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The Role of Using Classroom Discussion Techniques on Improving Students' Speaking Skills from the English Teachers' Perspectives of the Secondary Stage at the Public Schools in Nablus District

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Dedication

To my father's soul Abd-Alrahman; the man who sacrificed his life to ensure my well-being and my quality of life.

To my dearest mother Mariam; my second soul, the woman who has never left me alone, the woman who cared, supported and always loved me.

To my husband Ameed who has been the biggest source of support, encouragement and inspiration.

To my lovely daughter Seleen, and my son Raed.

To my parents-in- law Raed and Hanan for their endless support.

To my brothers, sisters, nieces, nephews, friends and colleagues.

To all expected readers of this thesis, I dedicate my research work.

Acknowledgements

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الإقرار

أنا الموقعة أدناه، مقدمة الرسالة التي تحمل العنوان:

دور استخدام تقنيات المناقشة الصفية في تحسين مهارات التحدث لدى الطلاب من وجهة نظر معلمي اللغة الإنجليزية للمرحلة الثانوية في المدارس الحكومية في محافظة نابلس

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The Role of Using Classroom Discussion Techniques on Improving Students' Speaking Skills from the English Teachers' Perspectives of the Secondary Stage at the Public Schools in Nablus District

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اقر بأن ما اشتملت عليه هذه الرسالة إنما هي نتاج جهدي الخاص، باستثناء ما تمت الإشارة إليه حيثما ورد، وان هذه الرسالة ككل، أو أي جزء منها لم يقدم من قبل لنيل أية درجة علمية أو بحث علمي أو بحثي لدى أية مؤسسة تعليمية أو بحثية أخرى.

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Declaration

The undersigned hereby certifies that the work provided in this thesis unless otherwise referenced, is the researcher's own work, and has not been submitted elsewhere for any other degree or qualification.

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Abstract

This study sought to find out the role of using classroom discussion techniques in improving students' speaking skills from the perspective of English teachers of the secondary stage at the public schools in Nablus district. In order to achieve this objective, the descriptive method was used. The study also examined the role of teachers' gender, qualification, years of experience, training sessions and specialization. For data collection, a questionnaire and interviews were used to examine the role of using classroom discussion techniques in improving students' speaking skills from English teachers' perspective. The questionnaire consisted of 32 items covering five domains: classroom environment, student-centered approach, interaction, fluency and pronunciation and motivation. The questionnaire was distributed to (57) male and (65) female English language teachers in Nablus district, and (15) Secondary- school English teachers were interviewed.

The results of the study revealed that teachers of English agreed positively about the importance of the role of using class discussion

techniques in improving students' speaking skills. Moreover, the results showed that there were no statistically significant differences at ($\alpha = 0.05$) in the role of using classroom discussion techniques in improving students' speaking skills due to teachers' gender in the first, third, fourth and fifth domains, qualification, years of experience, training sessions and specialization. On the other hand, there were statistically significant differences at ($\alpha=0.05$) in the role of using classroom discussion techniques in improving students' speaking skills due to teachers' gender in the second domain. Also, the differences were in favor of the males.

Accordingly, the researcher recommended teachers to shift from the traditional teaching methods to the communicative approach that is based on students' involvement in the teaching- learning process, and to change their roles from instructors who dominate the class into facilitators whose role is to help, guide and support the students to learn the language. The researcher also recommended the Ministry of Education to improve the English curriculum, and establish a research center to conduct research studies for the Ministry of Education. Other researchers are also recommended to compare between private and public schools according to the using of classroom discussion techniques and other techniques for improving the students' speaking skills.

Chapter One

Introduction

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Chapter One

Introduction

1.1 Introduction

Communication is a vital need for human beings and language in particular is known to be a major tool for this communication which plays a significant role in revealing speakers' intentions, desires and thoughts. Speaking, moreover, is considered a main language skill that students should improve (Al-Hosni, 2014).When the students who learn English as a foreign language EFL master the speaking skill, they can converse, argue, exchange ideas and discuss a variety of matters with their relatives, friends and others. In this respect, Chaney & Burk (1998) claimed that speaking is a process which aims at conveying meaningful messages in different situations by means of verbal and non-verbal language.

In real- life situations, speaking can take two forms, namely, individual presentation and group discussion. The first form enables the speaker to convey facts, needs, feelings and preferences on an individual basis while he second entails the ability of the speaker to interact, converse, negotiate, and manage discussions. Hence, there is a need to shed some light on the role of classroom discussion techniques in improving the speaking skill of EFL students.

In Palestine, some secondary – school teachers still use traditional methods in teaching speaking. Teachers usually tend to give the material orally with some explanation besides few examples exercises to the extent

that oral language in the classroom is used more by teachers than by students (Al-Hosni, 2014). One of the problems concerning teaching speaking skills in the traditional classroom setting is that it is not the spoken but the written form of language and its characteristics that are taught (Šolcová, 2011).This is not only because of lack of vocabulary but also due to the lack of effective interaction strategies. Besides, most students suffer from the weakness to communicate their ideas and thoughts fairly well and also they are unable to participate effectively in group discussion. One reason for these weaknesses might be due to students' lack of vocabulary (Gillis, 2013), and being worried about making mistakes and receiving criticism (Al-Hosni , 2014), This traditional method seems to be ineffective because the EFL students usually get bored and spend longer time to master the English speaking skill especially for communication or conversation (Alhabbash, 2012).

Due to the latest development in technology and the acceleration of knowledge in this era, an interactive learning environment is fundamental to any teaching and learning process. Over time, negative implications of the traditional learning environment are increasing, and measures must be taken to face them. With extensive research on available learning tools and resources, it has become more feasible to provide students with better learning opportunities (Rababah, 2013).

1.2 Statement of the Problem

In the Palestinian context, according to Amara (2003), English is the most widely known and used foreign language in Gaza and the West Bank.

Thus, English is studied and taught as a Foreign Language (EFL) from the first grade till the 12th grade. However, and regardless of learning English for twelve years, it is common that most students face the difficulty of speaking English either in the classroom or outside which might be due to the fact that speaking remains the most difficult skill to master for the majority of English learners (Zhang ,2009) which may result in students' incompetency in communicating orally in English. Alhabbash (2012) pointed out that most students do not participate in class, and their English language proficiency is low and insufficient while they lack self-confidence, vocabulary, and questioning techniques. Some students face the challenge of cultural misunderstanding and other psychological problems which negatively affect their learning and mostly they tend to be reluctant to participate in classroom discussions and prefer to keep silent most of the time.

Practicing is essential in learning any language in order to communicate with others easily; thus, teachers need to motivate students to practice their speaking skills and improve their proficiency by using the most attractive and appropriate techniques to teach the English language, particularly, the speaking skills (Oradee, 2012). Research exploring the role of classroom discussion in enhancing students' oral skills is still limited in the Palestinian context. Under these situations, EFL students feel reluctant to speak English because speaking is linked to some kind of anxiety especially for foreign language learners although they learn English for 12 years. Teachers within this context play a significant role and exploring their

beliefs and perspectives becomes a necessity since the teachers' beliefs can affect classroom action more than a particular methodology or coursebook (Tomlinson 2008).Thus, this study aims to find out the role of using classroom discussion techniques in improving students' speaking skills from the perspective of English language teachers of the secondary stage at the public schools in Nablus district.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The major objective of this study is to find out the role of classroom discussion techniques in improving student's speaking skills from the perspectives of English language teachers at the secondary stage in the public schools in Nablus district. Moreover, the study aims at exploring the role of teachers' gender, qualification, and years of experience, training sessions and specialization on teachers' perspectives.

1.4 Significance of the Study

To the best of the researcher's knowledge and despite the importance of improving EFL students' speaking skills, less research exists on the role of classroom discussion techniques in improving student's speaking skills from the perspectives of English teachers at the secondary stage in the public schools in Palestine. Studies on classroom behavior and learning outcomes have demonstrated that students' discussions have the potential to enhance better learning outcomes and students' active participation in the classroom has been linked with

learning (Howard, 2004). Hence, the results of this study are hoped to help the teachers in the Palestinian schools to be aware of the importance of using discussion techniques among students by using different strategies to improve students speaking skills. Teachers, therefore, can benefit from the results of this study to design activities to promote the speaking skill of EFL students in the Palestinian educational context. Curriculum designers and other decision makers are hoped to benefit from the results so as to update the curricula and integrate more oral activities into the curricula.

Additionally, having better understanding of the relationship of classroom discussion techniques and students' speaking skills may encourage the students to get involved in discussions either inside the classroom or outside. More specifically, this study is hoped to add to the literature of EFL techniques and methods within the Palestinian context.

1.5 Questions of the study

This study attempts to answer the following questions:

1. What is the role of using classroom discussion techniques in improving students' speaking skills from the perspective of English teachers of the Secondary Stage at the public schools in Nablus district?

2.   Are there any statistically significant differences at (α=0.05) in the role of using classroom discussion techniques in improving students' speaking skills from the perspective of English teachers of the secondary stage at the public schools in Nablus district due to gender, qualification, years of experience, training sessions and specialization?

1.6 Hypotheses of the Study

Hypotheses of the study include the following:

1.   There are no statistically significant differences at (α=0.05) in the role of using classroom discussion techniques in improving students' speaking skills from the perspective of English teachers of the secondary stage at the public schools in Nablus district due to gender.

2.   There are no statistically significant differences at (α=0.05) in the role of using classroom discussion techniques in improving students' speaking skills from the perspective of English teachers of the secondary stage at the public schools in Nablus district due to qualification.

3.   There are no statistically significant differences at (α=0.05) in the role of using classroom discussion techniques in improving students' speaking skills from the perspective of English teachers of the secondary stage at the public schools in Nablus district due to years of experience.

4. There are no statistically significant differences at (α=0.05) in the role of using classroom discussion techniques in improving students' speaking skills from the perspective of English teachers of the secondary stage at the public schools in Nablus district due to the training sessions.

5. There are no statistically significant differences at (α=0.05) in the role of using classroom discussion techniques in improving students' speaking skills from the perspective of English teachers of the secondary stage at the public schools in Nablus district due to teacher's specialization.

1.7 Limitations of the Study

This study has the following limitations:

1. **Topical limitation**: the study aims at finding out the role of using classroom discussion techniques in improving students' speaking skills from the perspective of English teachers of the secondary stage at the public schools in Nablus district.

2. **Human limitation**: the study was conducted on a purposeful sample of 122 male and female English teachers of the secondary stage.

3. **Locative limitation**: the study was conducted on English teachers at the secondary schools in Nablus district.

4. **Temporal:** the study was carried out during the second semester of the scholastic year 2020-2021.

1.8 Operational Definitions of Terms

● **Classroom Discussion Techniques:**

New techniques that aims to increase student talking time and decrease teacher talking time. These techniques reduce anxiety, break the routine, aid learners in developing their speaking skills, improve their self-expression, and increase their interaction with the teacher, the material and other classmates. They include role-plays, debates, presentations, small groups and other effective techniques (Thomas, 2002).

● **Speaking Skill:**

The speaking skills involve two major aspects: fluency and accuracy. Fluency is the potential to speak with very few grammar mistakes that show how comfortable you are with the language. Accuracy, on the other hand, refers to how correct learners' use of the language system is, including their use of grammar, pronunciation and vocabulary (Silaban, 2018). The speaking skill is the ability to speak, to make a dialogue, to practice a real discussion for fluent English with the maximum correct grammar and a range of useful vocabulary which help others to communicate.

Chapter Two

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Chapter Two

Theoretical Background & Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

The English language is taught as a school subject in Palestine from the 1st grade (6 years) till the 12th grade. Thus, it is considered as a foreign language with no official use within the Palestinian community. Nevertheless, English has a significant status in the Arab world in general and in Palestine in particular. One rationale for learning English as a foreign language is to use it to communicate with native and non-native speakers in addition to express ones' thoughts effectively (Alhabash, 2012).

According to Bruce (2006), language acquisition is the result of intensive, repetitive, and dynamic processes which enable the user to perceive and comprehend the language being used as well as the ability to produce words and sentences to communicate. Such situation illustrates the importance of understanding how students acquire or learn languages so as to provide them with the right supportive environment, where they feel inspired and strongly motivated.

