

## The Impact of Dialogic Teaching on English Language Learners' Speaking and Thinking Skills

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### **Abstract:**

This paper aims to investigate the influence of dialogic teaching on the development of the learners' speaking skills and critical thinking. It is questioning why Sudanese tertiary students are unable to express themselves efficiently and comfortably. This seems crucial and imperative for a college student and it shouldn't shape any obstacle as a prerequisite for future development. Accordingly, this paper poses a significant issue that every learner of English needs to ponder. To collect data for the study, three tools has been used; a questionnaire, an interview and an observational checklist. The questionnaire was distributed throughout the students of second, third and fourth year university students who had been selected from different Sudanese universities. The collected data is analyzed quantitatively and qualitatively. Data analysis has shown that dialogic teaching enables students to develop the skills of argumentation, questioning and debate which contribute to the development of their critical thinking and speaking skills. Generally, the findings indicate that authentic dialogic teaching components are effective if students are given enough time to practice its skills. Hence recommendations for exposing learners to a variety of medium of speaking like dialogues, debate, argumentation and questioning are made to facilitate teachers to be more well-informed with dialogic teaching approach.

*Key words:* dialogic teaching, English language learners, speaking skill critical thinking skills

**Cite as:** Elhassan, I. B. M., & Adam, M. I. (2017). The Impact of Dialogic Teaching on English Language Learners' speaking and Thinking Skills. *Arab World English Journal*, 8 (4). DOI: <https://dx.doi.org/10.24093/awej/vol8no4.4>

**Introduction:**

University students encounter difficulties to express themselves comfortably and efficiently either when dealing with academic topics or common every day topics. The researchers (like Moon, 2008; Paul & Edger, 2004) think that, dialogic teaching method is one of the effective strategies moreover they considered it to be the educative potential of teacher – student interaction that enables students to play active part in shaping the topics of classroom discourse. Dialogic teaching which is collective, reciprocal, cumulative, stresses the potential of collaborative, group work and peer assistance to promote mutually responsive learning in the zone of proximal development.

**Objectives of the paper:**

The present paper is aiming to achieve the following objectives:

1. To investigate the role of dialogic teaching in developing learners' speaking and thinking to create active classroom interaction.
2. To explain the role of dialogic teaching in engaging learners through the medium of speaking.
3. To find out whether the skills of debate, argumentation and questioning can be achieved by the learners through dialogic teaching.

**Literature Review:****The concept of Dialogic Teaching**

Empirical classroom research for the last three decades has shown that discourse patterns are monologue, controlled and shaped by the teacher. Therefore, to maximize active participation, and develop learners' proficiency, there must be a significant shift in classroom practice which in turn leads to a new trend in teaching namely the dialogic teaching. Dialogic teaching is explained by Alexander (2008, p.62) as finding out what learners think, engaging with their developing ideas and helping them to talk through innovative activities. Dialogic teaching can be thought of as combinations of various conditions that build up into a recognizable teaching approach. "Dialogic Teaching" means using talk most effectively for carrying out teaching and learning. It involves an ongoing talk between teachers and students.

Dialogic teaching is distinct from the question-answer and listen-tell routines of traditional and so-called 'interactive' teaching and also is different from the casual conversation of informal discussion. It should not be confused with the official use in England of the term 'Speaking and Listening', since this attends only to the learner's talk and is viewed as an aspect of English teaching, whereas dialogic teaching relates to an interactive teaching across the curriculum. Grounded in the principles of collectivistic, reciprocity, support, cumulating and purposefulness, dialogic teaching draws on recent psychological and neuroscientific research on children's development and cognition as well as on a long tradition of observational and process-product research on teaching. The approach links with the work of Bakhtin, (Bakhtin, M. (1986), Cazden, (Cazden,

C. (1988). Barnes, Mercer, Bruner, J. S. (1978). and with new developments in cultural psychology and activity theory. Dialogic teaching has been intensively trailed in London, Yorkshire and other parts of Britain. Practicing dialogic teaching according to Alexander (2008, p.6) is based on the six pedagogical values which start with the purposes of education, the nature of knowledge and the relationship between teacher and learner:

Teaching as transmission sees education primarily as a process of instructing children to absorb, replicate and apply basic information and skills.

Teaching as initiation sees education as the means of providing access to, and passing on from one generation to the next, the culture's stock of high-status knowledge, for example in literature, the arts, humanities and the sciences.

Teaching as negotiation reflects the Deweyan idea that teachers and students jointly create knowledge and understanding rather than relate to one another as authoritative source of knowledge and its passive recipient.

Teaching as facilitation guides the teacher by principles which are developmental (and, more specifically, Piagetian) rather than cultural or epistemological. The teacher respects and nurtures individual differences, and waits until children are ready to move on instead of pressing them to do so.

