CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

The English language, like other world languages, involves four major skills; namely listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Native speakers and non-native speakers alike work hard towards improvement, particularly in their speaking skills, as a means to refine the way they communicate with other people. Drama is often used to make learning more meaningful, enjoyable, communicative, and contextual for students who prefer spoken communication. Zhang et al. (2018) claimed that collaborative drama is considered a useful exercise for language learning when each student is interested and shows a different part with clear objectives and then connects with other students in the class in order to create associations besides achieving the intended objectives. Learners can play, move, act, and at the same time, learn through drama. Likewise, Masoumi-Moghaddam (2018) noted that English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students could use drama to develop their language and communication skills effectively. A study conducted by Fabio (2014) highlighted that drama is the center of existence, especially when it provides students with incentives to work together cooperatively. Consequently, it gives students the ability to express themselves more efficiently in everyday life situations. In addition, drama allows students to learn how to influence others (Fabio, 2014). Furthermore, Neelands and Goode (2000) illustrated that drama and theatre could offer real life to people by bringing a smartly direct experience that is shared when people imagine and act in a different place at a different

time as if they live a regular life. Drama is something we all do on a regular basis when dealing with tough circumstances (T. R. Bsharat, 2017).

In order to help EFL students cultivate and develop their linguistic and communicative competence, effective methods and techniques are vital and necessary (F. Li & Liu, 2019). Nowadays, cooperative learning is generally accepted as an innovative and effective teaching technique that has been used in English language teaching as a promising method of teaching. The conventional teacher-centered teaching paradigm has been shattered in favor of cooperative learning, which is regarded as an effective teaching technique and theory (Al-Mubireek, 2021). Cooperative learning is often based on small groups in the classroom to help students maximize their own and each other's learning. Individual students in cooperative settings pursue results that favor not only themselves but also the rest of the community. Furthermore, at all levels of education, cooperative learning is now widely recommended to help students in engaging with a variety of learning activities. Such engagement has the potential to enhance students' enthusiasm, which in turn contributes to major changes in their language skills (Wang, 2020).

Regardless of its significant role in communication, speaking skill represents a major challenge for instructors and learners, especially in EFL contexts. To face this challenge, the instructor needs to formulate suitable procedures to assist the learner, while the latter needs to devise a method of mastering the language. Furthermore, speaking is regarded as the most critical foundation in a language classroom. However, several educators still find it difficult to teach. The main question is whether the things carried out by the educators in a speaking schoolroom are all about 'doing' teaching or 'thinking' about teaching. Language can be strengthened in classes through the provision of various opportunities for practicing speech. This is also the responsibility

of teachers, particularly in devising activities that are linguistically suitable and cognitively demanding in order to give students the best opportunity to practice speaking (Ibnerrays, 2019). Therefore, this study highlights the most significant results that are considered successful for English educators and curriculum designers to take into consideration when designing and guiding speaking activities in a war-torn society. Furthermore, there are strategies that aim to assist instructors in deciding how to apply teaching inside a classroom, such as cooperative learning techniques and educational drama. The study also presents a brief analysis of the data collected through interviews with a sample of seventh graders, teachers, and English language supervisors from the Ministry of Education in Jenin, West Bank, Palestine.

1.2 Background of the Study

The concept of cooperative learning dates back to the 18th century when peer work was known as cooperative learning. Later on, educators began to compare individualistic, competitive, and peer learning and their effects on students, which paved the way for a new phase in the field of peer learning. In this regard, Miller (1989) conducted a pioneering study on peer learning and competitive learning. Moreover, researchers began to work on cooperative learning approaches and improving cooperative learning strategies in the 1970s (Slavin, 1995). Prior to 1970, cooperative learning was only used in universities. In the second stage, high school teachers began to use cooperative learning in elementary schools. In the 1990s, educators devoted more efforts to the use of cooperative learning in college classrooms (Yassin et al., 2018).

1.2.1 The Significance of Drama to Learning

Teaching with drama is not an innovative approach. Throughout history, drama and theatre have been used to teach and indoctrinate. According to Plato and Aristotle, educators should differentiate between performance practices that are used to improve learning from those done purely for the pleasure of acting (McCaslin, 2006). Also, Tolstoy (1861) projected that the future school would not be a school in the conventional sense with chairs, blackboards, and a teacher's platform but rather a theatre, a library, a museum, or a conversation (Cited in Nessel, 1997). Brain-based research has recently revealed that students have different learning styles and interests and that learning is fundamentally individual, which means that structured resources, training, and practices can potentially impede or inhibit learning (Lawson, 1994). This justifies the use of drama as a teaching method because it relates to a range of learning styles and can help all students. Moore (2004) went on to suggest that drama is a teaching tool that activates different forms of intelligence and stimulates the "whole brain." As a consequence, it is targeted at students who need a challenge and those who cannot be reached using traditional teaching methods. Furthermore, as pointed out by Mehrabian and Wiener (1967), contact is mainly nonverbal to the extent that body language accounts for 55% of contact, while voice tone accounts for 38%. These are critical communication components for English language students to master.