This chapter comprises two sections. The first introduces the theoretical background related to the discussion techniques in the classroom while the second section reviews related literature.

2.2 Theoretical Background

2.2.1 Speaking

English is considered the first international language around the world due to the spread of information and communication technologies ICT and the increase in the rate of internet access all over the globe. Furthermore, English has become the language of technology, science, medicine, technology, economy, and international politics and diplomacy. For these reasons and others, English is the first language taught worldwide either as a foreign language or as a second language.

Speaking as one of the four skills of any language is seen as a reactive process where speakers send and receive processed information to express their needs and communicate with others (Burns and Joyce, 1997). It is undoubtedly an indispensable element of language learning by which the participants use certain functions and patterns in certain discourse according to the situation. Bailey (2005) maintained that speaking is a process by which the speaker uses one language or another to construct meaning. Hence, one major aim of acquiring the speaking skill in English is to empower students to communicate by using the spoken language. Communication implies using the language orally or in the spoken form in different situations as well as paying attention to some aspects as the subject matter, the goal, the message, the context, the participants, and time to fulfill the desired goal.

Cameron (2001) argued that speaking is the way the language users organize lexical items to express meaning so that others can understand them. Besides, speaking is recognized as a social, interactive and contextualized communicative event. For students who learn English as a foreign/ second language, the speaking skill becomes more essential because it aims to enable them to activate the English language in different contexts for different functions and goals. This means that the students of English need to have sufficient knowledge of how to produce correct language syntactically, semantically and pragmatically to construct convenient utterances.

Ur (1996) assured that speaking is the most significant skill among the four skills because knowing how to use language to speak anytime anywhere is more important than just knowing about that language. Accordingly, teaching the spoken form of a language using samples of spoken texts should be part of teaching speaking (Šolcová, 2011). Thus, learning a second language might be useless and time-wasting if the learner is unable to use that language for meaningful communication. Speaking in this respect is an efficient way that enables the speaker to convey a message in a thoughtful, passionate, and convincing manner.

By the same token, Kaily (2006) confirmed that speaking is considered as one of the most crucial skills for of any language and teaching the speaking skill has the potential to improve students' ability to succeed later either at school or during their future careers.

However, regardless of the aforementioned significance of improving the students' speaking skill, students in Palestine are usually unable to speak a single coherent sentence without making an error. This problem is not limited only to the Palestinian context because as revealed by Rababah's (2003), Arab learners face difficulties in English speaking skill and the writing skill as well, a reality emphasized by Wahba (1998).

The current situation as pointed out by school teachers, university professors, researchers and other educators in Palestine indicates that students' English language proficiency in schools are not up to the optimal level. Therefore, research studies are required to investigate some expected challenges facing EFL students when learning English.

The speaking skill in this study covers three interrelated domains which are vocabulary, fluency, and grammar. Students' success in practicing the speaking skill is mostly dependent on these domains. To achieve such aim, new techniques and methods of teaching are due.

2.2.2 Communication

The relationship between language and communication has become commonplace all over the different cultures around the world. However, people under specific conditions tend to use different kinds of communication including verbal and non-verbal communication. For Nordquist (2019), communication is a process that involves sending and receiving messages through verbal and non-verbal means, including speech

or oral communication, writing and graphical representations signs, signals, and behaviors. For teachers of English, there is a need to use both verbal and non-verbal means of communication to teach certain aspects or components of language. This does not only mean using pictures, cards, real objects, videos, and songs in the classroom environment to get the message across, but also using non-verbal communication including the body language accompanied with expressive speech patterns, repetition and emphasis. By the same token, face-to-face communication is seen as the most favourable form of human language since it involves different types of messages.

Harmer (2007) divided the communication skills into receptive and productive skills. Listening and reading are receptive skills while speaking and writing are productive skills. Receptive skills are these in which students receive and process the information but do not need to produce a language to do this, while productive skills require the production, for instance, a speech.

2.2.3 The Importance of Speaking and Communication Skills

Communication can be defined as the process of transmitting information and common understanding from one person to another (Keyton, 2011). To communicate with each other, people everywhere, from the early days of history, used the spoken language more than the spoken language. The communication skill, or what we can call interaction skills, is to use the person's speaking skill besides their knowledge and perceptions (Bygate, 1987).In this respect, most of the real life situations, students are

judged upon their speaking ability which is very essential for all people. Learners of English language need to communicate with their classmates and teachers through speaking when they ask questions, answer questions, present information, discuss debate, argue, negotiate and when they need to express their feelings and thoughts. Communication is also realized as a means to fulfill specific objectives such as to inform, to ask for explanations, etc., or as a means used in daily communication such as booking a room, giving directions, etc. (Šolcová, 2011). Meanwhile, one of the major characteristics of communicative competence is fluency (Shahini and Shahamirian, as cited in Ho, 2018).

Argumentative oral group discussions and debates can make students share and exchange ideas, contribute equally to achieve the task purpose and this can be reinforced by stimulations or realistic items such as pictures and stories. This might illustrate why teachers should maintain a regular basis of speaking practice in their classrooms (Jones, 2007). Thus, teachers need to motivate students to speak by offering more enjoyable opportunities and activities relevant to students' needs and interests. Furthermore, teachers should find topics that hover around the students" lives and reflect their interests to encourage them to perform real communication inside and outside the classroom walls (Shalaby, 2012). In order to encourage EFL students to use the target language in real life situations, teachers have the responsibility to prepare their students as much as possible to speak English in daily situations and also to listen to the spoken language.

According to Harmer (2007), there are three main reasons for getting students to speak in the classroom. Firstly, the speaking activities provide rehearsal opportunities to practice real-life speaking situations in the classroom. Secondly, the speaking tasks provide feedback where everyone can see how well they are doing, how successful they are, and also what language problems they are facing. Finally, the more students have opportunities to activate the various language elements they have in their brains, the more automatic their use of these elements become.

Palmer (2011) stated that well spoken English offers excellent strategies to help students to capture the right tone and voice to achieve the right kind of eye contact, and to be aware of how one's appearance and actions affect speech production.

As noted by Goh and Burns (2012), second language learners who attend schools where teaching is conducted in the target language can be engaged effectively in the discourse of an academic environment if they have good speaking abilities. Likewise, Goh (2007) highlights the importance of the speaking skill as a tool for language teaching and learning when it facilitates language acquisition and development as well as for English major students who wish to be teachers in their future.

2.2.4 Communicative Competence in English

Communicative competence is a term coined by Dell Hymes in 1966 to include both form and function. Hymes (1972) differentiated between

performance and competence. Whereas performance refers to the actual use of language in concrete situations, competence refers to the speaker-hearer's knowledge of language. However, a synthesis definition of this term was proposed by Tarvin (2014) to include the ability to use language, or to communicate, in a culturally-appropriate manner in order to make meaning and accomplish social tasks with efficacy and fluency through extended interactions. Chomsky's view of linguistic competence, however, was not intended to inform pedagogy, but serve as part of developing a theory of the linguistic system itself, idealized as the abstract language knowledge of the monolingual adult native speaker, and different from how they use and experience language (O'Connor & McCartney, 2007).

Four communicative components were suggested by Canale and Swain (1980) grammatical competence that covers the knowledge of language's sentence structure; 2)sociolinguistic competence which refers to the ability to use vocabulary suitable for a specific situation; 3)dialogue competence which covers the capacity to identify specific discourse patterns, to link sentences to an overarching theme of a topic; 4) strategic competence that entails the capacity to account for incomplete knowledge of the rules of grammar, or limiting reasons such as weaknesses, disruption or lack of attention. Thus, speaking and successful communication require knowledge of linguistic, sociolinguistic, discourse and strategic features (Šolcová, 2011).

With reference to the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), four characteristics were suggested by Brown (2000) and Freeman (2000:129). The first is to focus the classroom objectives on the basic elements of the communicative competence components at the expense of grammatical or linguistic competence. The second is to design tasks and techniques to engage learners in the pragmatic, authentic, and functional use of language. The third is to look at fluency and accuracy as complementary principles underlying communicative competence. The fourth and the last is motivate the students to use the language, productively and receptively, in unrehearsed context.

In order to develop the ability of the students to use English, both the practical principles of language and the theoretical concepts should be carefully considered, since learning language is not a matter of acquiring a set of rules and building up vocabulary. Alternatively, the teacher's behavior should be aimed at teaching the language and encouraging students to practice it. Mastering a language is measured by how effectively a student can use the target language, not by how much he/she learns about it (Chen Jing, 2010).

According to Chivers and Shoolbred (2007), it is important to identify three specific fields used as sub-skills for enhancing speech along with the class discussion: The first field is verbal interpersonal communication which involves allowing one jargon use, discussing words that are unique or complicated, talking obviously, using interesting tone of speech, and

finishing statements. The second field is visual interpersonal communication which involves using pictures to enhance comprehension, using photos and images. The third field is non-verbal communications which involves how the student interacts through body language.

2.2.5 Teaching Speaking

Teaching English as a foreign/ second language involves focusing on the four skills. Being one productive skill, speaking should be given more emphasis so as to help the students to use English for communication. Nevertheless, Alhabbash (2012) emphasized that teaching speaking is not a simple task and several challenges are faced when teaching speaking. One of these challenges is related to the students who usually forget vocabulary during speaking. The second challenge is that the majority of students are not willing to use English in the classroom either because they feel unconfident, shy and reluctant. This challenge is supported by Alharthi (2020) who maintained that in FL contexts learners prefer to be silent or sit back in the classroom to avoid participation in activities that push them to speak. The third challenge is related to students' tendency to use the mother tongue in certain situations. These challenges and others might be due to the fact that teaching speaking is not an easy task as it involves many important aspects. Teaching speaking means teaching students how to produce the English speech sounds, stress, intonation, and rhythm, teaching learners how to choose suitable words and sentences according to the given setting, audience, situation and subject matter, teaching students how to organize

their thoughts in a meaningful and logical sequence and how to use se the language quickly and confidently with few unnatural pauses, which is called as fluency (Nunan 2003).

2.2.6 Teaching Vocabulary and some learning difficulties

To speak any language, a speaker needs certain amount of vocabulary to deliver the message. People's ability to use language, and thus vocabulary, is a crucial element of language knowledge necessary for successful communication (Alharthi, 2020). Vocabulary learning is very important for people who learn English both as foreign language and as second language (Rohmatillah ,2014). In the same vein, Nation (2013) maintains that EFL learners face the difficulty of expressing the intended meaning due to the lack of sufficient lexical knowledge or their inability to fully use vocabulary in oral interaction. According to Alharthi (22020), understanding the international culture and acquiring vocabulary in a cultural context is a very important aspect of good communication in a foreign language

With regard to teaching English vocabulary to monolingual Arab students, additional challenges are faced since Arabic and English are not cognate languages and have different syntactic and word formation systems. Such challenges might be faced by other learners around the world who learn English either as a foreign language or as a second language. Rohmatillah (2014) found that the students faced some difficulties in vocabulary learning including pronouncing the words, writing and spelling the words, choosing the appropriate meaning of the words, and using the word appropriately.

Afzal, N. (2019) found that the English majors at Prince Stattam bin Abdulaziz University in Saudi Arabia face several problems in learning the vocabulary such as knowing the meanings of new words, pronouncing new words, using new words correctly, memorizing and spelling new vocabulary and so on.

Thus, EFL teachers need to give more attention to teaching vocabulary using a variety of techniques. Teachers are expected to provide their students with sufficient English vocabulary along with language functions and notions to encourage them to communicate effectively. Teachers, moreover, are expected to contextualize all teaching points by using audio-visual aids, stories, dialogues or pictures to inspire and encourage learners to use the language communicatively and appropriately.