Teaching as acceleration, in contrast, implements the Vygotskian principle that education is planned and guided acculturation rather than facilitated 'natural' development, and indeed that the teacher seeks to outpace development rather than follow it.

Teaching as technique, finally, is relatively neutral in its stance on society, knowledge and the child. Here the important issue is the efficiency of teaching regardless of the context of values, and to that end imperatives like structure, economic use of time and space, carefully graduated tasks, regular assessment and clear feedback are more pressing than ideas such as democracy, autonomy, development or the disciplines.

### **1. Dialogic teaching approach**

- Dialogic teaching is an approach and a professional outlook rather than a specific method. It requires teachers to rethink not just the techniques they use but also the classroom relationships. They foster, the balance of power between teachers teaching performance and the way they conceive knowledge.
- Dialogic teaching, like all good teaching, is grounded in evidence and principles.
- And like all good teaching it draws on a broad repertoire of strategies and techniques.
- The teacher draws on this repertoire in response to different educational purposes and contexts, the needs of different pupils, and the diverse character of what is to be taught and learned.

## 2. Dialogic teaching and other talk

In a nutshell, dialogic teaching comprises repertoires for everyday talk, learning talk, teaching talk, Academic talk and classroom organization on which the teacher draws flexibly according to purpose and the contexts, dialogic teaching has five principles that has been identifies by (Alexander, 2008b, pp. 112–113):

- talk for everyday life
- learning talk
- teaching talk
- Classroom organization

## 3. Pedagogical Repertoires of Dialogic Teaching

First, the idea of repertoire is paramount. The varied objectives of teaching cannot be achieved through a single approach or technique.

Dialogic teaching combines four repertoires: These repertoires are used flexibly, on the basis of fitness for purpose, but the principles remain constant. Repertoire (i): talk for everyday life.

The talk of everyday life is identified by socio-linguists as any kind of talk which empowers and support everyday human interactions. The kind of talk that educational institutions perform to help learners to develop, explore and use each of these: transactional talk, expository talk, interrogatory talk, exploratory talk, expressive talk, and evaluative talk.

Mercer and Littleton (2007) identify a central role of the teacher in determining the classroom ethos and ensuring opportunities for learners to build on each other's ideas. In arguing that ground rules are necessary to enable learners to engage, Mercer and Hodgkinson (2008) clarify the difference between exploratory talk, which requires an understanding that ideas will not be ridiculed or aggressively contradicted, and 'presentational talk', which tests understanding and focuses on correct answers. Although both forms of talk have a particular function, exploratory talk is seen as embodying the characteristics of accountability, clarity, constructive criticism and receptiveness.

### Repertoire (ii): learning talk

In dialogic teaching learners do not just provide brief factual answers to test or recall questions, or merely spot the answer which they think the teacher wants to hear. Instead they learn to: narrate, explain, analyze, speculate, imagine, explore, evaluate, discuss, argue, justify and they ask questions of their own.

### Repertoire (iii): teaching talk

In dialogic classrooms teachers may use familiar kinds of teaching talk such as:

- Rote (drilling ideas, facts and routines through repetition)
- Recitation (using short question/answer sequences to recall or test what is expected to be known already)
- Instruction (telling learners what to do and how to do it)
- Exposition (imparting information and explaining things)

But in dialogic classrooms teachers do not limit themselves to these. They also use:

- Discussion
- Scaffold dialogue.

### **What is scaffolding?**

Scaffolding can be defined as “the process that enables a child or novice to solve a problem, carry out a task, or achieve a goal which would be beyond his unassisted efforts” (Wood, Bruner, & Ross, 1976, p. 90). Wood et al. (1976) characterized scaffolding as an interactive system of exchange in which the tutor operates with an implicit theory of the learner’s acts in order to recruit his attention, reduces degrees of freedom in the task to manageable limits, maintains ‘direction’ in the problem solving, marks critical features, controls frustration and demonstrates solutions when the learner can recognize them. (p. 99).

### **What is dialogic teaching?**

The term “dialogic teaching” is particularly associated with Alexander’s (2008) focus on talk between teachers and students in the classroom. Alexander grounds his approach to dialogue in Bakhtin often quoting the line “if an answer does not give rise to a new question from itself, it falls out of the dialogue” (Bakhtin, 1986, p. 168). Alexander’s point in using this Bakhtinian definition of dialogue is that it is only by engaging in live dialogue, either with each other, directly with the teacher, or vicariously by listening to others in dialogue, that students learn to think. This understanding of dialogue as a form of open ended shared inquiry links Alexander’s ‘dialogic teaching’ to Nystrand’s ‘dialogic instruction’ (Nystrand, 1997), Matusov’s ‘dialogic pedagogy’ (2009), Wells’ ‘Dialogic inquiry’ (Wells 1999a, b), Flecha’s ‘dialogic learning’ (2000) and Wegerif’s ‘Dialogic education’ (2007; 2013). What all of these approaches to teaching have in common is a stress on the importance of teaching for dialogue as well as teaching through dialogue. In other words, the aim of education is not only that the students will learn something that the teacher already knows but also that the students will learn how to ask open questions and how to learn new things for themselves through engaging in dialogic inquiry.

