**Person Correlation**	**Sig**
1.	Lacking clear aims and objectives for studying Drama.	0.584**	0.000
2.	Facing difficulties in the process of analyzing and assessing the play.	0.459**	0.000
3.	Not properly guided about how to use the appropriate strategies for studying drama.	0.522**	0.000
4.	Some quotations are written in a language which is different from everyday English.	0.258**	0.0٢٢
5.	Lacking the ability to appreciate drama.	0.456**	0.000

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6.	The play comes from unfamiliar culture.	0.327**	0.0٠٥
7.	There is no benefit of studying drama.	0.260**	0.0٢٦
8.	Language difficulties kill the sense of enjoyment of studying drama.	0.374**	0.00١
9.	Class time allocated for learning drama is not enough.	0.295**	0.0١١
10.	Absence of any effective teaching aids (e.g. LCD, TV, and films) which hinders teaching drama.	0.462**	0.000
11.	Drama content and language are not in harmony with my age and interest.	0.364**	0.00٢
12.	Struggling and facing a tough time to get the real meaning of the play.	0.371**	0.0٠١
13.	The plays are too long.	0.497**	0.000
14.	Extensive use of symbolism, similes, metaphor.	0.323**	0.00٥
15.	No chance for acting the play	0.455**	0.000
16.	Watching drama is more common than reading it.	0.266**	0.0٢٣
17.	Lack of participation and discussion in Drama classes.	0.600**	0.000
18.	Depend totally on the summery of professors.	0.499**	0.0٠٠
19.	My level is weak in English to understand Drama.	0.223**	0.0٥٨
20.	I have negative attitude towards drama.	0.247**	0.0٣٥
21.	Professors who teach drama are not qualified enough	0.293**	0.0١٢
22.	I lack fun	0.520**	0.000
23.	Writing style in the play is complicated.	0.364**	0.00٢
24.	I generally feel that plays contribute very little to my language development compared to other genres.	0.241**	0.040
25.	Professors use inappropriate methods in the process of teaching plays.	0.368**	0.001

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level.

Table 4 shows that the value of each item was suitable, consistent, and valid for conducting this study. All them were sig at (0.01) level.

4.2.1.5 Reliability

Table 5. Reliability of the scale domains by Alpha Cronbach Method

Scale	**Numbers of Each Item**	**Cronbach's Alpha**
Total	٢٥	0.758

The result of Table 5 shows that Alpha Cronbach Coefficient is more than 0.6, and Alpha Cronbach coefficient for all overall degree equals 0.758. This result indicates that the questionnaire is suitable for making the study.

4.2.1.6 Statistical Methods

The researchers used a number of statistical techniques that were with the study nature; the data were collected and computed by using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS IBM 22.0 version) as follows:

1. Frequencies and Percentage.

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2. Correlation coefficient.

3. Alpha Cronbach Coefficient.

4. Independent samples T- test

4.2.2 Interviews

The researchers interviewed 3 drama teachers at Al Aqsa University in Gaza. It is the qualitative approach of the study. The teachers were purposively selected and interviewed face to face by the researchers. After taking their notes, the researchers analyzed the teachers' answers and came to the conclusion discussed in the results.

4.3 Data Collection

To collect data, the researchers reviewed the educational literature regarding problems in learning drama. Then, the researchers selected the most related items to be included in the questionnaire reaching the first draft of the questionnaire of 30 items. After building the preliminary questionnaire, it was distributed to a panel of referees who are specialized in English language teaching, methodology and English Literature for modifications and consultations. After that, the researchers made the required comments and notes by the referees. Following that, the researchers reached the final questionnaire which was consisted of 25. To make the reliability of the questionnaire, the two researchers distributed it to 10 students who were out of the study sample.

After checking the reliability and validity of the questionnaire, the researchers distributed the questionnaire to 75 male and female English majors at Al Aqsa University to know the points where they face problems in learning drama. The students were enrolled in course "*Drama 1*" at Al Aqsa University – Gaza, Palestine in the first semester of the year 2017/2018. They were male and female students, junior and senior students. The students' sub-majors were English Language and Literature and English Language Teaching. After filling the questionnaire, the researchers treated them statistically reaching the results.

