



The Attitudes of Algerian EFL Learners towards Learning a Dramatic Text in an Acting Class

Ms. Maroua ROGTI - Supervisor: Prof. Noureddine GUERROUDJ

maroua03@live.co - guerroudjnoureddine@gmail.com

Djilali Liabes University-Sidi Bel abbés- Algeria

E. ISSN :2602-506X * * ISSN :2335-1969

Résumé

L'enseignement et l'apprentissage du drame en Algérie ont été enseignés à travers la mise en œuvre de méthodes et d'approches multiples et sont devenus plus rigoureux. Pour obtenir une compréhension claire de l'enseignement du théâtre dans une classe d'acteur et son impact sur les attitudes et les réactions des apprenants, cette recherche vise à présenter une nouvelle approche interactive de l'enseignement du théâtre par la performance dans un environnement d'enseignement et d'apprentissage. En effet, nous tentons de prouver dans quelle mesure l'approche suggérée peut améliorer les réactions des apprenants aux activités et aux différentes méthodologies des enseignants en classe et intensifier leurs compétences communicatives, justifiant également leur appréciation d'un texte dramatique à l'étude. Ainsi, il a été perçu qu'il existait une relation substantielle entre les approches pédagogiques employées avec les groupes et leur réaction et appréciation du texte dramatique.

Mots clés : EFL Apprenants Algériens; texte dramatique; Compétences communicatives; méthodes d'enseignement; approche interactive

Abstract

Teaching and learning drama in Algeria have become taught through the implementation of multiple methods and approaches and became more rigorous. For getting a clear understanding of drama teaching in an acting class and its impact on learners' attitudes and responses, this research is conducted to report a new interactive approach to teaching drama through performance in an actual teaching and learning environment and comparing that to the traditional approach. Indeed, we tempt to prove the extent to which the suggested approach can enhance the learners' responses to the activities and teachers' different methodologies in class and intensify their communicative skills, also justify their appreciation of a dramatic text under study. Thus, it has been perceived that there was a substantial relationship between the teaching approaches employed with groups and their response and appreciation of the dramatic text as well.

Key words: Algerian EFL Learners; dramatic text; Communicative skills; teaching methods; interactive approach

Introduction

The teaching and learning processes have relatively been changed



from the traditional approaches, functional and discourse stylistics approaches to a more interactive and experiential approaches across huge dimensions. Indeed, there become a huge need for experiential learning in increasing the learner's communicative abilities, his ability to exercise newly acquired skills and notable knowledge to real life situations and the ability to become self-directed learner.

Evidently, there are certain ways to incorporate these experiential interactive approaches into drama courses and in enhancing the teaching and learning processes of a dramatic text. Indeed, teaching drama typically belongs to art education because arts have traditionally applied more experiential approaches to teaching compared to other approaches. In effect, traditional art education is arguably an experiential learning process determination that incorporates the integration of theory and practice while other traditional educational trends can be interpreted as text-driven approaches that indicate both telling and theory.

In an interactive learning situation, the learner is effectively involved with the learning activity and has a considerate control over his learning experience. As a matter of fact, drama often belongs to interactive teaching. It is an active device that helps the learner get through the learning experience as it moves from the lecture podium into the interactive, experiential and performance aspects.

1. Problem of the Research

In drama teaching, interactive learning approach may increase and the use of art-based learning may rise including stage and screen performance theatre. Indeed, the use of spontaneous theatre facilities in the classroom and use of role-playing are the most notable innovative techniques employed by the dramatic arts in experiential teaching.

Interactive drama teaching is opposed to traditional drama teaching and can eloquently be determined as a creative and inventive art-based device or mechanism in which scenes are performed live by role-playing actors before a learner's audience which in return can interact with actors, as it has the role of enhancing the experiential teaching and learning processes. The learner indeed can interact by discussing the scenes, replaying the scenes by suggesting some changes, and finally joining the scenes as performers.

In fact, teachers often try various approaches to work with literary texts in the classroom by recognizing the most appropriate work for their learners and making the lecture more accessible and enjoyable. Literature is a difficult and sophisticated task which makes teaching literary texts demanding and disputed. Besides, reading dramatic literature is very influential in improving the learner's proficiency and helps them easily interact with the text.