2.2.7 Emphasizing fluency

Fluency is the potential to speak with very few grammar mistakes that show how comfortable you are with the language. It involves the ability to speak or write a foreign language easily and accurately in addition to the ability to express oneself easily and articulately (Lexico. com.). It involves the ability to produce or comprehend utterances smoothly, rapidly, and accurately. Fluency is also defined as the ability to use the language quickly and confidently without too much hesitations or too many unnatural pauses to cause barriers in communication (Bailey, 2003 as cited in Ho , 2018) . To enhance students' fluency, EFL students need to practice the speaking skill through a variety of activities without any fear of making mistakes or being

criticized by the teacher or classmates. In this respect, Morley (1991) pointed to three kinds of discussion - enhancing activities, namely, imitation, rehearsal, and extemporaneous speech. Imitation, being the simplest activity, requires a copy of a model speech by the students. Rehearsal is the process in which pseudo-communication occurs in activities such as sketches or role-play. Extemporary communication practices include an opportunity to more openly and creatively improvise expressions and language use. These types of exercises are widely used in the EFL classroom to promote the development of communicative competence. Learners are put in situations such as shopping, asking for directions, or answering the telephone, to conduct various kinds of interactions and discussions. As indicated by Hughes (2004), language students are considered successful if they can communicate in the second or foreign language effectively.

2.2.8 English language teaching (ELT) in the Palestinian context

In Palestine, English is taught as a foreign language from the first grade where English for Palestine curriculum has been introduced during the last two decades. In order to make the new curriculum more effective the Palestinian Ministry of Education cooperated with MacMillan Education to develop English for Palestine curriculum, which debuted in 2000 (Dajani & McLaughlin, 2009,p.29). Using this modern curriculum, students are expected to study English at school for about 12 years. However, most of them are unable to speak the English language fluently. A foreign language learner who has not developed sufficient accuracy in

pronunciation cannot be said to speak the target language proficiently (Bianchi and Abdel Razeq, 2017). Dajani and McLaughlin (2009) claimed that the speaking skills are taught either inadequately or not at all. This might be similar to many countries around the world as indicated by Ho (2018) when claiming that in countries where English is seen as a foreign language, training students how to communicate in English naturally and effectively is not primarily emphasized. Gorkaltseva, Gozhinand Nagel (2015) maintained that in Russia, English was not taught for verbal communication and fluency and students study English just because it is required by the curriculum, not because of awareness of the practical purpose of language learning. The same problem is seen in the Republic of Angola, where English language is taught for the purpose of examinations and students, who passed their exams, still lack the ability to express their ideas fluently (Albino, 2017 as cited in Ho, 2018). Similarly, the Malaysian students were unable to get decent fluency after learning English for 11 years (Palpanadan, Salamand Ismail, 2014).

As for the speaking skills, the majority of teachers in the governmental schools mostly focus on teaching grammar and vocabulary more than focusing on speaking and language use. As a result, few opportunities are available for students to actually practice the language inside the classroom and outside.

2.2.9 General Outline of a Speaking Lesson

As mentioned previously, English as any other spoken languages consists of four skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing which play a significant role in any language learning process. For teaching of English to be successful, the four skills should be integrated in an effective way since such integration helps the learners to be good listeners, speakers, readers and writers to communicate effectively (Sadiku, 2015).The speaking skill in particular is an important productive skill that enables users to communicate with other people using oral means. To help EFL students to communicate using the English language, EFL teachers should provide the students with sufficient opportunities for practice. One of the most fundamental concerns of teaching English as a foreign language (EFL) is to maximize the opportunities of learner-learner talk (Hamlaoui and Benabdallah, 2015).In this respect, Cazden (2001) maintained that the teacher can use the preparation step to set a context for the speaking task (where, when, why, and with whom it will occur) and to raise awareness of the speaking task. In presentation, the teacher should provide a preproduction model for learners that fosters awareness of the learners and helps them become more conscientious observers of language usage. In practice, learners are involved in the reproduction of the targeted structure, usually in a controlled or highly supported manner. Added to these recommendations, Nunan (2003) and Kayli (2006) offered some suggestions that can help teachers in teaching the speaking skills such as giving attention to the differences between the second language and the foreign language in the learning context, providing students

with to practice with more opportunities to practice both fluency and accuracy, using group work, pair work and other motivating activities to maximize students' talk and minimize teacher's talk, and providing chances for speaking activities not only in the classroom but also out of classroom.

In relation to the speaking tasks and activities that can be conducted in the classroom, Ur (2000) offered the following characteristics: 1) Learners talk a lot as much as possible; 2) Classroom discussion is not dominated by a minority of active participants; 3)Motivation is high and learners are eager to speak because they are interested in the topic and have something to say; 4)Learners express themselves easily in a manner that is comprehensible to each other, and of an acceptable level of language accuracy.

2.2.10 Classroom Discussion

Discussion is defined by Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary as a conversation in which people talk about something and tell each other their ideas or opinions. Hamlaoui and Benabdallah (2015) maintained that discussion is complex and requires not only knowledge of syntactic and grammatical structures, vocabulary and pronunciation, but also the knowledge of some pragmatic, socio-cultural, and discourse rules. Furthermore discussions help students develop and strengthen interpersonal communication skills as well as analytical and critical thinking skills (Corcoran, 2016) while giving learners an opportunity to share their views while being a useful means of training pragmatic and strategic competence and fluency in general (Šolcová, 2011). Likewise, Thornbury and Slade

(2006) state that discussion is based on seven basic features: it is a spoken activity based on prosodic features, interactive and interpersonal, spontaneous and synchronous, takes place in a shared context, mostly informal in certain situations and reveals the speaker's identity. On the other hand, Backer (2016) classified discussions into three types: the written discussion involving a kind of printed discourse, argument, or examination of a subject by one or many authors; the spoken discussion involving individuals speaking and listening to one another and finally the online discussion which appears to be a dialectical synthesis of the written and spoken forms.

In terms of the interactive feature of discussion, Brown (1994) discussed the importance of interaction inside the classroom which plays a basic role in facilitating students' learning when providing more opportunities to practice the speaking skill at least inside the classroom. Thus, discussion should promote a kind of interaction between students over teacher-student interaction, and also encourage more students to participate (Backer, 2016). This is due to the fact that most students need more opportunities to ask and answer questions which involve the use of certain rules of grammar and vocabulary.

Cannon (2000) claimed that the classroom environment is considered an important context where the students can interact with each other and talk to and with their teachers and classmates, listen to others' ideas, and use the language they learned to express personal ideas and needs. To enhance the

students' speaking skills, teachers everywhere are recommended to use different types of activities and techniques to raise students' motivation to speak and improve their speaking skills. Among these activities are group work, debates, games, role-play, to name a few.

2.2.11 Role-Play: features and advantages

Role play is another means of motivating students to speak when the participants claimed to be in numerous social situations and have a number of roles in society. In role-play, the teacher provides learners with the situation and some information such as who they are and what they believe or feel to help them speak the language function provided in the textbook. Teachers of English who teach English for Palestine curriculum know well that the textbooks from t 1st grade to 12th grade are rich in tasks and exercises that enable the students to participate in role-paly activities. According to Richard (1985), role play is defined as a drama-like classroom activity in which students take the roles of different participants in a situation, and, act out what might typically happen in that situation. Thus, role play provides the students with an opportunity to use language functions correctly and appropriately in the given roles and situations with regard to three main components : the situation, roles and useful expressions (Neupane, 2019). Hence, using role-play involves several advantages such as enhancing communication, motivation, speaking skills, team work, and building up students' confidence (Milarisa, 2018).

2.2.12 Benefits of classroom discussion

Classroom discussion can be used as a technique to enhance students' skills such as enhancing understanding and critical thinking, promoting student engagement as they learn. Discussion is a form of instructional conversation consisting of teacher and student interaction and can be stimulating if they concern topics or issues that interest learners and/or challenge them (Šolcová, 2011). By the same token, Hayes et. al (2009) maintained that discussion in general has the potential to improve critical thinking skills. Furthermore, student discussion was found to be effective for better learner outcomes (Hann et. al., 2008). On the other hand, Dallimore et al (2008) claimed that active preparation and participation in class discussion can affect oral and written communication skills in addition to improving writing and speaking skills.

2.3 Previous Studies

A great deal of research has be conducted to examine the effect of using different types of activities on enhancing students' speaking skills.

To begin with, Schuitema et. al. (2018) aimed to contribute to the development of a framework for analysing the characteristics of classroom discussions and the different roles teachers can adopt in guiding a discussion on controversial issues. The framework was used to analyze five classroom discussions in secondary education. The results revealed that a high degree of teacher regulation was related to high content quality and more

participation from students. A high degree of student regulation was linked to more genuine discussion among students. The study underlined the importance of taking account of the teacher's role in research into the effectiveness of classroom discussions for democratic citizenship education.

Aboura (2017) aimed to find out the role of group work in improving students' speaking skills at the English Language Center (ELC) at the Arab American University (AAUJ) – Jenin. Results revealed statistically significant differences between the two the experimental and control groups in favor of the experimental one in syntax, vocabulary, pronunciation, organizing information, comprehension, and fluency due to utilizing group work. As well, the findings of the study revealed that there were no significant differences in using group work in improving the students" speaking skills between the results of the pre-test and post-test of the experimental group due to the independent variables of the study (gender, academic level at university placement test, English score at Tawjihi exam, stream and faculty).

Arar (2017) aimed at examining the influence of debate discussion on enhancing secondary students' critical thinking skills and academic achievement for tenth grade in Jaljulia Secondary School. It also aimed at observing the relation between argument writing skills, reading comprehension skills as achievement dimensions and debate discussion as effective strategy in cooperative learning. The results revealed that there are statistical significant differences between the experimental group and control

group in critical thinking skills, and sub skills (inference, evaluation, deduction) in favor of the experimental group, and academic achievement. In the writing test, results showed statistically significant differences in writing argument, and reading comprehension skills. Classroom observation showed increase in respect for the other team, in constructing rebuttal, and understanding of the topic in favorer of the experimental group as well.

Corcoran (2016) maintained that classroom discussions make learning more interactive and help students develop skills that cannot be taught in a traditional teaching method. This is because discussion is a tool to be used correctly in the classroom to increase students' enjoyment of the class and strengthens students' understanding of concepts.

Abrar and Mukminin (2016) aimed to investigate the classroom discussion engagement experiences, the challenges faced and strategies for solution among eight international Indonesian MA students in a UK university through a demographic questionnaire and semi-structured interviews. Results revealed that the students faced some speaking challenges including language barriers, individual matters and the academic culture differences. As a result the students used some strategies to deal with such challenges such as (having the verbal response, utilising learning sources, and maintaining positive motivation.

Sabbah (2015) aimed to investigate the effectiveness of using debates on developing the speaking skills of a sample of 20 English- major students at the University of Palestine in Gaza. The findings indicated that there are

statistically significant differences between the pre and post-tests due to pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary skills after the use of debates as strategy for enhancing the speaking skills.

Alozie and Mitchell (2014) presented one high school teacher's facilitation of science discussions supported by a dialogic discussion structure that was collaboratively developed through professional-development workshops. The findings provided a real-time teaching tool for teachers working toward integrating inquiry-based discussions in their classrooms. Nevertheless, due to time constraints and lack of support, teachers tend to reduce the possible depth that classroom discussions offer.

Afana (2012) investigated the effect of using Educational Drama Intervention on the 9th grade students in UNRWA schools. The intervention aimed to maximize the speaking skills by utilizing three strategies of educational drama: role play, simulation and hot seating. The results indicated that there were statistically significant differences between both groups in favour of the experimental one in improving speaking skills due to the Educational Drama Intervention.

Yahya (2012) aimed to identify the speaking difficulties of the students at the Arab American University-Jenin. Findings of the study showed that the instructional and academic factors have a high means (3.32) and that there were no statistically significant differences due to gender.

Alhabbash (2012) examined the effectiveness of classroom and online discussion on the speaking skills of 12th students in Abu TharAlgefary secondary school .Three class were chosen randomly and divided into three groups with 25 students each: the experimental classroom discussion group, the experimental online discussion group and the control group. Results revealed statistically significant differences in the level of speaking ability between the students who learn by classroom discussion and those who learn by traditional method (control group) in favor of classroom discussion group 2 as well as in favor of online discussion group.