Purposeful: Classroom talk, performs though open discussions, The origin of these criteria as has been stated by Alexander (2005, p.14) is complex it needs more explanation as well as interpretation. In short, it combines (i) a positive response (ii) an attempt to counter the less satisfactory features of mainstream classroom interaction ( for example, tends not to exploit the full collective potential of students working in groups) (iii) distillation of ideas from others

working in this and related fields – thus, for example, in the criterion of reciprocity you will spot the pioneering work of Palincsar and Brown (1984) among others, and in cumulation, of course, Bakhtin and indeed conventional wisdom on how human understanding, collectively as well as individually, develops.

### **Dialogic teaching components**

Studies of classroom communication have identified five components of dialogic teaching and they have been referred to as patterns of interaction these are; exploratory talk, argumentation, effective questioning, debate and dialogue. These components are believed to promote high level of understanding and intellectual development through their capacity to involve teachers and learners in joint acts of meaning – making and knowledge construction.

### **Argumentation**

The word argument connotes anger and hostility, but the most popular image of argument is debate. to our way of thinking, argument does not imply anger. It is a creative and productive activity that engages us at high levels of inquiring and critical thinking. It is worth to mention that linguists and philosophers have disagreed over centuries about the meaning of the term and about the goals that arguers should set for themselves. So, the meaning of the term is controversial. It is crucial to explain three defining features of argument. These features are: argument requires justification of its claims, it is both a product and a process, and it combines elements of truth seeking and persuasion. These defining features had been explained by Ramage and Bean (1997) as follows:

#### **• Argument requires justification of its claims**

Two necessary conditions that must be met before something is called an argument. A set of two or more assertions and the attempt to resolve the conflict through an appeal to reason. But a good argument demands more than meeting these two formal requirements. For the argument to be effective, an arguer is obligated to clarify and support the reasons presented.

#### **• Argument is both a process and a product**

Argument can be viewed as a process in which two or more parties seek the best solution to a question or problem. Argument can also be viewed as a product, each product being any person's contribution to the conversation at a given moment.

#### **• Argument combines truth seeking and persuasion**

##### **Internal structure of arguments**

Typically an argument has an internal structure, comprising the following:

1. a set of assumptions or premises
2. a method of reasoning or deduction and
3. a conclusion or point.

**Kinds of argumentation****Conversational argumentation**

The study of naturally-occurring conversation arose from the field of sociolinguistics. It is usually called conversational analysis. Inspired by ethno methodology, it was developed in the late 1960s and early 1970s principally by the sociologist Harvey Sacks, Emanuel Schegloff and Gail Jefferson. Because of them conversational argumentation has now become an established force in sociology, anthropology, linguistics, speech-communication and psychology. Recently CA techniques of sequential analysis have been employed by phoneticians to explore the fine phonetic details of speech. Empirical studies and theoretical formulations by Sally Jackson and Scott Jacobs, and several generations of their students, have described argumentation as a form of managing conversational disagreement within communication contexts and systems that naturally prefer agreement.

**Scientific argumentation**

Perhaps the most radical statement of the social grounds of scientific knowledge appears in Alan G. Gross's *The Rhetoric of Science*, (Gross A. (1990) holds that science is rhetorical "without remainder," meaning that scientific knowledge itself cannot be seen as an idealized ground of knowledge. Scientific knowledge is produced rhetorically, meaning that it has special epistemic authority only insofar as its communal methods of verification are trustworthy.

**Legal argumentation**

Legal arguments are spoken presentations to a judge or appellate court by a lawyer, or parties when representing themselves of the legal reasons why they should prevail. Oral argument at the appellate level accompanies written briefs, which also advance the argument of each party in the legal dispute.

**Dialogue**

The word dialogue comes from two Greek roots, dia and logos, suggesting "meaning following through". In common sense, 'Dialogue' is defined as a process of conversation between two or more persons for exchanging. Many thinkers from the East and the West have given different kinds of meanings to the term dialogue. Some of these thinkers, like Socrates, Martin Buber, Paulo Freire, David Bohm, and J. Krishnamurti have used this term in different contexts. Socrates used the technique of dialogue for social awareness. Martin Buber used dialogue for spirituality and education. David Bohm, the eminent physicist suggested the use of dialogue for creating holism of mind. Further, the notion of dialogue has been used by Paulo Freire for creating 'pedagogy of the oppressed.