5. Results and Data Analysis

5.1 The Results and Discussions of the Quantitative Data. (The Questionnaire)

5.1.1 The Result of the First Question

The first question is stated as *"What are the main problems English languages majors at Al Aqsa University in Gaza encounter in learning drama in English?*"

To answer this question, the researchers used the frequencies, the sum of responses, means, the percentage weight and rank of each item of the questionnaire. Table 6 shows this:

Table 6. Frequencies, the sum of responses, means, the percentage weight and rank problem encounter students in learning drama

No.	Scales and Items	Mean	Percentage	Test value	Sig	Rank
1.	Lacking clear aims and objectives for studying Drama.	2.84	56.8	-1.106	0.272	16
2.	Facing difficulties in the process of analyzing and assessing the play.	3.16	63.2	1.136	0.260	٧
3.	Not properly guided about how to use the appropriate strategies for studying drama.	2.90	58	-0.694	0.490	١٥
4.	Some quotations are written in a language which is different from everyday English.	3.16	63.2	1.216	0.228	٨

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5.	Lacking the ability to appreciate drama.	2.73	54.6	-1.824	0.072	٢١
6.	The play comes from unfamiliar culture.	2.81	56.2	-1.330	0.188	١٩
7.	There is no benefit of studying drama.	2.30	46	-4.488	0.000	٢٤
8.	Language difficulties kill the sense of enjoyment of studying drama.	3.36	67.2	2.547	0.013	٣
9.	Class time allocated for learning drama is not enough.	3.07	61.4	0.500	.619	١١
10.	Absence of any effective teaching aids (e.g. LCD, TV, and films) which hinders teaching drama.	3.56	71.2	4.200	0.000	٢
11.	Drama content and language are not in harmony with my age and interest.	2.84	56.8	-1.168	0.246	١٧
12.	Struggling and facing a tough time to get the real meaning of the play.	3.30	66.0	2.192	0.032	٥
13.	The plays are too long.	2.95	59	-0.379	0.706	١٤
14.	Extensive use of symbolism, similes, metaphor.	3.12	62.4	0.894	.374	٩
15.	No chance for acting the play.	3.67	73.4	4.440	0.000	١
16.	Watching drama is more common than reading it.	3.34	66.8	2.191	0.032	٤
17.	Lack of participation and discussion in Drama classes.	3.07	61.4	0.425	0.672	١٣
18.	Depend totally on the summery of professors.	3.07	61.4	0.500	0.619	١٢
19.	My level is weak in English to understand Drama.	2.11	42.2	-6.550	0.000	٢٥
20.	I have negative attitude towards drama.	2.45	49	-3.955	0.001	٢٢
21.	Professors who teach drama are not qualified enough.	2.32	46.4	-4.538	0.000	٢٣
22.	I lack fun	3.08	61.6	0.575	0.567	١٠
23.	Writing style in the play is complicated.	3.18	63.6	1.327	0.189	٦
24.	I generally feel that plays contribute very little to my language development compared to other genres.	2.82	56.4	-1.371	0.175	١٨
25.	Professors use inappropriate methods in the process of teaching plays.	2.81	56.2	-1.284	0.203	20
Total		**2.96**	**59.2**	**-0.716**	**0.476**	

According to Table 6, the percentage of the problems encountering students in drama was 56.8%. The top five factors constituting high level of difficulty for studying drama among English majors were 73.4% of the respondents who told that there is no chance for acting the play, 71.2% of them reported that there are not any effective teaching aids (e.g. LCD, TV, and films) which hinder teaching drama, 67.2% of them mentioned that language difficulties kill the sense of enjoyment of studying drama, 66.8 revealed that watching drama is more common than reading it, and 66.0%

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of them confirmed that they struggle and face a tough time to get the real meaning of the play. In contrast, the least three factors causing difficulties in understanding drama were: 42.2 of them considered their level is weak in English to understand drama, 46% of them told there is no benefit of studying drama, and 46.4% stated that professors who teach drama are not qualified enough.

5.1.2 The Result of the Second Question

The second question is stated as "*Is there any statistically significant difference at (a ≤ 0.05) among English languages majors (male and female) at Al Aqsa University in Gaza in learning drama in English?"*

To answer this question, the researchers used T-test. Table 7 shows this:

Table 7. Means, t value, and sig. level to know the difference between male and female

Gender	**Means**		**Test value**	**Sig**
	male	female		
Total	2.891	2.983	-0.719	0.475

"T" table value at (131) d f. at (0.05) sig. level equal 1.96

"T" table value at (131) d f. at (0.01) sig. level equal 2.58

Table 7 shows the comparison between male and female English majors who participated in responding to the questionnaire to find which one face problems more in learning drama. After the analysis, the previous table shows that computed T value is less than the T critical (0.05) and that proves that there is no statistically significant difference at (a ≤ 0.05) between male and female students in understanding drama in English Literature at Al Aqsa University in Gaza.