Kirkham (2011) examined how students position themselves in relation to academic knowledge through the epistemic phrases I don't know and I think. Results demonstrated that the ability to evaluate classroom discussion as a social practice relies upon one's ability to place that practice within an understanding of individual speakers' personal styles and the social ideologies that frame them.

Buchanan (2011) aimed to uncover how and why three elementary teachers use discussion in the classroom, and how discussion is similar and different in kindergarten, third grade, and fifth grade. To collect data, an exploratory collective case study was developed to identify the three participants involving a kindergarten teacher, a third grade teacher, and a fifth grade teacher. Three qualitative methods were employed: semi-structured classroom observations, participant interviews, and a focus group.

Each of the participants believes that the most successful discussions originate from issues that are important and relevant to students' lives.

Šolcová (2011) aimed to investigate how teaching speaking skills is realized in practice by teachers in the Czech Republic and Austria as well as exploring the teachers" assumptions and possible misconceptions about speaking and the classroom techniques they use. Results revealed that Czech respondents preferred form-focused and accuracy-focused activities at the expense of communicative activities like discussions, storytelling and role plays. By contrast, Austrian respondents showed preferred freer communication and creativity rather than controlled activities. The results also revealed that Austrian teaching of English indicates a strong tendency for a communicative approach while in the Czech Republic English teachers incline to a grammar-translation approach.

Wiwitanto (2010) aimed to investigate the impact of using the Australian parliamentary debate system on the 11th graders. The sample consisted of 50 male students divided into two groups: experimental and Results of the post-test were better than pre-test results.

O'Neal (2009) examined the effectiveness of using asynchronous discussions in an online course compared to traditional classroom face-to-face discussions. The sample consisted of 44 participants in an undergraduate course for elementary and secondary education majors related to teaching children with disabilities in the regular classroom. Twenty-two participants were enrolled in the online section of the course that accessed

the course through home computers. Twenty-two participants were enrolled in the traditional section of the course that met in a classroom at the university. The instructional program for both groups included the same required textbook, syllabus, and activities. The results have direct implications for using asynchronous discussions in an online learning environment.

Murphy (2009) aimed to explore the impact of classroom discussion on measures of teacher and student talk and on individual student comprehension and critical-thinking and reasoning outcomes. Results revealed that several discussion approaches produced strong increases in the amount of student talk and concomitant reductions in teacher talk, as well as substantial improvements in text comprehension. Meanwhile, Muttaqin (2009) examined the role of debates on improving learners' speaking skills. Results showed that the English speaking skills of the students improved in terms of vocabulary, grammar and fluency.

Murad (2009) investigated the effect of a task-based language teaching (TBLT) program on developing the speaking skills of 11th grade secondary students and their attitudes towards English. A task-based language teaching program was developed by the researcher for the experimental group. Results revealed that the TBLT program enhanced significantly the speaking skill of the students of the experimental group and positively affected their attitudes towards English. Secondly, the TBLT

program improved the girls' speaking skills more than the boys in the experimental group.

Hann and Park (2008) aimed to evaluate the effects of students' epistemic belief and the instructor's discussion-facilitating strategies on interaction and satisfaction in online discussion with 43 college students. The results revealed that there are group differences in interaction and satisfaction, depending on epistemic belief. Regarding discussion-facilitating strategies, there are meaningful differences in interaction but not in the satisfaction level. Interactional effects were also found between epistemic belief and discussion-facilitating strategies in social and interactive types of messages.

Costa et. al. (2007) carried out study on two groups of undergraduate medical students who covered the same information and took the same tests but one class was taught following a traditional lecture format while the other consisted of open discussion sessions. The students who were in the discussion group enjoyed the style of teaching more than the students in the lecture group and test results showed that interactive teaching practices increase knowledge retention.

Shan (2005) investigated the impact of debate on oral communication skills and the relationship between students' personalities and their language learning among 21 students. The results showed that both groups did not make much progress on the pre-test and the midterm test at the end of the first treatment, but both groups made much progress on the pretest and the

post-test by the end of the second treatment. Moreover, 46 students maintained that frequent debate in class increased not only their public speaking skills, but also other skills, such as critical thinking skills, organization skills, communication skills and note-taking skills. In addition, personality types influenced learners' preferences and attitudes towards different oral task-based activities.

Elise et al. (2004) examined the context of intensive graduate business classes using a questionnaire to identify what enhanced the quality of participation and the effectiveness of discussion in this class. Qualitative content analysis revealed several areas such as using graded participation, incorporating ideas and experiences, asking effective questions, providing supportive classroom environment, and ensuring constructive feedback.

Howard (2004) argued that classroom discussion has the potentials to increase learning and critical thinking which make it a good pedagogical strategy to integrate into their classes.

Larson and Keiper (2002) attempted to incorporate electronic threaded discussions into pre-service methods courses in 20 class sections, and engaged students in 29 different threaded discussions. The participants involved students in a secondary social studies methods course who were pursuing their initial teaching certificate, and intended to teach either middle or high school. Results revealed that both forms of discussion provide unique opportunities for students to learn and interact with each other.

The researcher believes that good classroom discussion techniques lead to improve not only students' speaking skills, but also other related skills that students practice while speaking among these are fluency, retention of knowledge, listening comprehension and critical thinking and creativity.

Chapter Three

Methodology & Procedures

3.1 Introduction

3.2 Study design

3.3 Population and Sample of the Study

3.4 Instruments of the Study

3.5 Validity of the Questionnaire

3.6 Reliability of the Questionnaire

3.7 Statistical Processing

3.8 Variables of the Study

Chapter Three

Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the methodology and procedures followed to carry out the current study. The chapter is divided into the following sections: instruments of the study, research questions, population and sample, as well as the instruments' validity and reliability, variables, procedures and statistical processing..

3.2 Study design

The mixed- method approach was used to achieve the objectives of the study. The mixed method is defined by Tashakkori and Creswell (2007) as research in which the investigator collects and analyses data, integrates the findings and draws inferences using both qualitative and quantitative methods in a single study. Accordingly, a questionnaire as well as interviews was used with EFL teachers.

3.3 Population and sample of the Study

The population of the study included all teachers who teach English as a foreign language in the secondary stage of the public schools in Nablus District, the number of which was (57) male and (65) female teachers. Among this number, 15 teachers were interviewed. Table (1) below shows the distribution of the study sample

Table (1): The distribution of the study sample

Variable	Classification	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	57	46.7
	Female	65	53.3
Qualification	Diploma	4	3.3
	B.A	77	63.1
	M.A	41	33.6
Experience	1-5	49	40.2
	6-10 years	23	18.9
	More	50	41.0
Training sessions	Without	20	16.4
	1-2	43	35.2
	More	58	47.5
Specialization	Methods	27	22.1
	Literature	95	77.9
Total		122	100.0

3.4 Instruments of the Study

To achieve the objectives of the study, two instruments were used. The first was a 32-item questionnaire scored with a 5-point Likert scale. Response options ranged from strongly agree to strongly disagree. The estimation level was as follows:

- Very high = means that range between 4.21-5.

- High = means that range between 3.41-4.20.

- oderate with means that range between 2.61-3.40.

- Low = with means that range between 1.80-2.60.

- Very low = with means that range between 1.0-1.80.

The second tool was interviewing 15 teachers from the population who were chosen randomly. The interview consisted of three open-ended questions. The interviews were conducted using Facebook and WhatsApp applications. Each interview lasted for (25-35) minutes.

3.5 Validity of the Questionnaire

To ensure the validity of the questionnaire, it was presented to a jury in the field of TEFL and Linguistics at An-Najah National University. Some modifications were suggested by the jury such as using "style" instead of "ways", "reach" instead of "find", and "reflect" instead of "show". These suggestions were taken into account when preparing the final version of the questionnaire.

3.6 Reliability of the Questionnaire

To find out the reliability of the questionnaires, Chronapach Alpha formula was used and the following table shows the results.

Table (2): The results of Chronapach Alpha of the questionnaire

Questionnaire	Items	Chronapach Alpha
Teachers' tool	32	0.93

Table (2) reveals that the questionnaire reliability was (0.93) which is a satisfactory level to carry out the study.

3.7. Statistical Processing

The statistical measures used in the study were:

- Frequencies, means, standard deviations and percentages.

- Independent Sample t- test.

- One-Way ANOVA test.

3.8 Variables of the Study:

The study consisted of the following variables:

Independent Variables include:

1) Gender: (Male /Female).

2) Qualification: (Diploma /B.A/ M.A)

3) Experience: (1-5/6-10/More)

4) Training Courses: (0/ 1-2/More)

5) Specialization: (Methods/ Literature)

Dependent Variable:

Perspectives of English language teachers at the public schools in Nablus District.

Chapter Four

Results of the Study

4.1 Introduction

4.2 Results Related to the First Question

4.3 Results Related to the Sub – Questions

4.3.1 Results Related to the First Sub-Question

4.3.2 Results Related to the Second Sub-Question

4.3.3 Results Related to the Third Sub-Question

4.3.4 Results Related to the Fourth Sub-Question

4.3.5 Results Related to the Fifth Sub-Question

4.4. Results Related to the Interviews

Chapter Four

Results of the Study

4.1 Introduction

The purpose of this study was to explore the role of using classroom discussion techniques in improving students' speaking skills from the perspective of English teachers of the secondary stage at the public schools in Nablus district. To achieve the objectives of the study, a questionnaire and an interview were used to obtain quantitative and qualitative data. This chapter presents the qualitative and quantitative results of the analyzed data.

4.2 Results Related to the First Question

The first question of this study was "*What is the role of using classroom discussion techniques in improving students' speaking skills from the perspective of English teachers of the Secondary Stage at the public schools in Nablus district?*"

To answer this question, the means, standard deviations and percentages were used based on the responses of the participants on each domain as shown in Tables (3), (4), (5), (6), and (7) below.

Concerning the domain of the classroom environment, Table (3) shows that the role of using classroom discussion techniques in improving students' speaking skills as viewed by English language teachers of the secondary stage at the public schools in Nablus District was very high when

scoring (4.38) which suggested a high level of estimation for using classroom discussion techniques. The highest mean was given to the item "*Classroom Discussion techniques provide enjoyment and relaxation in the classroom*." which scored (5.00). On the other hand, the lowest mean was given to the item "*Classroom Discussion techniques increase students' attention and concentration*." which scored (3, 44).

Table (3): Means, Standard Deviations, Percentages and Estimation Level according to the Means of the First Domain "Classroom Environment"

No.	Item	Mean	Standard deviation	%	Estimation level
Classroom Environment					
1.	Classroom Discussion techniques help teachers to create context in which the language becomes useful and meaningful.	4.39	0.49	94.06	Very High
2.	Classroom Discussion techniques break the routine and generate interest in the classroom.	4.80	0.59	96.40	Very High
3.	Classroom Discussion techniques provide enjoyment and relaxation in the classroom.	5,00	0.00	100.0	Very High
4.	Classroom Discussion techniques foster a safe and natural classroom environment.	4.31	0.61	89.80	Very High
5.	Classroom Discussion techniques reduce anxiety and tension on unfamiliar topics among students.	4.36	0.69	91.35	Very High
6.	Classroom Discussion techniques increase students' attention and concentration.	3.44	0.64	87.8	High
	Total score of Classroom Environment	4.38	0.47	92.0	Very High

Furthermore, the items (1, 2, 3, 4 and 5) received a very high estimation level which revealed that teachers′ perspectives on using classroom discussion techniques in the learning process were positive to the extent they use them in the teaching-learning process.

With regard to the second domain "Student-Centered Approach", Table (4) below shows that the role of classroom discussion techniques in improving students' speaking skills as viewed by English language teachers of the secondary stage at the public schools in Nablus District was very high when scoring (4.33) which suggested a high level of estimation for using classroom discussion techniques. The highest mean was given to the item "*Classroom Discussion techniques improve self-expression.*" which scored (4.44). On the other hand, the lowest mean was given to the item "*Classroom Discussion techniques increase a sense of prediction.*" which scored (4.21).