Alexander (2008a, p.27) distinguishes dialogue from main stream of oral or 'interactive' teaching as currently understood by many teachers. Alexander defined the term dialogue in terms of five types of teacher talk:

1. Rote (teacher – class): The drilling of facts, ideas and routines through repetition.
2. Recitation (teacher – class or teacher – group): The accumulation of knowledge and understanding through questions designed to test or stimulate recall of what has previously been encountered, or to cue learners to work out the answer from clues provided in the question.

3. Instruction/exposition (teacher – class, teacher – group or teacher – individual): Telling the learner what to do, and/or imparting information, and/or explaining facts, principles or procedures.
4. Discussion (teacher – class, teacher group or student – student): The exchange of ideas with a view to sharing information and solving problems.
5. Dialogue (teacher – class, teacher – group, teacher – student, or student – student): Achieving common understanding through structured and cumulative questioning and discussion.
  - Dialogue seems to be emerging as a cornerstone for “organizational learning”.
  - Dialogue appears to be a powerful way of harnessing the inherent-organizing collective intelligence of groups of people and of both broadening and deepening the collective inquiry process.
  - Dialogue shows possibilities for being an important breakthrough in the way people might govern themselves, whether in public or private domains.
  - Dialogue shows promise as an innovative alternative approach to producing coordinated action among collective.

From a Bakhtinian perspective (1981), dialogue is not merely a term for describing the structure of speech in discourse: it is a phenomenon that penetrates the very structure of words themselves. (Wegerif, 2008, p350) asserts that dialogue is every written or spoken word that filled with the voices of others and shows no “overcoming” or “synthesis”.

### **The relationship between dialogue and pedagogy**

Smith and Higgins (2006) suggest that the focus of attention should be placed, not on the questions that teachers ask, but more on the way in which they react to learners’ responses; in this they share some commonality with Alexander’ notion of an ‘emerging pedagogy’ of talk as means of helping to shape and develop learners’ engagement with learning and understanding.

### **Promotion of pedagogic dialogue**

Moore (2004) believes that the discourse of the ‘charismatic’ teacher is a powerful myth founded on Burner’s notion of ‘folk pedagogy’. He suggests that ‘charisma’, the characteristic regularly cited by students as paramount in a good teacher, might be better conceptualized as ‘communicative’.

The power of dialogic approaches to learning and teaching can extend beyond whole class teaching. Indeed, it may argued that productive use of cognitively stimulating dialogue could be explored most fruitfully in small-group learning. This, however, does not appear to be widely recognized by teachers as practice that promotes thinking and understanding. As Baines et al. (2003, p.31) point out, “creating effective group-working tasks and conditions is harder and more time consuming than a traditional independent and didactic learning approach”. It may also be the result of a lack of understanding of ways to scaffold dialogue, and of what their talk role might be in promoting this.

Fisher (2011) argues that if Gillies (2006) is correct in her supposition that teachers lack an understanding of how strategies for cooperative investigation may be embedded in the curriculum, then it is fair to suppose that the higher cognitive challenge of fostering ‘inter thinking’, or co-learning through a social pedagogical approach remains a challenge too far for many.

## Questioning

The subject of classroom questioning has been the interest and concern of researchers and practitioners because of its long and venerable history as an educational strategy. In classroom settings, teacher questions are defined as instrumental cues or stimuli that convey to students the content elements to be learned. Questioning is effective when it allows students to engage with the learning process by actively composing responses. (Borich 1996; Muijs and Reynolds 2001; Morgan and Saxton 1994; Wragg and Brown 2001) suggest that lessons where questioning is effective are likely to have the following characteristics:

- Questions are planned and closely linked to the objectives of the lesson.
- The learning of basic skills is enhanced by frequent questions following the exposition of new content that has been broken down into small steps. Each step should be followed by guided practice that provides opportunities for:
- Closed questions are used to check factual understanding and recall.
- Open questions predominate.
- Sequences of questions are planned so that the cognitive level increases as the questions go on.
- Pupils have opportunities to ask their own questions and seek their own answers. They are encouraged to provide feedback to each other.
- The classroom climate is one where pupils feel secure enough to take risks, be tentative and make mistakes.

### Purposes of classroom questions

Cotton listed the following purposes for the classroom questions:

1. Developing interest and motivating students to become actively involved in lessons.
2. Evaluating students' preparation and check on homework or seatwork completion.
3. Developing critical thinking skills and inquiring attitudes
4. Reviewing and summarize previous lessons.
4. Nurturing insights by exposing new relationships.
5. Assessing achievement of instructional goals and objectives.
6. Stimulating students to pursue knowledge on their own.