Arguably, in every academic trend most notably drama and theatre studies; pedagogy has been a matter of expanding inquiry. Most teachers of drama are impressively judging classroom performances and practices that interest the learners and the learning situation. In fact, the core of this study has the intent to offer decisive practical prescriptions and advocates theoretical groundwork for teaching a dramatic



text focusing on an interactive approach in conducting the examination of the teaching and learning process, its impact on the learners, and its academic value in research.

Thus, performance is an arduous notion and its most textual use is in theatre. It, in fact, refers to the conscious taking on of a role. In the public sphere, performance is often linked to assessment and evaluation. Consequently, a performance study, which is found in communication and theatre studies, broadens the concept of performance and emphasizes people's everyday practices as performance.

2. Methodology of Research

In conducting any research study, we usually tempt to examine or solve particular issues, such as research questions and testing the hypotheses of the study, before we actually indulge into our research. We should first recognize the audience, how to make observations, how to collect our data, how to test our hypotheses at the beginning of the research. Indeed, it was equally adequate for our work to explore these problems before actually proceeding in our study.

In any research, researchers may go through varied stages to realize the eventual targets set for the study, thing that we have implemented in our study. Actually, before setting out the stages for our research, we need first to determine what is meant by "research".

Accordingly, Rajasthan Kothari identifies research as: "Research is a systematic process of collecting and analyzing information to increase the understanding of the phenomenon under study." (02) It means that the aim of research is to follow scientific procedures and methods to acquire knowledge that may not have been tackled in earlier researches. Researcher can contribute to the understanding of the phenomenon and to share that understanding with others. The research practice lies in employing philosophical presumptions which should combined strategies, methods, and approaches used with certain procedures of the research. (Creswell 2003:04)

According to Busha & Harter, (1980) "A more efficient and effective approach to expand knowledge, however, is to conduct special, planned and structured investigations; a process known as research. In its largest context research is a systematic quest for knowledge." (21) Research is a logical search for new and useful information on a specific topic in the fundamental nursery rhyme. (Rajasekar *et.al* 2013: 02) Yet, Clifford Woody states that research can compromise certain steps:

Defining and redefining problems, formulating hypothesis or suggested solutions; collecting, organizing and evaluating data; making deductions and reaching conclusions; and at last carefully testing the conclusions to determine whether they fit the formulating hypothesis. (Chakroun 43)

Kumar (2011) when reviewing the past and present definition of the term research he concluded that "research is a process for collecting, analyzing and interpreting information to answer questions" (07). In effect, we usually may face certain obstacles and try to resolve plenty of minor and major problems through the methods that we



adopt. Indeed, based on our own experience that each method is idealistic and combine its own worthiness and demerits, along with restraints.

The present study tempts to illustrate the impact of the use of drama approaches in the Algerian ELT classes, as it serves to reflect the attitudes and responses of learners towards learning through performance pedagogy. Indeed, a comprehensive interpretation of the tools, data, and procedures are provided in this research which is based on implementing an experiment uncovering a questionnaire for learners and classroom observation.

We are conducting our study with fourth year students of ENS Laghouat aged between 22 and 24 inducted in the study syllabus of English literature in the English department at the college. The sample of this research paper consists of 25 learners, all female, who are divided into two groups: the control group and the experimental group for the purpose of exploring the differences and similarities between two approaches of teaching, the Reader-Response approach and dramatic performance.

Before the implementation of the approaches by the teacher of the groups who is the researcher herself. The teaching process for the control group starts by reading dialogues of a dramatic text: *The Glass Menagerie* Scene III and scene V, and then answering questions about the text. The experimental group is asked to act the scenes out on stage through making improvisations in front of an audience and then given the same activities to answer.

Ideally, our study tempts to assimilate both qualitative and quantitative paradigms to analyze the research data and procedures. Creswell asserts: “a mixed methods approach is one in which the researcher tends to base knowledge claims on pragmatic grounds. It employs strategies of inquiry that involve collecting data either simultaneously or sequentially to best understand research problems.” (18) The questionnaire consists of close-ended questions, multiple choice questions, and English Language classroom anxiety questionnaire that comprise six questions. For, the most noteworthy answers will be announced just below.