Table (4): Means, Standard Deviations, Percentages and Estimation Level according to the Means of the Second Domain "Student-Centered Approach"

No.	Item	Mean	Standard deviation	%	Estimation level
B. Student-Centered Approach:					
7.	Classroom Discussion techniques decrease teachers' talk time and increase students' talk time.	4.37	0.76	95.16	Very High
8.	Classroom Discussion techniques improve self-expression.	4.44	0.63	97.23	Very High
9.	Classroom Discussion techniques provoke students' imagination.	4.22	0.68	88.70	Very High
10.	Classroom Discussion techniques increase a sense of prediction.	4.21	0.61	86.01	Very High
11.	Classroom Discussion techniques encourage self-confidence in using English.	4.41	0.67	91.14	Very High
12.	Classroom Discussion techniques improve students' critical thinking skills.	4.37	0.62	94.90	Very High
13.	Classroom Discussion techniques enable life-long learning and independent problem solving skills.	4.26	0.67	87.51	Very High
	Total score of Student-Centered Approach	4.33	0.47	92.6	Very High

Table (4) shows that the items (7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12,13) received a very high estimation level, which revealed that the teachers' perspectives on using classroom discussion techniques in the learning process were positive which motivate them to use such techniques in their teaching.

Concerning the third domain "Interaction", Table (5) below shows that the role of classroom discussion techniques on improving students' speaking skills as viewed by English language teachers of the secondary stage at the public schools in Nablus District was very high when scoring (4.34) which suggested a high level of estimation for using classroom discussion techniques. The highest mean was given to the item " *Students learn better, when they are given a chance to talk to one another and are actively involved in their discussions.*" which scored (4.44). On the other hand, the lowest mean was given to the item "*Classroom Discussion techniques promote a positive interaction which improves students' cognitive, emotional and social growth.*" which scored (4.25).

Table (5): Means, Standard Deviations, Percentages and Estimation Level according to the Means of the third Domain "Interaction"

No.	Item	Mean	Standard deviation	%	Estimation level
C. Interaction.					
14.	Classroom Discussion techniques should be based on Communicative Approach.	4.33	0.77	94.6	Very High
15.	Using Classroom Discussion techniques encourages learners to interact with the material, other classmates and the teacher.	4.32	0.68	92.3	Very High
16.	Classroom Discussion techniques help in decreasing the gap between the teacher and the students.	4.30	0.77	93.8	Very High
17.	Classroom Discussion techniques facilitate the exchange of information among learners.	4.40	0.67	97.1	Very High
18.	Students learn better, when they are given a chance to talk to one another and are actively involved in their discussions.	4.44	0.69	98.5	Very High
19.	Classroom Discussion techniques promote a positive interaction which improves students' cognitive, emotional and social growth.	4.25	0.68	87.4	Very High
	Total score of Interaction	4.34	0.55	90.4	Very High

As shown in Table (5), the items (14, 15, 16, 17, 18,19) received a very high estimation level, which revealed that the teachers' perspectives of using classroom discussion techniques in the learning process were positive to encourage them to use such techniques in their classrooms.

As shown in Table (6) which presents the results of the fourth domain Fluency and pronunciation", the role of classroom discussion techniques in improving students' speaking skills as viewed by English language teachers of the secondary stage at the public schools in Nablus district was very high when scoring (4.36) which suggested a high level of estimation for using classroom discussion techniques. The highest mean was given to the item

"*Classroom Discussion techniques develop students' speaking skills."* which scored (4.53). On the other hand, the lowest mean was given to the item "*Classroom Discussion techniques accelerate better pronunciation, appropriate intonation and stress in the expressions of ideas and feelings.*" which scored (4.28).

Table (6): Means, Standard Deviations, Percentages and Estimation Level according to the Means of the fourth Domain "Fluency and pronunciation"

No.	Item	Mean	Standard deviation	%	Estimation level
D. Fluency and pronunciation					
20.	Classroom Discussion techniques develop students' speaking skills.	4.53	0.53	98,5	Very High
21.	Classroom Discussion techniques help students to overcome speaking difficulty.	4.37	0.62	88	Very High
22.	Classroom Discussion techniques improve students' fluency.	4.34	0.59		Very High
23.	Classroom Discussion techniques improve learners' pronunciation.	4.29	0.59	88.7	Very High
24.	Classroom Discussion techniques help students to use new vocabulary in different contexts.	4.33	0.59	90.3	Very High
25.	Classroom Discussion techniques encourages the teacher to listen more carefully to students when they use the language.	4.36	0.57	93.1	Very High
26.	Classroom Discussion techniques accelerate better pronunciation, appropriate intonation and stress in the expressions of ideas and feelings.	4.28	0.64	87.5	Very High
	Total Score of fluency and pronunciation	**4.36**	**0.42**	**90.4**	**Very High**

As shown in Table (6), the items (20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26) received a very high estimation level, which revealed that the teachers' perspectives of using classroom discussion techniques in the learning process were positive.

Regarding the fifth domain "Motivation", Table (7) shows that the role of classroom discussion techniques in improving the students' speaking skills as viewed by English language teachers of the secondary stage at the public schools in Nablus district was very high when scoring(4.33) which suggested a high level of estimation for using classroom discussion techniques. The highest mean was given to the item "*Classroom Discussion techniques enhance students' communicative abilities*." which scored (4.40). On the other hand, the lowest mean was given to the item "*Classroom Discussion techniques inspire and motivate students to express their ideas.*" which scored (4.27).

Table (7): Means, Standard Deviations, Percentages and Estimation Level according to the Means of the fifth Domain "Motivation"

No.	Item	Mean	Standard deviation	%	Estimation level
E. Motivation					
27.	Classroom Discussion techniques bring something new and capture students' attention to learn better.	4.31	0.62	92.8	Very High
28.	Classroom Discussion techniques energize and prepare students for learning tasks.	4.29	0.66	86.9	Very High
29.	Classroom Discussion techniques inspire and motivate students to express their ideas.	4.27	0.54	87.7	Very High
30.	Classroom Discussion techniques encourage learners to be active and responsible participants in their learning.	4.39	0.64	88.5	Very High
31.	Classroom Discussion techniques engage learners in constructing their identities through collaboration and negotiation.	4.29	0.66	86.9	Very High
32.	Classroom Discussion techniques enhance students' communicative abilities.	4.40	0.59	98.5	Very High
	Total score of Motivation	**4.33**	**0.45**	**95.01**	**Very High**

As shown in Table (7), the items (27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32) received a very high estimation level, which revealed that the teachers' perspective of using classroom discussion techniques in the learning process were positive.

4.3 Results Related to the Sub-Questions

The sub-questions addressed in this study were as follows:

1. Are there any statistically significant differences at (α=0.05) in the role of using classroom discussion techniques in improving students' speaking skills from the perspectives of English teachers of the secondary stage at the public schools in Nablus district due to gender?

2. Are there any statistically significant differences at (α=0.05) in the role of using classroom discussion techniques in improving students' speaking skills from the perspective of English teachers of the secondary stage at the public schools in Nablus district due to qualification?

3. Are there any statistically significant differences at (α=0.05) in the role of using classroom discussion techniques in improving students' speaking skills from the perspective of English teachers of the secondary stage at the public schools in Nablus district due to years of experience ?

4. Are there any statistically significant differences at (α=0.05) in the role of using classroom discussion techniques in improving students'

speaking skills from the perspective of English teachers of the secondary stage at the public schools in Nablus district due to training courses ?

5.   Are there any statistically significant differences at (α=0.05) in the role of using classroom discussion techniques in improving students' speaking skills from the perspective of English teachers of the secondary stage at the public schools in Nablus district due to specialization ?

4.3.1 Results Related to the First Sub-Question

To answer the first sub-question "*Are there any statistically significant differences at (α=0.05) in the role of using classroom discussion techniques in improving students' speaking skills from the perspectives of English teachers of the secondary stage at the public schools in Nablus district due to gender?",* the Independent T-test was used and Table (8) shows the results.

Table (8): The Independent T-test for the different averages due to the Gender

Teachers' Perspectives toward using Classroom Discussion techniques on improving students' speaking skills	Gender	N	Mean	S. D	T-test	Sig.*
Domain (I) Classroom Environment	Male	57	4.36	0.45	0.39	0.85
	Female	65	4.40	0.48		
Domain (II) Student-Centered Approach	Male	57	4.31	0.46	0.44	0.000*
	Female	65	4.34	0.48		
Domain (III) Interaction	Male	57	4.35	0.55	0.28	0.80
	Female	65	4.33	0.56		
Domain (IV) Fluency and Pronunciation	Male	57	4.40	0.45	0.98	0.28
	Female	65	4.32	0.40		
Domain (I) Motivation	Male	57	4.33	0.45	0.03	0.67
	Female	65	4.33	0.45		
Total	**Male**	**57**	**4.38**	**0.38**	**1.30**	**0.46**
	Female	**65**	**4.29**	**0.38**		

Table (8) shows that there are no statistically significant differences at (α=0.05) in the role of using classroom discussion techniques in improving students' speaking skills from the perspectives of English teachers of the secondary stage at the public schools in Nablus district due to teachers' gender in the first, third, fourth and fifth domains (classroom environment, interaction, fluency and pronunciation, and motivation). Thus, the null hypothesis in these domains is accepted.

On the other hand, there are statistically significant differences at (α=0.05) in the role of using classroom discussion techniques in improving

students' speaking skills from the perspectives of English teachers of the secondary stage at the public schools in Nablus district due to teachers' gender in the second domain (student-centered approach). This means that the null hypothesis is not valid and rejected. These differences were in favor of the male teachers. This means that teachers' gender does not have any role in his\her perspectives towards classroom discussion techniques and the role in classroom environment, interaction, fluency and pronunciation, and motivation, but it has a role in the teachers' perspectives toward classroom discussion techniques and their influence on student-centered approach.

4.3.2 Results Related to the Second Sub-Question

To answer the second sub-question *"Are there any statistically significant differences at (α=0.05) in the role of using classroom discussion techniques in improving students' speaking skills from the perspectives of English teachers of the secondary stage at the public schools in Nablus district due to teachers' qualification?"*, the means , standard deviations and One -Way ANOVA were used as shown in Tables (9) and (10) below.

Table (9): Means and Standard Deviations of the Variable of Qualification

Teachers' Perspectives toward using Classroom Discussion techniques on improving students' speaking skills	Qualification	No.	Mean	S.D
Domain (I) Classroom Environment	Diploma	4	4.08	0.09
	B.A	64	4.34	0.44
	M.A	54	4.45	0.50
Domain (II) Student-Centered Approach	Diploma	4	3.92	0.58
	B.A	64	4.32	0.40
	M.A	54	4.37	0.52
Domain (III) Interaction	Diploma	4	4.20	0.41
	B.A	64	4.29	0.57
	M.A	54	4.41	0.53
Domain (IV) Fluency and Pronunciation	Diploma	4	4.39	0.45
	B.A	64	4.31	0.41
	M.A	54	4.42	0.42
Domain(V) Motivation	Diploma	4	4.45	0.36
	B.A	64	4.31	0.41
	M.A	54	4.34	0.50
Total		**122**	**4.35**	**0.38**

Table (9) shows that using classroom discussion techniques varies from one teacher to another according to teachers' qualification. The teachers with high qualification were more interested in using classroom discussion techniques. Therefore, there were differences in the means of the variable of qualification. In order to identify these differences, One Way ANOVA Test was used and Table (10) below shows the results.