### Principles of Questioning

The following principles were developed by Richard L. Loughlin can provide an excellent set of guidelines for the teacher who wishes to develop good questioning techniques:

- I. Distribute questions so that all, including non-volunteers, are involved.
- II. Balance factual and thought-provoking questions.
- III. Ask both simple and exacting questions, so that the poorer students may participate and the brighter students may be extended.
- IV. Encourage lengthy responses and sustained answers. (Avoid yes-no questions, questions overlaid with afterthoughts, fragmentary questions, and those that tug or encourage guessing.)
- V. Stimulate critical thinking by asking: "To what extent?" "How?" "Under what circumstances?" "Why?" "Compare (or contrast)..."

### The Concept of debate

Reinking (2000) defines debate:

A formal contest of argumentation in which two opposing teams defend and attack a given proposition". Although debate is an excellent activity for developing critical thinking, its weakness is that it can turn argument into game of winners and losers rather than a process of cooperative inquiry (p.4).

Debates have been defined as an educational strategy that fosters good reasoning and critical thinking, as well as heightens awareness of attitudes, values, and beliefs. As explained by Hall (2011, p.2) that in traditional classroom setting, a large percentage of what students are taught occurs via the lecture format. However, with debates, students must go beyond the passive nature of the lecture format to the dynamic nature of debating.

### **The general structure of the debate**

The general structure of the debate (without cross-examination) as provided by Alford et al. (2002, p.3-4) can be as follows:

- A coin toss immediately prior to the debate determines which team began the debate.
- The team that wins the coin toss begins with five minutes for stating an opening position.
- The other side then has three minutes to present their opposing position.
- The original side receives two minutes for rebuttal.
- The other side then receives one minute for counter-rebuttal.
- The timing for the next round is the same as the first except that the teams switch the order of their presentations.

### **1. Research design**

This research is a descriptive analytical research.

### **2. Area of the Research**

The research was conducted in different Sudanese universities and colleges including Al-Fashir University, Faculty of Arts & Education English Language Department.

### **3. Population and sample**

The study populations were students of 2-4 year in English department, Faculties of Arts, Education, and other technical colleges at different Sudanese universities, they were males and females.

### **4. Sample size**

Sample size of this study consisted of 60 students (for questionnaire), 40 lecturers (for interviews) and 40 students for the observational check list (classroom debate activity).

**4.1 Inclusion criteria** – Only students of 2-4 years who studied debate techniques and skills were purposely selected to respond to the questionnaire.

**4.2 Exclusion criteria** – students of other classes who did not study debate techniques and skills.

## 5. Data collection instrument and Instrumentation

Primary data had been collected by using three tools:

### 5.1/ Questionnaire

A structured self-administered questionnaire was used to collect primary data from participants (60 students). The questionnaire contains 20 closed ended statements with the same answering option. The questionnaire was filled by the students from a number of Sudanese universities.

### 5.2 Observational check list

Observational check list was used for two groups of respondents:

Group (A) control group: consisted of 20 students at 3<sup>rd</sup> year.

Group (B) Experimental Group: Also consisted of 20 students at 3<sup>rd</sup> year (semester 6) who studied the skills and techniques of debates. The forty students were from Al-Fashir University.

### 5.3 Interviews

Interviews were used with 40 English Language lecturers, assistant professors, and professors from different Sudanese Universities. Teachers from English departments who responded to the interview were from thirteen Sudanese universities.

## 6. Data collection method/ procedure

The data for this study were collected through questionnaire and interviews during the period from 6/5/2013 up to 13/6/2013. The observational check list was conducted through the participation of the selected students in the classroom debate. The questionnaire was distributed to 60 students who had been introduced to debate skills and techniques and who participated in the international debate or debates held at their colleges. With the help of one of the lecturers, the researcher met the selected students and explained to them the purpose of the questionnaire. Then, the questionnaire was distributed to those who agreed to respond to it. Twenty students from colleges of Education and Arts as control and experimental groups with the intervention for experimental group. The two groups participated separately in a classroom activity and the performance of the two groups was evaluated and compared. As for the interview, it was conducted with 40 English language lecturers who were available during data collection and who accepted to be interviewed.

## 7. Data Analysis

Two methods were used:

- 1- Quantitative analysis was used for analyzing the data collected through questionnaire and check list. The analysis was done by using the statistical package for social science (SPSS) program and the results were represented in the form of frequencies and percentage tables and figures.
- 2- Qualitative analysis was used for analyzing interviews, where interviews, ethnographies and documents are the typical sources of qualitative data which can be captured on audio recording or video, cameras, charts and most commonly textual transcriptions. These texts, documents and recordings are analysed for their meaningful content and they are interpreted rather than counted or measured.