3. Data Analysis and Discussion of the Findings

The data collection tools of our study aim to detect the extent to which the implemented remedies and treating are efficient and applicable. We have focused mainly on the impact of the use of dramatic performance activities on our Algerian EFL learners for the experimental group and the Reader-Response Approach for reading for the control group, their attitudes and responses towards the use of the chosen approaches, and the extent to which these learners can have adequate understanding and achieve better learning of a dramatic text in a language classroom.

Here we state our interpretation and analysis of data operated from learners' questionnaire. The data on the responses of learners from both groups to the teaching methodology were collected through a questionnaire and have been highly varied. Among the questions asked to the learners of both groups is about their attitudes about the approach used.



Our learners of the control and experimental groups have been asked about their attitudes towards performance activities in class. The majority of the control group participants declare that performance is useful and interesting; one participant state that he is not interested in performance, and one claim that it is waste of time. However, all participants of the experimental group state that performance activities and useful and interesting as revealed in chart One. (See Appendix A, Chart One)

Another question was asked to both groups about the impact of using performance activities in class and most of the answers were positive. Most of the participants from both groups assert that performance activities contribute to the increase of their communicative competence. While two and three from both groups declare that is a challenging activity, three and two assert that performance activities contribute to their development of their cultural awareness as shown in chart two. (See Appendix A Chart Two)

Among the questions chosen for the participants is about the degree of difficulty of the use of performance in the language classroom, and most of the answers of both group were somehow positive. 61 percent from the control group assert that performance is easy, 8 percent claim that performance is too difficult, and 31 percent declare that performance is quite difficult. On the other hand, 0 percent of the experimental group claim that performance is too difficult, 33 percent claim that it is quite difficult, and 67 percent declare that performance activities are easy as illustrated in chart three. (See Appendix A Chart Three)

Another question refers to the participants' opinion about the relevance of performance activities. Most learners from both groups believe that performance is very relevant and few participants assert that the relevance of performance activities is not noticeable. (See Appendix A Chart Four)

The participants also answered the question about their responses towards performance in classroom. 84 percent from the control group and 55 percent from the experimental group claim that performance is systematic. 8 percent from the control group and 18 percent from the experimental group share the view of performance is not different from other approaches. And 8 percent from the control group and 27 percent from the experimental group claim that performance is not organized. (See Chart five in Appendix A)

The next question that we would like to discuss is the frequency of the use of the approach of performance pedagogy in language classroom. Most of the learners' responses were positive. The participants of both groups' answers were mostly about the fact that performance is an encouraging approach which has the role of enhancing their language communicative skills in an interactive classroom and consider that dramatic performance is arguably an interactive approach. Some consider it very



interesting, and none of them see it as inappropriate. The results are illustrated in chart six. (See Appendix A Chart Six)

The last close-ended question asked to the participants was about the extent to which they are convinced with performance activities and the approach introduced by the teacher of both groups. The results are as follow. Most of the participants are satisfied with the approach introduced by the teacher but not highly satisfied with the activities of performance in their classroom. (See chart seven Appendix A Chart Seven)

The second section of our questionnaire is represented through rating how strongly the participants agree or disagree with some suggested statements about their performance in the class. The aim of this section is to gather information about the extent to which learners can be totally engaged in role play and drama activities in the language class. The information gathered from this questionnaire are listed in the tables 1& 2 revealing the number of participants' level of agreement and the percentage of their number in each level.

The data obtained from the answers to this question reveal that all five teachers agreed that Performance was valuable authentic material and helped them have adequate understanding of the text through using their skills and their cultural and traditional issues and values. Most of the participants (10 from 13) agreed that performance kept them in touch with universal human values and imparted real language.

These participants agreed that they are usually comfortable when making performance in front of an audience unlike the traditional manner. Most of them suggested that performance would naturally create a more enjoyable classroom environment where they would be likely to learn the language, literature and drama in an upgraded way. The minority of these participants assert that they feel afraid about taking roles in front of their colleagues and that their learning through using the traditional approach may not be much better than any other teaching approach as revealed in Table 01. (See Appendix B.1)

Next, data from Table 02 (See Appendix B.2) show that nearly most of participants strongly disagreed with the statements that assert that performance is too difficult in the language classroom and about the irrelevance of performance activities. This re-confirms most participants' tendency for, and positive attitude towards learning through in the language classroom. The Data also reveal that most participants agreed that performance activities supply many opportunities for English language and literature teaching and learning. This indeed confirmed the status of dramatic performance as having a rewarding effect on the teaching learning environment.