5.1.3 The Result of the Third Question

The third question is stated as *"Is there any statistically significant difference at (a ≤ 0.05) between English Language and Literature students and English Language Teaching students at Al Aqsa University in Gaza in learning drama in English?"* To answer this question, the researcher used T-test. Table 8 shows this:

Table 8. Means, t. value, and sig. level to know the difference in sub-major

Sub-Major	**Means**		**Test value**	**Sig**
	English Language And Literature	English Language Teaching		
Total	2.451	3.024	-1.526	0.031

Table 8 illustrates the difficulties of learning drama among English majors according to their sub-majors (English language and literature), and English language teaching. Looking at the table above, Sig is (0.031) is less than (0.05) and thus we can conclude that there is a difference between the two sub-majors attributed to English language teaching. There are statistically significant differences at (a ≤ 0.05) between students majoring in English language and literature and students majoring in English language teaching in understanding drama in English Literature at Al Aqsa university in Gaza attributed to English language teaching. This means that English language teaching students face more problems in learning drama than their counter parts- English language and literature studies.

5.1.4 The Result of the Fourth Question

The fourth question is stated as **"***Is there any statistically significant difference at (a ≤ 0.05) among English languages majors (junior and senior students) at Al Aqsa University in Gaza in learning drama in English?"* To answer this question, the researchers used T-test. Table 9 shows this:

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Table 9. Means, T. Value, and Sig. Level to Know the Difference in Students' Level

level	Means		Test value	Sig
	Junior	Senior		
Total	2.953	2.964	-0.090	0.929

Table 9 shows the differences in problems facing English majors - junior and senior – in learning drama. According to the table above, Sig value (0.929) is bigger than (0.05) and thus, there is no statistically significant difference at ($a \leq 0.05$) between junior and senior students in understanding drama in English Literature at Al Aqsa University in Gaza.

6. Discussion

6.1 Discussing the Results of Questions Related to Quantitative Approach

6.1.1 Discussing the Result of the First Question

After showing the results of the first question, it was shown that item no. "15" *No chance for acting the play*" was the first level of difficulty among students. This is true due to two major reasons: the first one relates to university and the second pertains to students. As for the university, there is no single chance for acting the play due to some obstacles. First, there is no accreditation for acting drama inside the campus because acting requires the involvement of female and male students, and the university does not accredit mixing between the two sexes. The Gaza society is very conservative and parents would not allow their daughters to do acting with boys. Second, dramatization needs a well-equipped hall, which unfortunately is not available at university. Third, extra-curriculum activities are not approved at the university and even students cannot do this extemporaneously. With regard to the students, there are two main difficulties. On the one hand, the great majority of English Department students are, to a large extent, communicatively deficient and mentally and psychologically not ready for any kind of acting, mainly because acting a play or parts of it is not part of the assessment tools.

On the other hand, students' shyness is another serious problem, which prevents them from taking any part even in classroom discussion. Therefore, the idea of acting does not match their interest. Only very few students would welcome the idea of acting the paly. Finally, for the students to act a paly, this requires strenuous efforts, including training and preparing the students, and it has to be part of course assessment. This result conforms to Shakfa (2007) which confirmed that 80% of the study respondents agreed that reading the paly, not acting it, is the major difficulty in learning drama.

The second main difficulty was item no. 10 "*Absence of any effective teaching aids (e.g. LCD, TV, and films) which hinders teaching drama."* The researchers think this is true because drama teachers at Al-Aqsa University do not consider teaching aids important at university. They argue that students have access to the internet and can watch the play in different sights. They may attribute not using LCD or TV to the frequent outages of electricity or the internet at university, which is a waste of time for them. One of the researchers, the drama teacher, thinks that the drama teachers refuse the idea of teaching aids since it cuts the students form the real text, which weakens students' understanding.

The third main difficulty is item no. 8 *"Language difficulties kill the sense of enjoyment of studying drama."* Some plays are very old, and some of the language quite peculiar, causes a big problem for the students. It also seems that most of the students lack understanding a great number vocabulary, which may hinder the process of reading drama. Students usually spend long time looking up new words in the dictionary, which is a very slow process. Hence, this makes them dissatisfied and frustrated, which pushes them to stop reading, and start thinking of other alternatives: reading good summaries or just watching the play on the internet. In short, lack of the needed vocabulary means struggling and facing a tough time to get the real meaning of the play.