Table (10): One-Way ANOVA Test for the Variable of Qualification

Teachers' Perspectives toward using Classroom Discussion techniques on improving students' speaking skills	Source of variation	Sum of squares	Df	Mean square	F	Sig.*
Domain (I) Classroom Environment	Between Groups	0.775	2	0.388	1.773	0.174
	Within Groups	26.017	119	0.219		
	Total	26.793	121			
Domain(II) Student-Centered Approach	Between Groups	0.735	2	0.367	1.660	0.194
	Within Groups	26.337	119	0.221		
	Total	27.072	121			
Domain (III) Interaction	Between Groups	0.493	2	0.247	0.797	0.453
	Within Groups	36.825	119	0.309		
	Total	37.319	121			
Domain (IV) Fluency and Pronunciation	Between Groups	0.363	2	0.181	1.003	0.370
	Within Groups	21.519	119	0.181		
	Total	21.882	121			
Domain(V) Motivation	Between Groups	0.096	2	0.048	0.229	0.796
	Within Groups	25.042	119	0.210		
	Total	25.139	121			
Total Score	Between Groups	0.292	2	0.146	0.989	0.375
	Within Groups	17.557	119	0.148		
	Total	17.849	121			

*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

Table (10) shows that the qualification variable did not have a role in improving students' speaking skills as viewed by English language teachers of the secondary stage at the public schools in Nablus district. The significant level is (0.375) which is more than (0.05). Consequently, the null hypothesis is valid and accepted in all domains.

This means that the qualification of the teacher does not have any role in his/her perspectives towards classroom discussion techniques and their

influence on classroom environment, student-centered approach, interaction, fluency and pronunciation, and motivation.

4.3.3 Results Related to the Third Sub-Question

To answer the third sub-question," *Are there any statistically significant differences at (α=0.05) in the role of using classroom discussion techniques in improving students' speaking skills from the perspective of English teachers of the secondary stage at the public schools in Nablus district due to years of experience? ,* the means, standard deviations and One -Way ANOVA were used and Tables (11) and (12) below show the results.

Table (11): Means and Standard Deviations of the Variable of Experience

Teachers' Perspectives toward using Classroom Discussion techniques on improving students' speaking skills	Experience	No.	Mean	S.D
Domain (I) Classroom Environment	1-5	50	4.42	0.37
	6-10	22	4.34	0.61
	More	50	4.36	0.48
Domain (II) Student-Centered Approach	1-5	50	4.38	0.39
	6-10	22	4.25	0.54
	More	50	4.31	0.51
Domain (III) Interaction	1-5	50	4.39	0.49
	6-10	22	4.29	0.59
	More	50	4.32	0.60
Domain (IV) Fluency and Pronunciation	1-5	50	4.36	0.35
	6-10	22	4.40	0.48
	More	50	4.34	0.46
Domain (V) Motivation	1-5	50	4.34	0.32
	6-10	22	4.39	0.54
	More	50	4.30	0.52
Total		122	4.35	0.38

Table (11) shows that using classroom discussion techniques differs from one teacher to another according to their years of experience. This implies that older teachers seem to be more interested in using classroom discussion techniques. In order to identify the significant differences, One Way -ANOVA test was used and table (12) below shows the results

Table (12): One-Way ANOVA Test for Years of Experience Variable

Teachers' Perspectives toward using Classroom Discussion techniques on improving students' speaking skills	Source of variation	Sum of squares	Df	Mean square	F	Sig.*
Domain (I) Classroom Environment	Between Groups	0.119	2	0.060	0.266	0.767
	Within Groups	26.673	119	0.224		
	Total	26.793	121			
Domain(II) Student-Centered Approach	Between Groups	0.302	2	0.151	0.671	0.513
	Within Groups	26.770	119	0.225		
	Total	27.072	121			
Domain (III) Interaction	Between Groups	0.186	2	0.093	0.299	0.742
	Within Groups	37.132	119	0.312		
	Total	37.319	121			
Domain (IV) Fluency and Pronunciation	Between Groups	0.062	2	0.031	0.168	0.846
	Within Groups	21.820	119	0.183		
	Total	21.882	121			
Domain(V) Motivation	Between Groups	0.141	2	0.071	0.336	0.715
	Within Groups	24.998	119	0.210		
	Total	25.139	121			
Total Score	Between Groups	0.072	2	0.036	0.242	0.785
	Within Groups	17.777	119	0.149		
	Total	17.849	121			

*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

Table (12) shows that teachers' years of experience did not have a role in using classroom discussion techniques in improving students' speaking skills as viewed by English language teachers of the secondary stage at the

public schools in Nablus district because there were no statistically significant differences at(α=0.05) since the significant level is (0.785) which is more than (0.05).This means that the teachers' experience did not have any role in his\her perspective towards classroom discussion techniques and their role in classroom environment, student-centered approach, interaction, fluency and pronunciation, and motivation. Hence, these results provide evidence to accept the third hypothesis.

4.3.4 Results Related to the Fourth Sub-Question

To answer the fourth sub-question, "*Are there any statistically significant differences at (α=0.05) in the role of using classroom discussion techniques in improving students' speaking skills from the perspective of English teachers of the secondary stage at the public schools in Nablus district due to training courses?*", the means, standard deviations and One - Way ANOVA were used and Tables (13) and (14) below show the results.

Table (13): Means and Standard Deviations of the Training courses Variable

Teachers' Perspectives toward using Classroom Discussion techniques on improving students' speaking skills	Training Courses	No	Mean	S.D
Domain (I) Classroom Environment	Without	22	4.34	0.43
	1-2	42	4.42	0.45
	More	58	4.37	0.50
Domain(II) Student-Centered Approach	Without	22	4.39	0.42
	1-2	42	4.26	0.44
	More	58	4.35	0.50
Domain (III) Interaction	Without	22	4.46	0.39
	1-2	42	4.30	0.61
	More	58	4.32	0.56
Domain (IV) Fluency and Pronunciation	Without	22	4.36	0.37
	1-2	42	4.34	0.42
	More	58	4.37	0.45
Domain (V) Motivation	Without	22	4.31	0.34
	1-2	42	4.36	0.40
	More	58	4.32	0.52
Total		122	4.35	0.38

Table (13) shows that using classroom discussion techniques differs from one teacher to another according to their training courses. Teachers who took more training courses were more interested in using classroom discussion techniques to improve students' speaking skills. In order to identify the significant differences, One- Way ANOVA Test was used and Table (16) below shows the results.

Table (14): One-Way ANOVA Test for the Variable of Training courses

Teachers' Perspectives toward using Classroom Discussion techniques on improving students' speaking skills	Source of variation	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	Sig.*
Domain (I) Classroom Environment	Between Groups	0.113	2	0.056	0.251	0.778
	Within Groups	26.680	119	0.224		
	Total	26.793	121			
Domain(II) Student-Centered Approach	Between Groups	0.333	2	0.167	0.742	0.478
	Within Groups	26.739	119	0.225		
	Total	27.072	121			
Domain (III) Interaction	Between Groups	0.431	2	0.216	0.696	0.501
	Within Groups	36.888	119	0.310		
	Total	37.319	121			
Domain (IV) Fluency and Pronunciation	Between Groups	0.022	2	0.011	0.059	0.942
	Within Groups	21.860	119	0.184		
	Total	21.882	121			
Domain (V) Motivation	Between Groups	0.048	2	0.024	0.113	0.893
	Within Groups	25.091	119	0.211		
	Total	25.139	121			
Total Score	Between Groups	0.019	121	0.009	0.063	0.939
	Within Groups	17.830	119	0.150		
	Total	17.849	121			

*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

Table (14) reveals that the training courses did not affect the teachers' perspectives of the role of using classroom discussion techniques in improving students' speaking skills because there were no statistically significant differences at(α=0.05) since the significant level is (0.939) which is more than (0.05). This means that the training courses of the teacher had no impact on his\her perspective towards classroom discussion techniques and their role in classroom environment, student-centered approach,

interaction, fluency and pronunciation, and motivation. Hence, these results provide evidence to accept the fourth hypothesis.

4.3.5 Results Related to the Fifth Sub-Question

To answer the fifth sub-question," *Are there any statistically significant differences at (α=0.05) in the role of using classroom discussion techniques in improving students' speaking skills from the perspective of English teachers of the secondary stage at the public schools in Nablus district due to specialization ?",* the Independent –T test and One -Way ANOVA were used and Tables (15) and (16) below show the results.

Table (15): The Independent T-test for the different averages due to Specialization

Teachers' Perspectives toward using Classroom Discussion techniques on improving students' speaking skills	Specialization	N	Mean	S.D	T-test	Sig.*
Domain (I) Classroom Environment	Method	68	4.36	0.49	0.69	0.36
	Literature	54	4.41	0.43		
Domain(II) Student-Centered Approach	Method	68	4.32	0.50	0.20	0.14
	Literature	54	4.34	0.42		
Domain (III) Interaction	Method	68	4.33	0.55	0.24	0.51
	Literature	54	4.35	0.55		
Domain (IV) Fluency and Pronunciation	Method	68	4.36	0.45	0.02	0.26
	Literature	54	4.36	0.39		
Domain (V) Motivation	Method	68	4.33	0.48	0.09	0.07
	Literature	54	4.33	0.41		
Total	Method	68	4.34	0.41	0.27	0.47
	Literature	54	4.36	0.35		

Table (15) shows that there are no statistically significant differences at (α=0.05) in the teachers' perspectives of the role of classroom discussion techniques in improving student's speaking skills due to the teachers' specialization in the first, second, third, fourth and fifth domains (classroom environment, student-centered approach, interaction, fluency and pronunciation, and motivation). Thus, the null hypothesis in these domains is valid and accepted. This means that the specialization of the teacher does not have any role in his\her perspective towards classroom discussion techniques and their influence on classroom environment, student-centered approach, interaction, fluency and pronunciation, and motivation. Hence, these results provide evidence to accept the fifth hypothesis.

4.4 Results Related to the Interviews

One of the research instrument used in this study was the interview tool. A semi-structured interview was conducted with 15 teachers in order to get more data concerning teachers' perspectives of using classroom discussion techniques. Due to ongoing situations under the spread of COVID-19 pandemic, it was difficult to meet the interviewees face –face. Instead, the interviews were conducted individually using Facebook and WhatsApp applications. Each interview lasted for (25-35) minutes.. Analysis procedures of transcribed interviews were done based on the guidelines of thematic analysis. The aim was detecting themes that demonstrate the teachers' perspectives of the role of using class discussion technique in the improvement of speaking skills of the secondary schools students. The

results from these interviews were classified into major themes as shown in Table (16) below.

Table (16): Summary of Teachers' Responses in the Interviews

No.	Theme	Item	Male	Female	Total	%
1.	Benefits of classroom discussion techniques to the students	It encourages students to express their ideas in English freely	4	6	10	66.6%
		It increase students' self-esteem	1	10	11	73.3%
		It makes students able to present their topics in front of their friends.	5	5	10	66.6%
2.	Teachers' role in improving the speaking skills of the students	They lead the conversation to serve the aim of the discussion	3	10	13	86.6%
		They motivate students to speak their minds when they get stuck.	4	5	9	60%
		They keep the discussion running	1	8	10	66.6%
3.	Success factors of implementing classroom discussion	The use of good strategies in teaching speaking.	2	6	8	53.3%
		The kind of students leaning speaking	5	10	15	100%
		The motivation of the teacher himself	5	10	15	100%

As shown in Table (16), three themes emerged which are :

A. Benefits of classroom discussion techniques to the students:

As revealed in the thematic analysis of the conducted interviews, it was obvious that teachers were divided into two main classifications, namely: gender (male/ female) and age (old /young). In terms of gender, female teachers were much eager to encourage students to express their own ideas in English more than male teachers because the latter know that even if they trained those students for a century, they would not achieve anything.

However, female teachers stuck to the hope that some improvements would be achieved in the level of speaking skills in the students' case.

In addition, older teachers did not accept this idea because they have been teaching for a long time, and this long time made them get bored of trying to improve anything in the educational process. However, young teachers seem to try their best efforts to make a difference and try any new technique or method.

B. Teachers' role in improving the speaking skills of the students

The thematic analysis of the interviews revealed that teachers were divided into passive teachers who did not even think of leading any conversation in their classes, making their classes a teacher- centered classroom while using traditional methods. On the other side, there were teachers who chose to be active and more hopeful to try new approaches and techniques s to motivate their students to speak.

C. Success factors of implementing classroom discussions

The interviewed teacher appeared to be classified into two categories, namely: passive teachers who did not believe in the benefits of engaging students in the educational process and those who considered the use of good strategies and teachers' motivation to be more important than the kind of students because they did not believe in the existence of bad students. Such teachers tend to believe that passive teachers might lead to passive students.