Conclusion

The achieved results from the above discussion of our questionnaire offer us the ability to lead to the results which are certainly efficient. After making a comparison between the two groups, it appears that both groups are similar to a certain extent. In fact, traditional teaching, which is typically teacher-centered, is still viewed as an



efficient teaching method. This method focuses mainly on classroom activities and tasks. Comparing this teaching approach to modern ones which allows learners to be more active and be exposed to group work activities and work-cooperatively in the classroom and can be seen as more learner-centered.

The findings of our study demonstrate that the comparisons between the results and scores of both groups are statistically considerable. Indeed, teaching drama through the Reader-Response approach was compared to the Performance approach and it is typically apparent that the participants prefer the performance approach in the scores of both groups. Although it is clear that the traditional approach is more useful and most of the learners are familiar with it engaging in open activities, reading comprehension in the classroom, performance became a superior teaching approach which attracted learners through classroom interaction

Further, the results of the experimental group increases more than those of the control group because the participants had adequate understanding. This might be due to experiencing the approach in a successful way and due the interactive approach that made learners be more active on stage. This means that learning language and literature can be improved and increased through the use of performance pedagogy through interactive approach to teaching language and literature.

List of References

Ainy, Selma. (2006) *Use of Literature in Developing Learner's Speaking Skills in Bangladeshi EFL Contexts*. Thesis. Nottingham Hallward Library. P57-83

Creswell, John W. (2003) *Research Design. "Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches*. Sage Publications, Inc. 2nd ed. p 04-18

Fehaima, Amaria. (2017) "EFL Learners' Responses and Attitudes towards Literary Texts: the Algerian Context." *European Journal of Research in Social Sciences*. Vol 05. N° 3. P 58-62

Flick, Uwe (2013). *The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Data Analysis*. Sage Publications. P 05-06

Gorjian, Bahman. Et al. (2010) "Dramatic Performance in Teaching Drama in EFL Contexts" *The Electronic Journal for English as a Second Language*. Vol 13. N° 04. P01-13

Kolesnikova, Iryna V. "Combined Teaching Method: An Experimental Study." *World Journal of Education*, 2016. P 51-59

Kothari, C Rajasthan. (2004) *Research Methodology. Methods & Techniques*. New Age International (P) Ltd., Publishers. P 02

Kumar, Runjit. (2011) *Research Methodology*. Sage Publications. 3rd edition. P 07

Padurean, Alina Nicoleta. (2015) "Approaches to Teaching Literature in EFL Classrooms." *Journal of Romanian Literary Studies*. P 195-200



Rachid, Radzuwan et al. (2010) “Approaches Employed by Teachers in Teaching Literature to Less Proficient Students in Form 1 and Form 2.” Canadian Center of Science and Education. P 87-97