The fourth main difficulty no. 16 *"Watching drama is more common than reading it."* This can be justified due to the fact that watching the drama is much easier than reading it. While watching the paly, neither needs efforts nor much

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time. Reading the text requires much effort and longer time. If put it in another way, watching seems to be more effective for memorization. People usually do not forget what they see. The motion pictures would stick in their memories; watching the paly makes it easy to remember the setting, events, the characters, and their roles. In addition, the students seem to be interested in understanding the events regardless of the text. Moreover, watching the play may facilitate the process of reading the text, hence better comprehension. One last important point is that neither students give the original text to express their critical comments about the play nor does the exam ask them comment on quotes from the paly.

The fifth main difficulty was no.10 "Struggling and facing a tough time to get the real meaning of the play." This is true as drama teachers at Al Aqsa University tend to teach old plays. This makes students have difficulty in understanding the real meaning of the play. Another important reason is that there is no a kind of interactions with texts to understand the situation or the cognate vocabulary.

Of the least difficult factors, the study showed that item no. 21 *"Professors who teach drama are not qualified enough."* The researchers think this is true due to the nature of English majors. The great majority of them see no difference between competent and non-competent teachers. They, regardless of gender, are to a large extent interested in getting more marks. The students have long realized that the less qualified teachers are more flexible, do not teach complex dramas, and design easy exams, which are rather expected. This kind of drama teachers does not think of changing his exam format. More importantly, students are expected to get higher marks. One of the researchers working at Al-Aqsa University has noted that a weak teacher satisfies his students by giving them satisfactory marks. To sum up, it is unfortunate that most English majors prefer teachers who are generous with marks, and do not consider qualified lecturers.

Another least difficult factor was item no. 7 *"There is no benefit of studying drama."* This can be justified due to the fact that many students feel that the drama they study do not represent their culture, nor is it needed for future jobs, except for literature students. In addition, students will not be required to teach drama in schools when become teachers, and they will not be asked to deal with items in career exams. Both students of English literature and education will have the same job career, which rarely has literary questions.

The third minor difficulty was item no. 21 *"My level is weak in English to understand Drama."* The researchers think that for the students to be weak to understand drama is not a serious problem since the drama teacher himself suffers the same problem. The students are dependent on the teacher who just helps students memorize what he says. In reality, the students have Facebook groups which make them acquainted with the nature of questions of the exam. In other contexts, the students train themselves during the course on memorizing the answers on the exam.

These results are partly similar to El Hellou (2010) study which revealed (1) there is no benefit of studying drama because its language is not modern, (2) drama is unrealistic and full of ambiguity that makes it difficult for students to grasp, and (3) drama content and language do not match students' age and interest. It also, to some extents, in agreement with Shakfa's (2012) study which revealed (1) they lack fun of learning drama, (2) the text they learn has so much non-English vocabulary, (3) they have negative attitudes towards drama, and (4) they expressed that reading drama is not exciting.

6.1.2 Discussing the Result of the Second Question

Is there any statistically significant difference at ($a \leq 0.05$) between male and female students in understanding drama in English Literature at Al Aqsa University in Gaza?" This is true because male and female students are taught by the same teacher. Both are surrounded by the same learning/teaching situation. They have the same input. Meanwhile, most of the students are dependent on the same source of information, which is usually a summary provided by a former or current excellent student. Both of them follow the same method of studying, i.e. memorization. In addition, they usually have closed groups on Facebook to exchange information and try to answer expected questions. This is in line with the studies of Alsofi (2008) and Shakfa (2007) who indicated that there was no statistically significant difference attributed to students' gender.

6.1.3 Discussing the Result of the Third Question

"Is there any statistically significant difference at ($a \leq 0.05$) between students majoring in English language and literature and students majoring in English Language teaching in understanding drama in English Literature at Al Aqsa University in Gaza?" By the nature of things, English language literature students face fewer problems in drama

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than their counterparts, education students. The researchers think this is evident because the formers study more literary courses and they aspire to have a mastery of English language via studying literature which reflects the actual use of language. They were also interactively motivated to understand the English culture better, which helps them pursue their further studies in the future. Importantly, literature students do not prefer the field of teaching; they can work in different fields: translation, journalism, and language checkers. On the other hand, education students are expected to focus on educational courses which they pay their most attention to so that they can pass any job career very easily. This is in line with the findings of Alsofi (2008) and Shakfa (2007) which revealed that there was no statistically significant difference attributed to students' specialization (scientific and literary sections).