The overall results of the interviews demonstrated that teachers are eager to use new strategies as classroom discussion techniques in teaching speaking and asking the Ministry to adapt the curriculum to give more emphasis to improving the speaking skill, but there were a few teachers who did not really care about this due to their experience in education.

Chapter Five

Discussion of the Results, Conclusion, and Recommendations

5.1 Introduction

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Chapter Five

Discussion of the Results, Conclusion and Recommendations

5.1 Introduction

The main objective of this study was to explore the role of using classroom discussion techniques in improving students' speaking skills from the perspective of English teachers of the secondary stage at the public schools in Nablus district. Moreover, the study sought to examine the role of teachers' gender, qualification, years of experience, training sessions and specialization in their perspectives. This chapter is devoted to discuss the results of the study the questionnaire and the interviews. In the light of the study results, a final conclusion and recommendations will be given.

5.2   Discussion of the Study Results

5.2.1 Discussion of the Results of the Main Question

The main question of this study was "*What is the role of using classroom discussion techniques in improving students' speaking skills from the perspective of English teachers of the Secondary Stage at the public schools in Nablus district?*" Results revealed a positive role of using classroom discussion techniques in improving students' speaking skills. In particular, the results related to the first domain "Classroom Environment" showed that the total average of this domain was very high 92.0% which

suggested a high level of estimation for using classroom discussion techniques. The result in general agrees with Alozie and Mitchell (2014) who were in favor of integrating inquiry-based discussions in EFL classrooms.

This indicates that the teachers who responded to the questionnaire think of the classroom environment as significant factor to set out fruitful classroom discussion which is supported by Corcoran (2016) who maintained that such environment has the potential to increase students' enjoyment of the class. These results agree with Cannon (2000) who found that the classroom environment is an important context for students to interact with each other and with their teachers, and use the language to express their ideas and needs. The results are also supported by the results of Elise et al. (2004) who found that providing supportive classroom environment positively affects the effectiveness of students' participation in classroom discussion.

In reference to the second domain "Student-Centered approach" the responses of the respondents to the items (7, 8, 9 and 10) which received a high percentage ranged between 86.01 - 97.23 % showed that classroom discussion techniques decrease teachers' talk time and increase students' talk time, improve self-expression, provoke students' imagination and increase a sense of prediction. These results are in line with Hamlaoui and Benabdallah (2015) who highlight the importance of providing more opportunities to maximize learner-learner talk. The results also agree with Backer (2016) who found that discussions promote interaction between students over

teacher-student interaction, and also encourage more students to participate. These results are supported by Murphy (2009) who found that classroom discussion approaches produced strong increases in the amount of student talk and concomitant reductions in teacher talk.

Item (11) which scored 91.14% showed that classroom discussion techniques encourage self-confidence in using English. This result in particular is in consistent with Milarisa (2018) who maintained that classroom activities such as discussions and role-play build up students' confidence.

Item (12 and 13) received an average between 87.51-94.90 % showed that classroom discussion techniques improve students' critical thinking and independent problem-solving skills. These results agree with Howard (2004) who argued that classroom discussion has the potentials to increase learning and critical thinking. The results are also supported by Corcoran (2016) who found that classroom discussions make learning more interactive and help students develop skills that cannot be taught in a traditional teaching method.

In relation to the third domain "Interaction", the items (15, 16, 17 and 18) received an average between 92.3 - 98.5% which means that English teachers agreed that using classroom discussion techniques encourages learners to interact with the teacher, other classmates and the material. Also, they help in decreasing the gap between the teacher and the students, and facilitate the exchange of information among learners. These results are consistent with Larson and Keiper (2002) who found that using different

forms of threaded discussion provide unique opportunities for students to learn and interact with each other and use the language effectively.

Items (14, 32 and 19) which received an average of 87.4-98.5 % showed that classroom discussion techniques should be based on the communicative approach. These results seem to partially disagree with Šolcová (2011) who found that Czech respondents preferred form-focused and accuracy-focused activities as part of a grammar-translation approach at the expense of communicative activities like discussions, storytelling and role plays while Austrian teaching of English indicated a strong tendency for a communicative approach.

In response to the fourth domain "Fluency and Pronunciation", the items (20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25 and 26) which received an average of 87.5 - 98.5% showed that classroom discussion techniques develop students' speaking skills and improve students' fluency and pronunciation. These results seem to disagree with Gorkaltseva, Gozhinand Nagel (2015) who found that the Russian students do not learn English for verbal communication and fluency, rather English is taught as part of a compulsory by curriculum without any practical purpose of language learning. Nevertheless, the results seem to partially agree with Šolcová (2011) who emphasized that discussions give learners an opportunity to build up their pragmatic and strategic competence and fluency as well although the Malaysian students in the study of Palpanadan, Salamand Ismail(2014)were unable to get decent fluency after learning English for 11 years.

As regards the fifth domain "Motivation", the items (27, 28, 29, 30 and 31) which received an average of 86.9 - 98.5%, showed that using classroom discussion techniques can capture students' attention, inspire and motivate students to express their ideas and encourage them to be active learners. These results are in consistent with Shalaby (2012) who maintained that teachers can use classroom discussion to motivate students to speak by offering more enjoyable opportunities and activities relevant to students' needs and interests and promote student engagement as well (Wilen,2004).

5.2.2 Results Related to the sub- Questions

The sub-questions addressed in this study were as follows:

1. Are there any statistically significant differences at (α=0.05) in the role of using classroom discussion techniques in improving students' speaking skills from the perspectives of English teachers of the secondary stage at the public schools in Nablus district due to gender?

2. Are there any statistically significant differences at (α=0.05) in the role of using classroom discussion techniques in improving students' speaking skills from the perspective of English teachers of the secondary stage at the public schools in Nablus district due to qualification?

3. Are there any statistically significant differences at (α=0.05) in the role of using classroom discussion techniques in improving students' speaking skills from the perspective of English teachers of the

secondary stage at the public schools in Nablus district due to years of experience ?

4.   Are there any statistically significant differences at (α=0.05) in the role of using classroom discussion techniques in improving students' speaking skills from the perspective of English teachers of the secondary stage at the public schools in Nablus district due to training courses ?

5.   Are there any statistically significant differences at (α=0.05) in the role of using classroom discussion techniques in improving students' speaking skills from the perspective of English teachers of the secondary stage at the public schools in Nablus district due to specialization?

5.3 Discussion of the Results Related

To discuss the results of these questions, the hypotheses will be used.

5.3.1 Results Related to the First Hypothesis

The first hypothesis stated that "***There are no statistically significant differences at (α=0.05) in the role of using classroom discussion techniques in improving students' speaking skills from the perspectives of English teachers of the secondary stage at the public schools in Nablus district due to gender".***

The results of t-test for independent samples revealed that there were no statistically significant differences at (α=0.05) in the role of using classroom discussion techniques in improving students' speaking skills from the perspectives of English teachers of the secondary stage at the public schools in Nablus district due to gender in the first, third, fourth and fifth domains (classroom environment, interaction, fluency and pronunciation, and motivation). These results demonstrated that teachers of English regardless of their gender positively approve the use of classroom discussion techniques as a teaching strategy. Such approval might be due to the effectiveness of using different types of activities and tasks to improve the speaking skills of EFL learners as indicated by Muttaqin (2009), Murad (2009), Wiwitanto (2010), Afana (2012) and Sabbah (2015). The results also agree with Aboura (2017) who found no significant differences with reference to the role of using group work in improving the students" speaking skills due to gender.

5.3.2 Results Related to the Second Hypothesis

The second hypothesis stated that "*There are no statistically significant differences at (α=0.05) in the role of using classroom discussion techniques in improving students' speaking skills from the perspectives of English teachers of the secondary stage at the public schools in Nablus district due to* qualification".

Results of the study indicated that qualification did not have influence on the role of using classroom discussion techniques in improving students'

speaking skills as viewed by English language teachers of the secondary stage at the public schools in Nablus district. This might be interpreted by saying that teachers regardless of their qualification are interested in trying their best efforts to enhance students' interaction and participation since they feel that this is a major part of their teaching load and responsibilities in a context where their students have no opportunities to practice English outside the school. These results support the claims of Schuitema et. al. (2018) who highlighted the characteristics of classroom discussions and the different roles teachers can adopt in guiding a discussion on controversial issues. Their study underlined the importance of taking account of the teacher's role in the effectiveness of classroom discussions for democratic citizenship education. The results seem to be in consistent with Murphy (2009) who found discussion approaches produced strong increase in the amount of student talk as well as substantial improvements in text comprehension.

5.3.3 Results Related to the Third Hypothesis

The third hypothesis stated that "***There are no statistically significant differences at (α=0.05) in the role of using classroom discussion techniques in improving students' speaking skills from the perspectives of English teachers of the secondary stage at the public schools in Nablus district due to* years of experience.**

Using One‑Way ANOVA showed that the teacher's years of experience do not have any effect on his\her perspective towards classroom

discussion techniques and their influence on classroom environment, student-centered approach, interaction, fluency and pronunciation, and motivation. These results indicate that the teachers nearly have the same perspectives towards the role of classroom discussion techniques in improving the speaking skills of the students regardless of their years of experience in teaching English as a foreign language. Such results might be due to the fact that teachers in Palestine have to attend pre-service training workshops and in-service training sessions so as to be well-prepared for the teaching profession. Besides, the majority of teachers are were supposed to take specific courses at university level such as English language teaching methodology, practicum course, TEFL courses and others that are meant to qualify them for teaching. The results, thus, seem to agree with Elise et al. (2004) who stressed the importance of the teacher's role in incorporating ideas and experiences in addition to providing supportive classroom environment. Results also are supported by Kirkham (2011) who highlighted the understanding of individual speakers' personal styles and the social ideologies that frame them when employing classroom discussion techniques. Meanwhile, Buchanan (2011) stressed that the most successful discussions originate from issues that are important and relevant to students' lives.

5.3.4 Results Related the Fourth Hypothesis

The fourth hypothesis stated that "*There are no statistically significant differences at (α=0.05) in the role of using classroom*

discussion techniques in improving students' speaking skills from the perspectives of English teachers of the secondary stage at the public schools in Nablus district due to the **training sessions taken by the teacher.**

Using One Way ANOVA revealed that the training courses taken by the teacher did not affect teachers' perspectives towards the role of classroom discussion techniques on improving students' speaking skills. Again this might be due to the fact that EFL teachers in Palestine show genuine interest in using different techniques to enhance students' learning and classroom discussion is one of these techniques that can achieve a variety of objectives such as enhancing students' speaking skills, promoting critical thinking, building up students' self-esteem and self-confidence ....etc. Such results support the results of other researchers including Afana (2012), Sabbah (2015) and Corcoran (2016) who found that discussions represent a reliable tool to increase students' enjoyment of the class and strengthen students' understanding of concepts.

5.3.5 Results Related to the Fifth Hypothesis

The fifth hypothesis stated that "*There are no statistically significant differences at (α=0.05) in the role of using classroom discussion techniques in improving students' speaking skills from the perspectives of English teachers of the secondary stage at the public schools in Nablus district due to teacher's* **specialization.**

Results of the study showed that there were no statistically significant differences at (α=0.05) in the role of classroom discussion techniques in improving student's speaking skills from teachers' perspectives due to teachers' specialization in the first, second, third, fourth and fifth domains (classroom environment, student-centered approach, interaction, fluency and pronunciation, and motivation). This means that the specialization of the teacher does not have any effect on his\her perspective towards classroom discussion techniques and their influence on classroom environment, student-centered approach, interaction, fluency and pronunciation, and motivation Such results might be explained by stating that EFL teachers and regardless of their specialization, do their best to try any new possible technique to help students improve their speaking skills since they themselves were students who used to try their best efforts to succeed in their learning. Thus, teachers now feel the responsibility to provide their students with the best possible opportunities and activities, such as group work, debates, games, role-play, to enable them to succeed in their EFL learning. These results support those of Aboura (2017) and Brown (1994) who stressed the importance of interaction inside the classroom and its role in facilitating students' learning when providing more opportunities to practice the speaking skills. This is due to the fact that most students need such opportunities to ask and answer questions which involve the use of certain rules of grammar, pronunciation and vocabulary.