Rajasekar. S. *et.al.*,. (2013) Research Methodology. Gen-ph Physics. P.02

List of Appendices

Appendix A

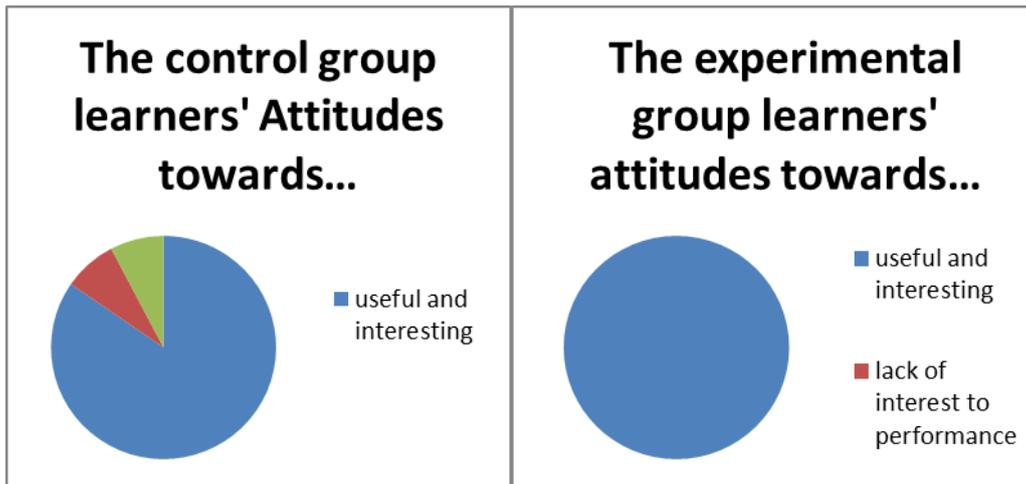


Chart One: Learners' attitudes towards performance

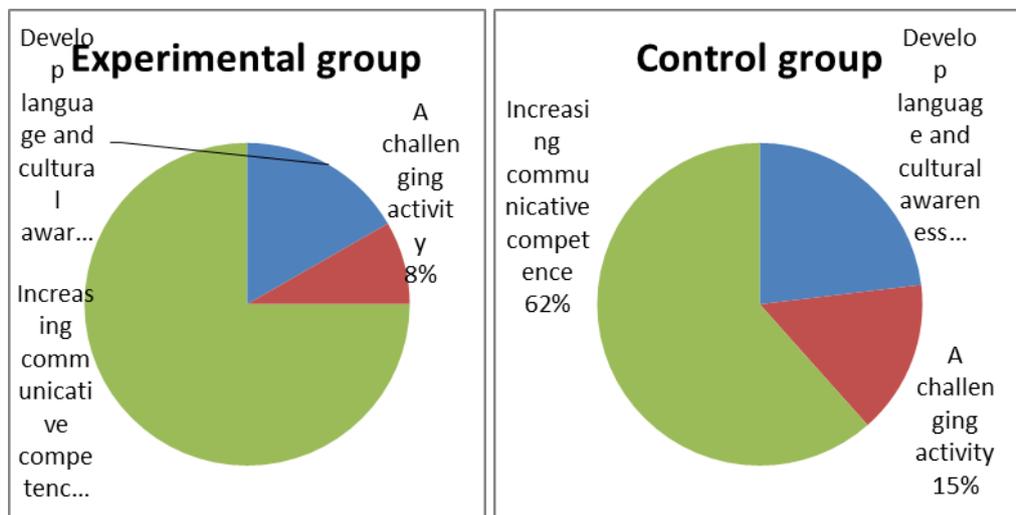


Chart Two: Effects of performance activities

Chart Three: Degree of difficulty

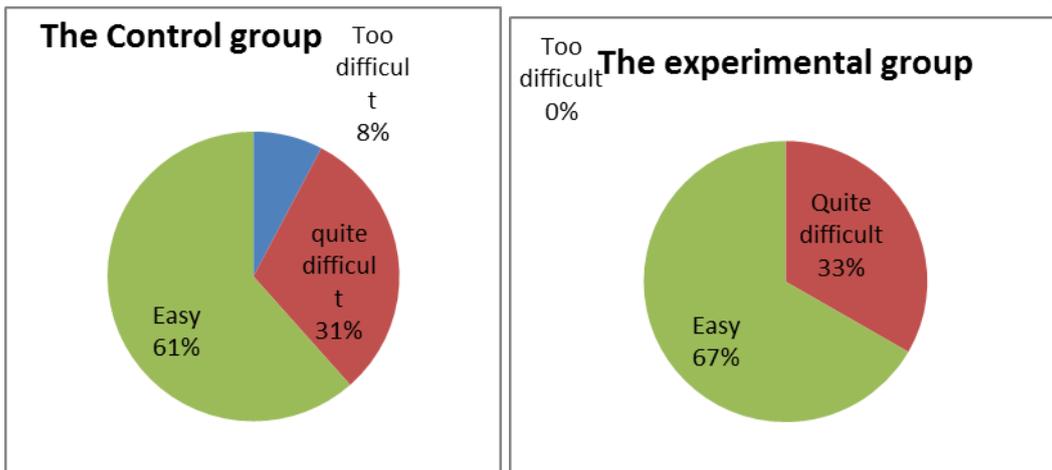


Chart Four: Relevance of performance activities

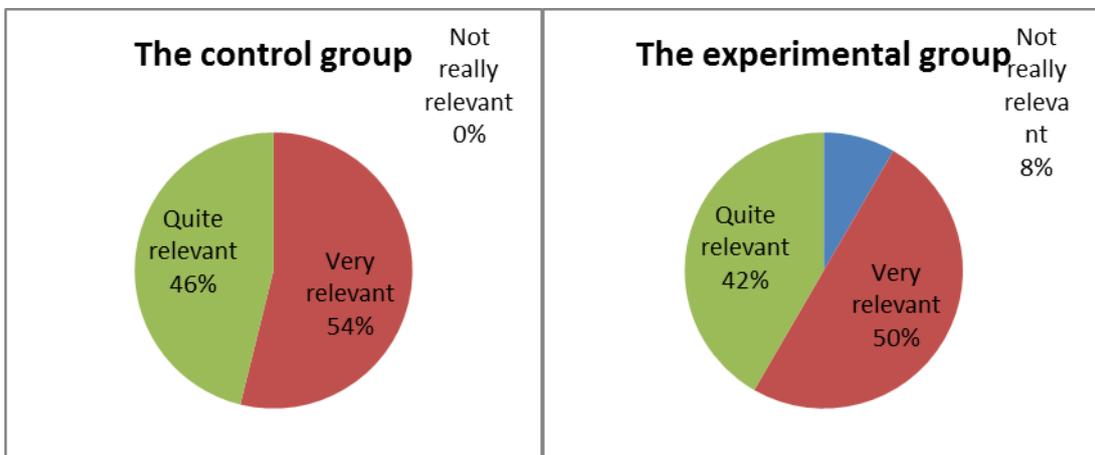


Chart Five: Learners' Responses towards performance

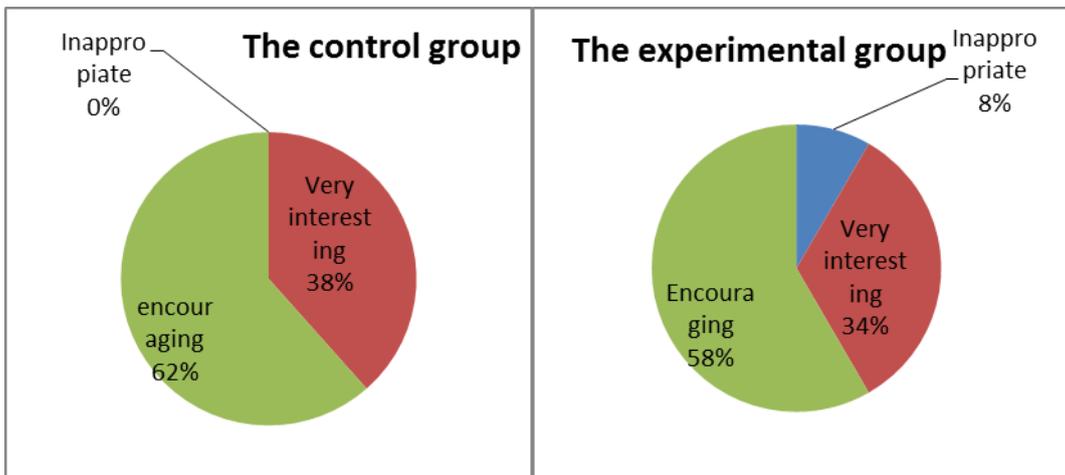
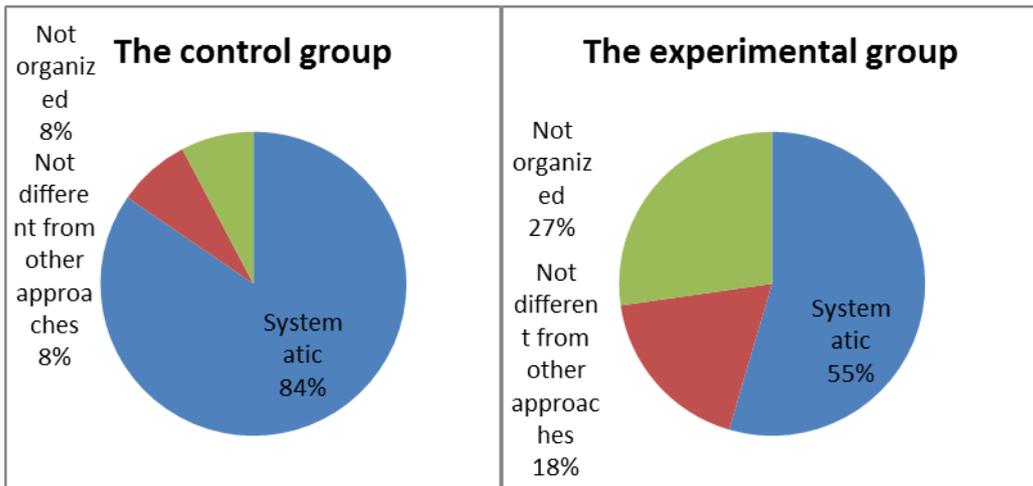
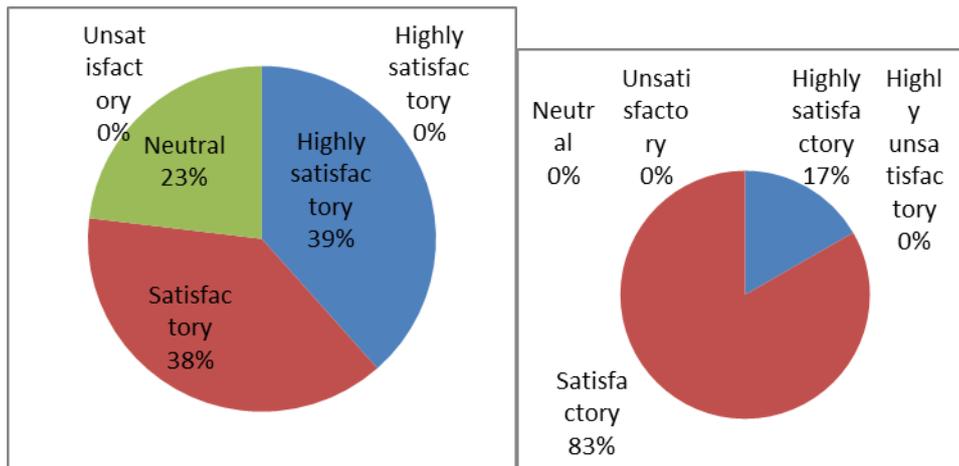


Chart Six: Frequency of Performance pedagogy



The Control Group

The Experimental