6.1.4 Discussing the Result of the Fourth Question

"*Is there any statistically significant difference at (a ≤ 0.05) between junior and senior students in understanding drama in English at Al Aqsa University in Gaza?"* The researchers attribute this problem to the following reasons: First, junior students take drama one by the same teacher who teaches drama two to the seniors. Second, the same teaching strategy, cramming and stuffing information into the minds of the students, is used all the time. Third, neither the original text nor any references are available to the students, which force the students to depend heavily on the lecturer. Finally, both senior and junior students have to take notes during classes. They are not allowed to come with new information that the teacher did not mention in classes. This result is in conformity with Habeeb and Firwana (2015) which confirmed that there was no statistically significant difference at (α α ≤ 0.05) level between the junior and senior students in the difficulties in learning literature.

6.1.5 Discussing the Result of the Fifth Question

"What are the ways of reducing problems English Majors encounter in understanding drama in English at Al Aqsa University in Gaza?" All the suggestions and ways to reduce problems and difficulties in learning drama were sourced by looking at the questionnaire's items. The suggestions mentioned were based on the real need for changing the current situation, which is not appropriate for teaching drama to students.

6.2 Discussing the Results of Questions Related to Qualitative Approach

The qualitative approach of this study is applied throughout the answer of the fifth question that was stated as *"What are the ways of reducing problems English Majors at Al Aqsa University in Gaza encounter in learning drama in English?"*

To answer this question, the researchers conducted interviews with each one of the 3 drama teachers at English Department at Al Aqsa University. The researchers focused in their questions on discussing the major problems in understanding drama as resulted from the questionnaire.

The researchers collected many suggestions for reducing problems English majors at Al Aqsa University in Gaza encounter in understanding drama in English literature. The suggestions were gathered and classified under three domains as follows:

6.2.1 Suggestions of this Study

6.2.1.1 Suggestions of this Study to English Language Department

The drama teachers made the following suggestions for English Department:

a. As for English department, it must appoint teachers whose major is Drama.

b. It needs to force teachers to teach different dramas according to the various literary ages: ancient Greek drama, Elizabethan drama, modern drama, and post-modern drama.

c. It should provide all visual aids needed to help teachers facilitate the process of teaching.

d. It needs to change the current assessment strategy by much more practical ones, including acting some parts of the play in the classroom, PowerPoint presentations, and group discussion, etc.

6.2.1.2 Suggestions of This Study to the Class Environment

The drama teachers made the following suggestions for class environment:

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a. It is of great importance that it be well-equipped with the latest visual aids: LCD, TV, internet access, and video-camera, etc.

b. It should be appropriate, well-lighted, decorated with curtains, has enough space for the number of the students and must be away from any distracters, i.e. noise of students or cars.

6.2.1.3 Suggestions of This Study to Drama Teacher

The drama teachers concluded the following suggestions for drama teachers:

a. Drama teachers should be aware of students' weakness in English language in general and their problems in understanding literary texts in particular.

b. It is highly recommended that drama teachers begin with modern drama for avoiding complexities in understanding old English.

c. Teachers should teach classical dramas for senior students who are expected to have acquired the right criteria to deal with such complex texts.

d. Teachers are required to encourage students to use higher mental operations (higher level of thinking) that will lead to more self-steam and confidence.

e. It is advisable that the teachers push the students to act some scenes that consolidate their understanding of the important events in the play. This is very useful because it improves students' fluency and bridges any potential gap between Arabic and Western culture.

f. Finally, drama teachers need to vary their methods of teaching in order to create a sense of enthusiasm in their classes.

7. Conclusion

The study elaborated the problems English majors encounter in learning drama. The major problem was that there is no chance for acting the play. This is a serious problem in Palestine universities. Drama teachers deal with it as a theoretical course that is away from practice. However, drama is written to be acted not read. The study touched the real reasons behind the problems students face in learning drama in Palestine universities as the questionnaire was distributed by the two researchers (face to face) to English language majors. That process made the questionnaire to be sincerely filled. Therefore, drama teachers in Palestine universities are advised to depend on the results of this paper.

The Drama teachers are encouraged to focus on the suggestions of this study as a means for eliminating the problems the students encounter in learning drama. It should be taught actively to students. Plays are not necessarily to be old text as the majority of teachers do; rather they are a source for learning daily language. They are authentic production of English daily language. Finally, the researchers throughout this article hope that they have presented something to reduce or remove problems encounter English students in learning drama.

8. Recommendations

Based on the findings the study reached, the researchers offer the following recommendations:

1. It is recommended that universities should establish a theater for students to act the play, or to give students the opportunity to act the play.

2. It is recommended that classrooms should have effective teaching aids such as LDCs and TVs to show the play to students.

3. Drama teachers should select plays of simple language that could be understood easily by students. Teachers are advised to teach modern drama.

4. It is advised to conduct other similar studies to find out the difficulties and problems students encounter in learning other literary subjects such as poetry, novel, short story, or criticism.

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