5.4 Results Related to the Teachers' Interviews

Results of the thematic analysis of the interviews showed that class discussion techniques have the potential to encourage students to express their ideas in English freely, increase students' self- esteem and enable students to present their ideas in front of their classmates. Moreover, the majority of teachers pointed that teacher plays a significant role in initiating and leading the conversation to achieve the aims of the discussion. Besides, the majority of interviews maintained that the success of classroom discussion techniques relies heavily on teacher's ability to use appropriate strategies and techniques to enhance students' speaking skills. Teachers need to motivate students to speak by offering more enjoyable opportunities and activities relevant to students' needs and interests. Furthermore, teachers should find topics that hover around the students" lives and reflect their interests to encourage them to perform real communication inside and outside the classroom walls (Shalaby, 2012). All in all, these results agree with most studies reviewed which indicated that using classroom discussion techniques involves several benefits and merits {See Keiper (2002), Howard (2004), Murphy (2009), Muttaqin (2009)}.

5.5 Conclusion

The present study aimed to analyze the role of class discussion techniques in improving students' speaking skills from English teachers' perspectives in Nablus District. In general, the results of the study revealed that teachers of English had positive perspectives towards the role of using

classroom discussion techniques in improving students' speaking skills. Therefore, classroom discussion techniques seem to improve students' speaking skills when they provide the chance to develop students' communicative skills in dynamic and authentic situations as distinct from the method of teaching in traditional ways.

Furthermore, the variables of gender, qualification, specialization and years of experience did not affect teachers' perspectives which means that all teachers were eager to use classroom discussion techniques as a means to help students to improve their speaking skills. As a result, using various kinds of class discussion techniques would help students improve their learning skills particularly the speaking skill.

In summary, three major points are due here:

1. The success of the implementation of classroom discussion techniques relies on the teacher who is the heart of the educational process.

2. Classroom discussion technique increased students' motivation to use language freely and communicatively.

3. Class discussion techniques enable students to present their ideas in front of their classmates as a result of their growing self-esteem.

5.6 Recommendations

Based on the study results, the following recommendations are due:

5.6.2 Recommendations for (EFL) Teachers:

English language teachers are recommended to:

1. Shift from the traditional teaching methods to the communicative approach that is based on the students' real involvement in the teaching- learning process, and to change their role from instructors who dominate the class into moderators and facilitators guide and support the students to practice the language.

2. Use a variety of classroom discussion techniques to make their students more motivated and create an active and interactive learning environment.

3. To be more flexible to allow more time for discussion.

4. Enrich the classroom with more communicative situations activities with relevant topics that suit students' interests and needs.

5. Consider students' individual differences, needs, interests and learning styles in selecting the activities for discussion.

6. Adopt new strategies by using social media and online discussions that enhance students' participation and interaction in the speaking activities outside the classroom.

5.6.1 Recommendations for the Ministry of education

Decision makers and curriculum designers in the Ministry of Education are recommended to:

1. Organize workshops and training sessions to enhance teachers' knowledge and practices in the field of using classroom discussion techniques as an educational tool in their classes.

2. Provide students with a relaxed classroom environment by using games, pictures and audiovisual aids that can encourage them to show positive attitudes towards classroom discussions.

3. Increase the number of English classes to give teachers and students enough opportunities to focus on speaking skills.

4. Enrich the English curriculum with real life situations such as : at the bank, at school, at the restaurant, shopping, role playing, and other relevant topics that encourage students to discuss, argue and debate with each other in a cooperative way.

5.6.3 Recommendations for Further Studies

Researchers in the field of educational research and EFL research are recommended to:

1. Conduct similar studies that aim to find out the role of using classroom discussion techniques on improving other skills (listening, writing, and reading).

2.   Conduct further studies that aim to find out the role of using classroom discussion techniques not only for secondary stages but also for other stages, not only in Nablus district but also in other districts in Palestine.

3.   Conduct similar studies that aim to find out the role of using classroom discussion techniques on motivation, interaction, and critical thinking between learners.

4.   Compare between private and public schools according to the using of classroom discussion technique in learning in private and other techniques on improving students' speaking skills.

5.   Conduct experimental and quasi- experimental studies that investigate the effect of using classroom discussion techniques on students' achievement and their language skills.

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Appendices

Appendix (A): Questionnaire

Appendix (B): Questions of the Interviews

Appendix A

Questionnaire

Dear Teacher:

This questionnaire aims to investigate the **"The Role of Using Classroom Discussion Techniques in Improving Students' Speaking Skills of the Secondary Stage from the Perspective of English Teachers at the Public Schools in Nablus District"**

Please, read all the questions carefully and then tick the correct option that corresponds to your response. Your answer will be only used for research purposes.

Researcher: ………………… .

Section (1): Personal Information

Gender	Male	☐			Females	☐
Qualifications	Diploma	☐	B.A	☐	MA	☐
Experience	1-5	☐	6-10	☐	More	☐
Training Course	Without	☐	1-2	☐	More	☐
Specialization	Methods	☐	Literature	☐		☐

Section (2): Read the following statements carefully and check under the column that best represents your level of agreement with each statement:

No.	Item	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
	A . Classroom Environment					
1.	Classroom Discussion techniques help teachers to create context in which the language becomes useful and meaningful.					
2.	Classroom Discussion techniques break the routine and generate interest in the classroom.					
3.	Classroom Discussion techniques provide enjoyment and relaxation in the classroom.					
4.	Classroom Discussion techniques foster a safe and natural classroom environment.					
5.	Classroom Discussion techniques reduce anxiety and tension on unfamiliar topics among students.					
6.	Classroom Discussion techniques increase students' attention and concentration.					
	B. Student-Centered Approach					
7.	Classroom Discussion techniques decrease teachers' talk time and increase students' talk time.					
8.	Classroom Discussion techniques improve self-expression.					
9.	Classroom Discussion techniques provoke students' imagination.					
10.	Classroom Discussion techniques increase a sense of prediction.					
11.	Classroom Discussion techniques encourage self-confidence in using English.					
12.	Classroom Discussion techniques improve students' critical thinking skills.					
13.	Classroom Discussion techniques enable life-long learning and independent problem solving skills.					
	C. Interaction					
14.	Classroom Discussion techniques should be based on Communicative Approach.					
15.	Using Classroom Discussion techniques encourages learners to interact with the material, other classmates and the teacher.					

16.	Classroom Discussion techniques help in decreasing the gap between the teacher and the students.					
17.	Classroom Discussion techniques facilitate the exchange of information among learners.					
18.	Students learn better, when they are given a chance to talk to one another and are actively involved in their discussions.					
19.	Classroom Discussion techniques promote positive interaction which improves students' emotional and cognitive growth.					
C. Fluency and pronunciation						
20.	Classroom Discussion techniques develop students' speaking skills.					
21.	Classroom Discussion techniques help students to overcome speaking difficulty.					
22.	Classroom Discussion techniques improve students' fluency.					
23.	Classroom Discussion techniques improve learners' pronunciation.					
24.	Classroom Discussion techniques help students to use new vocabulary in different contexts.					
25.	Classroom Discussion techniques encourage the teacher to listen more carefully to students when they use the language.					
26.	Classroom Discussion techniques accelerate better pronunciation, appropriate intonation and stress in the expressions of ideas and feelings.					
D. Motivation						
27.	Classroom Discussion techniques bring something new and capture students' attention to learn better.					
28.	Classroom Discussion techniques energize and prepare students for learning tasks.					
29.	Classroom Discussion techniques inspire and motivate students to express their ideas.					
30.	Classroom Discussion techniques encourage learners to be active and responsible participants in their learning.					
31.	Classroom Discussion techniques engage learners in constructing their identities through collaboration and negotiation.					
32.	Classroom Discussion techniques enhance students' communicative abilities.					

Thanks for Your Cooperation

The researcher: Malak Ashqar

Appendix (B)

Questions of the Interviews

Q1: What is the role of using class discussion techniques in improving the students' speaking skills?

    1- …………………………………………………………

    2- …………………………………………………………

    3- …………………………………………………………

Q2: What is the teachers' role in improving the speaking skills of the students?

    1- ……...

    2- …………………………………………………………

    3- …………………………………………………………

Q3: What are the success factors of the implementing of class discussion techniques?

    1- …………………………………………………………

    2- …………………………………………………………

    3- …………………………………………………………

جامعة النجاح الوطنية

كلية الدراسات العليا

دور استخدام تقنيات المناقشة الصفية في تحسين مهارات التحدث لدى الطلاب من وجهة نظر معلمي اللغة الإنجليزية للمرحلة الثانوية في المدارس الحكومية في محافظة نابلس

إعداد

ملك عبد الرحمن أشقر

إشراف

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اشراف

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د. فواز عقل

الملخص

هدفت هذه الدراسة إلى معرفة دور استخدام أسلوب المناقشة الصفية في تحسين مهارات التحدث لدى الطلاب وفق تصورات معلمي اللغة الإنجليزية للمرحلة الثانوية في المدارس الحكومية في محافظة نابلس. كما هدفت الدراسة إلى التحقق من دور جنس المعلمين ومؤهلاتهم وسنوات خبرتهم ودوراتهم التدريبية وتخصصهم. ولتحقيق هذه الاهداف تم استخدام المنهج الوصفي. ولجمع البيانات تم استخدام الاستبيان والمقابلات لفحص دور استخدام تقنيات المناقشة في الصف الدراسي في تحسين مهارات التحدث لدى الطلاب وفق تصورات معلمي اللغة الإنجليزية. وتكون الاستبيان من 32 فقرة غطت خمسة مجالات وهي البيئة الصفية، المنهج المتمركز حول الطالب، التفاعل، الطلاقة والنطق والتحفيز. وقد تم توزيع الاستبانة على (57) معلما و (65) معلمة للغة انجليزية في محافظة نابلس وتم أيضا اجراء مقابلات مع (15) معلما ومعلمة.

أظهرت نتائج الدراسة أن معلمي اللغة الإنجليزية اتفقوا بشكل إيجابي على أهمية دور استخدام اسلوب المناقشة الصفية في تحسين مهارات التحدث لدى الطلاب. علاوة على ذلك، أظهرت النتائج عدم وجود فروق ذات دلالة إحصائية عند مستوى الدلالة (α=0.05) في دور استخدام أسلوب المناقشة الصفيّة في تحسين مهارات التحدث لدى الطلاب تعزى إلى متغير جنس المعلم في المجالات الأول والثالث والرابع والخامس (المؤهل العلمي. سنوات الخبرة والدورات التدريبية والتخصص. من ناحية أخرى، وجدت فروق ذات دلالة إحصائية عند مستوى الدلالة (α=0.05) في دور استخدام أسلوب المناقشة الصفية في تحسين مهارات التحدث لدى الطلاب

تعزى لجنس المعلم في المجال الثاني. وقد كانت الفروق لصـــــالح الذكور. وبناءً على هذه النتائج أوصت الباحثة المعلمين بالانتقال من طرق التدريس التقليدية إلى المنهج التواصلي الذي يقوم على مشـاركة الطلاب في عملية التعليم والتعلم، وتغيير أدوارهم من مدرسـين يهيمنون على الفصـل إلى ميسـرين للعملية التعليمية يرتكز دورهم على المسـاعدة وتوجيه ودعم الطلاب لتعلم اللغة. كما أوصـت الباحثة وزارة التربية والتعليم بتحسـين مناهج اللغة الإنجليزية، وإنشـاء مركز أبحاث لإجراء الدراسات البحثية لصالح وزارة التربية والتعليم. كما وقدت توصيات دراسات وابحاث تستهدف مقارنة بين المدارس الخاصـة والعامة وفقًا لاستخدام اسلوب المناقشـة الصفية وغيرها من التقنيات لتحسين مهارات التحدث لدى الطلاب.