Group

Chart Seven: Rate of performance activities

Appendix B

	Agree		Strongly agree		Disagree	Strongly agree		
I'm usually at ease during acting in a language class	10	70%	2	14%	1	7%	0	9%
I start to panic when I have to act without preparation in an acting class.	3	27%	4	35%	3	27%	3	11%
I don't know why some upset learners get so upset over an acting class.	8	61%	1	8%	4	31%	0	0%
Even I am well prepared for an acting class, I feel anxious about it.	6	46%	2	15%	1	8%	4	31%
I feel self-conscious about acting in front of an audience in class.	7	46%	1	7%	3	20%	1	27%
I'm afraid that the other learners will laugh at me when I act on stage	3	23%	0	0%	3	23%	7	54%

Table 01: The control group's results of their level of agreement



	Agree		Strongly agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
I'm usually at ease during acting in a language class	6	50%	2	17%	3	25%	1	8%
I start to panic when I have to act without preparation in an acting class.	6	50%	4	33%	2	17%	0	0%
I don't know why some upset learners get so upset over an acting class.	5	46%	1	9%	5	45%	0	0%
Even I am well prepared for an acting class, I feel anxious about it.	9	75%	1	8 %	2	17 %	0	0%
I feel self-conscious about acting in front of an audience in class.	8	73	1	9%	2	18%	0	0 %
I'm afraid that the other learners will laugh at me when I act on stage	8	62	1	8%	2	15%	2	15 %

Table 02: The experimental group's results of their level of agreement