**Results and Discussions:**

This part consists of three sections. The first section is concerned with the analysis and discussion of the data obtained from students' questionnaire. The second section presents the analysis and the results of the performance of the control group and experimental group in a classroom debate activity. The third section deals with the English language lecturers' responses to the interview which was designed to get their viewpoints on the influence of dialogic teaching on the development of the learners' speaking skills and thinking.

**Analysis and discussion of students' questionnaire****1/ Dialogic teaching enhances the learners' skills of speaking**

Results shows that the great majority of respondents (96%) either strongly agreed (60%) or agree (36%) that dialogic teaching enhances the learners' skills of speaking; only 3.3% were neutral. According to the researcher' view point, this high percentage indicates the effectiveness of dialogic teaching enable the learners to value the difference between dialogic teaching and didactic teaching. In addition, it may refer to the fact that this type of teaching maximizes students' talking time which in turn enhances their speaking skills.

**Dialogic teaching provides learners with a chance to take an active part in classroom discourse**

The result reveals that 51.7% of respondents strongly agreed that dialogic teaching provides learners with a chance to take an active part in classroom discourse, 41.7% of them agreed; only 6.7% of them were neutral. Since in dialogic teaching students will have the chance to perfume activities such as narrating, explaining, asking different questions, analyzing and solving problems, exploring and evaluating ideas, discussing and arguing, then they are playing an active role in classroom discourse. The statement has been emphasized by this high percentage.

**Dialogic teaching develops the learner's thinking**

The result shows that 40% of respondents agreed that dialogic teaching develops the learner's thinking, 38.3% of them strongly agreed, 16.7% of them were neutral, only 5% of them were either strongly disagree or disagree. This proves that dialogic teaching can give students the opportunity to extend their talk and their thinking.

**4/ Dialogic teaching develops the learner's ability of reasoning**

Results shows that 40% of respondents strongly agreed that Dialogic teaching develops the learner's ability of reasoning, 28.3% of them agreed, 10% of them were neutral, only 6% of them disagreed. The development of the learners' of reasoning can be achieved through mastering argumentation skills.

**5/ through dialogic teaching the learner may develop the skill of dialogue**

more than half of respondents (58.3%) strongly agreed that 'through dialogic teaching the learner may develop the skill of dialogue, 26.7% of them agreed, 6.7% of them were neutral and disagreed respectively, and only one strongly disagreed. This is typically what happens when dialogic teaching is adopted because all students will have a chance to participate because they will be working in groups which leads to an effective relationship and intimacy among the

classmates. Students are cooperating with each other in a shared reality and with the help of each other create something more than their own personal action.

### **Using the technique of dialogue in teaching provides the learners with opportunity to speak to each other**

More than half of the respondents (56.7%) strongly agreed that using the technique of dialogue in teaching provides the learners with opportunity to speak to each other, 30% of them agreed, 8.1% of them were neutral, 3.3% of them disagreed and only one respondent strongly disagreed. This high percentage of agreement to the statement (86.7%) emphasizes the importance of dialogue in developing learners' thinking and speaking skills based on the fact that the concept of dialogue, itself, establishes the existence of the other person who cannot be excluded because meanings are created in processes of reflection between people.

### **Using the technique of dialogue in teaching provides the learners with opportunity to listen to each other**

Results reveals that 38.3% of the respondents agreed that using the technique of dialogue in teaching provides the learners with opportunity to listen to each other, 30% of them strongly agreed, 25% of them were neutral, 5% of them disagreed and only one respondent strongly disagreed. As shown in results, 68.3% of respondents agreed with this assumption. This indicates that dialogue is an effective technique in promoting learners' speaking skills and thinking if we consider that in any dialogue the person we are speaking to, the "addressee", is always already there at the beginning of the utterance just as we are there already on the inside when the addressees frame their reply to us.

### **Using the technique of dialogue in teaching provides learners with opportunity to share ideas**

results shows that the majority of the respondents (85%) were either (agree 45%) or (strongly agree 40%) that using the technique of dialogue in teaching provides learners with opportunity to share ideas, 8.3% of them were neutral, 5% of them disagreed and only one respondent strongly disagreed with this assumption.

### **Dialogic teaching develops the learner's debating skills**

More than half of the respondents (55% strongly agreed that dialogic teaching develops the learner's debating skills, 33.3% of them agreed, 10% of them were neutral and only one respondent strongly disagreed.

### **Debates in the classroom can serve as an innovative teaching tool**

When discussing results of the above statement, it is clearly observed that 43.3% of the respondents agreed that debates in the classroom can serve as an innovative teaching tool, 25% of them were neutral 21.7% strongly agreed, 8.3% of them disagreed, and only one respondent strongly disagreed. In spite of the variant percentage of the responses to this statement, using debate as a teaching tool will provide students with the ability to communicate successfully and think critically.

**Debates in the classroom can serve as an innovative learning tool**

the highest percentage (33.3%) of the respondents were neutral, 31.7% of them agreed that debates in the classroom can serve as an innovative learning tool, 25% of them strongly agreed, while 10% of them disagreed with the mentioned assumption. Most of the respondents thought that this could be done through using debate as a tool of learning. These responses supported the idea that debate is an experiential learning process that allows students to demonstrate their communication ability while presenting reasonable arguments based on evidence.

**Debates improves the learner's verbal skill**

Less than half of the respondents (45%) strongly agreed that debates improve the learner's verbal skills, 36.7% of them agreed, 11.7% of them were neutral, 5% disagree, and only one respondent strongly disagreed. These responses emphasize that debates have the ability to reinforce and enhance knowledge in a topic area, to engage students in the learning process, to verify that students have the ability to analyze, incorporate, and apply the literature to various situations, to heighten organization and listening skills, and to boost confidence when challenged on issues by others.

**Dialogic teaching enhances the learner's argumentation skills**

Result show that the majority of respondents (83.3%) stated that dialogic teaching enhances the learner's argumentation skills (43.3% agreed and 40% strongly agreed), 11.7% of them were neutral, 3.3% of them strongly disagreed and only one respondent strongly disagreed. Argumentation is interactive tool promote learners to present a rationale for their actions.

**Argumentation promotes high-level of thinking**

Half of the respondents strongly agreed that argumentation promotes high-level of thinking, 26.7% of them agreed, 15% of them were neutral, 5% of them disagreed, and only 3.3% strongly disagreed.

**Through dialogic teaching, the learner can develop the skill of questioning**

The majority of the respondents (73.6%) believed in dialogic teaching method in developing questioning skill of the learners, (43.3% strongly agree and 33.3% agree), 16.7% of them were neutral, 5% of them strongly disagreed and only one respondent strongly disagreed.

**Classroom questioning develops the learner's critical thinking skills**

The result shows that the majority of respondents (86.7%) agreed that classroom questioning develops the learner's critical thinking skills (55% agree, and 31.7% strongly agree), 8.5% of them were neutral, while 5% of respondents did not agree with the mentioned assumption. Questioning is a good means of developing learners' speaking skills and thinking as stated by some respondents.

**Dialogue is the most effective component of dialogic teaching**

Results shows that 43.3% of respondents strongly agreed that dialogue is the most effective component of dialogic teaching, in addition, 31.7% of them agreed, 13.7% of them were neutral, 10% of them disagreed, and only one respondent strongly disagreed.

**Debate is the most effective component of dialogic teaching**

The results showed that almost one third of respondents (33.3%) were strongly agree and agree (respectively) that debate is the most effective component of dialogic teaching, 23.3% of them were neutral, 6.7% of them disagreed and only 3.3% of the respondents were disagreed with the above assumption.

**Argumentation is the most effective component of dialogic teaching**

Results showed that 36.7% of the respondents strongly agreed that argumentation is the most effective component of dialogic teaching, 35% of them agreed, 15% of them were neutral, 11.7% of them disagreed, whereas only one respondent strongly disagreed.

**Questioning is the most effective component of dialogic teaching**

The majority of the respondents (76.7%) believed in questioning as the most effective component of dialogic teaching (40% agree, 63.7% strongly agree), 15% of them were neutral, 5% of them strongly disagreed, 3.3% of them disagreed.

**The interpretation of the classroom debate results**

Classroom debates help students learn through friendly competition, examine controversial topics and “strengthen skills in the areas of leadership, interpersonal influence, teambuilding, group problem solving, and oral presentation.

Twenty students had been selected randomly from the sixth semester from the Department of English language – College of Education – Al -Fashir University to perform a classroom debate activity which is a part of this study. These students form the control group which was not introduced to debate techniques and skills. Students with the same number had been chosen from the sixth semester from the Department of English language – College of Arts – Al Fashir University to represent the experimental group which had been introduced to the techniques and strategies of debate such as debate organization, taking positions, refuting, rebutting and asking questions. The two groups performed a debate on "Which is more devil to our society poverty or illiteracy?" The two groups were assessed by two other English Language lecturers beside the researcher.

**Evaluation (experimental and control group)**

Results have shown that 45% of the respondent students (experimental group) have a very good performance in classroom debate activity, 40% of them were good, 10% of them were excellent, and only 5% of them were fair. On the other hand, the performance of 45% of the respondent students (control group) in the classroom debate activity was fair, 25% of them had poor performance, 20% of them were good, and only 10% of them had very good performance in the classroom debate activity. It is clearly observed that students who attended or participated in classroom debate training program gained new skills and techniques that affected their performance positively compared to the students who did not participated in the training program.

**Qualitative analysis of the interviews**

Forty English language teachers from thirteen Sudanese universities had been interviewed by asking them three questions. Regarding the first question "do you think that dialogic teaching

develops Sudanese university English students' dialogue, debate, argumentation and questioning skills?", All respondents agreed with this assumption except one and they thought that using such a method in teaching will help improving these mentioned skills because as stated by twenty-two interviewees that it is the most important factor in developing the four mentioned skills through promoting communicative skills, and enhancing learner self-confidence. Other five respondents stated that the importance of this method of teaching (dialogic teaching) came from the fact that it develops effective interaction among the learners. Four of respondent teachers thought that dialogic teaching enhances argumentative skills that enable students to develop critical thinking and logical reasoning through evidences.

Most of respondent teachers stated that dialogic teaching improves learners' influence and speech mechanisms through teaching students to take turns and have positive roles. Also it gives students a chance to think critically, develop influence, and empower them to express their views freely and confidently. Only one respondent did not think that dialogic teaching is effective in developing dialogue, debate, argumentation and questioning skills of students because the teacher controls the class through this way, i.e. the teacher becomes the center of the class which restricts the ability of students in dialogue, debate, argumentation and questioning skills.

When discussing the effectiveness of the above mentioned skills in developing learners' speaking and thinking skills, almost all respondents stated that all the above skills, with more concentration on debate and argumentation skills which provide learners with chances to exchange and share their ideas with each others, so this will help them to expand their ideas and thoughts which will improve their thinking and speaking skills.

One of the interviewees believe that only dialogue and questioning skills suit student's knowledge and experience at this stage. Students at this level are unable to use debate and argumentation skills in class. Another interviewee said that dialogue is the most effective skill because all students can participate through using dialogue. He also stated that questioning technique is important in refreshing learner's ideas and thoughts.

Most of the interviewed teachers stated that there are many challenges facing dialogic teaching in Sudanese universities such as the lack of enough time, motivation, students' language proficiency levels and the influence needed to develop these skills. The major challenge is how to offer adequate training for teachers on modern techniques of dialogic teaching.

### **Results out of students' questionnaire, observational checklist and the analysis of the interviews**

Analyzing the interviews, students' responses to the questionnaire and the performance of the participants in the classroom debate activity has come out with the following results:

1. Dialogic teaching provides an opportunity for students to be actively engaged.
2. Dialogic teaching enables students to develop the skills of argumentation, questioning and debate which contribute to the development of their thinking and speaking skills.
3. Dialogic teaching uses techniques such as dialogue, questioning, argumentation and debates to allow the teacher and his/her students to address the learning task together.
4. In dialogic teaching, learners are active participants in the teaching – learning processes.

5. Asking questions frequently during class discussion is positively related to good achievement in communication skills.
6. Debates as an active instructional strategy enhances learning particularly in the areas of developing thinking skills and oral communication.
7. Dialogic teaching develops learners' thinking and speaking skills if it is applied on its scientific basis.
8. Dialogic teaching provides learners the opportunity to practice effectively speaking skills.
9. Dialogic teaching components are effective if students are given enough time to practice these skills.
10. These skills can be effective if they are practiced in authentic communicative situations.
11. The effectiveness of dialogic teaching depends on the teacher who is supposed to be of high proficiency and aware of these techniques.

### **Conclusion:**

The components of dialogic teaching skills which had been tested throughout the research, they explained that they are effective and interactive in learners' speaking and thinking. The most essential results are explored by some interviewees who stated that dialogue skills and questioning skills are the most effective and applicable in the classroom than the other components of dialogic teaching. Moreover, debate includes questioning, argumentation and dialogue between the participating teams which proved that it is effective and inclusive component. Among some of the experts who were interviewed stated that argumentation is effective in developing learners' thinking skills if they are introduced to basic vocabulary and technique of claims and refutations.

Dialogic teaching is faced by a number of challenges such as the time available for both students and teachers, motivation to speak the language, proficiency level and fluency needed to develop such skills. In order to make dialogic teaching the interactive method to develop learners' speaking and thinking, the raised challenges should be addressed.

### **Summary**

University students encounter difficulties to express themselves comfortably and efficiently either when dealing with academic topics or common every day topics. This study seeks to identify the effect of dialogic teaching methods on university students' critical thinking. It is commonly believed that teachers rely on language that allows only minor flexibility when exchanging views with their students. Too frequently they either pose questions that target predefined answers or simply lecture through lessons. This paper displays the introduction of the Communicative Approach drawing on dialogic teaching which means using talk most effectively for carrying out teaching and learning. Dialogic teaching involves ongoing talk between teacher and students, not just teacher-presentation. Here we show the most effective components of dialogic teaching skills that stimulate teacher-student interaction. However, dialogic teaching is faced with some challenges which exemplified in lack of adequate fluency and students' motivation.

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