Drama, by its very nature, offers a perfect setting for studying these various components. These are the important aspects of how students interact with one another, which makes the process of integrating drama into language classrooms an essential requirement to understand these components.

1.2.2 The Palestinian Context

There were approximately 4.8 million Palestinians as of mid-2016, with 48.0% of the population under the age of 18. Palestine has been divided into two geographical areas: The West Bank and Gaza Strip. In the West Bank area, 60.9% of the population lived on a population density of 519 per square kilometer. In 2015, the number of residents receiving refugee status in this area was 26.3% of the population. On the other hand, the population density in Gaza Strip was 5,154 per square kilometer, with 67.7% of the population obtaining refugee status in 2015.

In other words, and according to a very complex political structure in the Middle East, the Palestinian Authority is comprised of several divisive layers:

- Governmentally, Palestine is divided into two parts: The West Bank area, which constitutes 11 governorates, and the Gaza Strip area, which consists of 5 governorates.
- The two areas are institutionally distinct, with two concurrent governments in Ramallah and Gaza city since 2007, and are not geographically associated.
- In compliance with the Oslo II Agreement, the West Bank is further administratively divided into three regions. Area A is controlled solely by the Palestinian Government; Area B is subject to Palestinian Civil Law and Joint Israeli-Palestinian Security Control; and Area C is under Israeli security and administrative control, with the exception of the Palestinian government's education and health services.
- In addition to this governmental division in the West Bank, Israel has controlled East Jerusalem since 1967, and the sector is under the jurisdiction of the Israeli authorities to manage services (NRC, 2020).

In the West Bank, however, there are also major variations in poverty rates, with the highest rates reported in Hebron and Jericho Governorates, scattered Bedouin groups, and Area C populations. The intra-Palestinian governmental division between the West Bank and the Gaza Strip has also generated inequalities in public expenditure: teachers currently working in the Gaza Strip often do not take their paychecks for several months at a time or only receive part of the salaries. Instead, voluntary donations by parents to schools have become a major source of income for Gaza's education administration. The protracted war, frequent bouts of armed strife, the blockade of Gaza, and the occupation of East Jerusalem, all had adverse effects on the state of Palestine's economic situation. The war has also led to some obstacles that prevent kids from recognizing their right to decent quality teachings, such as the shortage of schools and classrooms, the psychosocial effect of the war on children, attacks and threats on schools, students and teachers, and other interferences (UNICEF, 2018).

1.2.3 State of Palestine Education System

There are four categories of Palestinian education: pre-school, basic, secondary, and non-formal. A new Palestinian Education and Higher Teaching Act were ratified in April 2017. The new program consists of nine years of primary schooling and three years of high school education. It should also be noted that the educational stages employed by The United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) vary from those of the Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MoEHE). The previously implemented education can be described as follows:

- A preschool education, which is not obligatory, is usually provided by non-profit or for-profit institutions for two years. In the academic year 2015-2016, there were 88,487 children enrolled in the second-stage MoEHE-registered

kindergartens, of which only 1,938 (2.2%) were enrolled in a public preschool operated by the MoEHE (Abualrob, 2019; UNICEF, 2018). It should be noted that not all private preschool providers were registered with the MoEHE.

- The basic education covered Grades 1-10 and consisted of two levels: preparatory (1st-4th grades) and empowerment (5th-10th grades). Schooling from Grades 1-10, i.e., the preparatory stage and the period of empowerment, was mandatory throughout Palestine, with the official first-grade enrolment age being six years old. The basic education was provided by three types of schools: (1) public schools run by MoEHE, (2) schools run by UNRWA, and (3) private schools operated by profit and non-profit organizations registered with and supervised by MoEHE.
- The non-formal education consisted of concurrent schooling and literacy services provided by the MoEHE in non-formal education centers. It also included other programs offered in vocational training centers operated by the Ministry of Social Development (MoSD) or the Ministry of Social Affairs (MoSA), the Ministry of Labor (MoL), UNRWA, or for-profit and non-profit non-state actors (NSA).
- Secondary education required an 11th and 12th-grade college and technical education. It was provided by public schools operated by the MoEHE and private schools managed by for-profit and non-profit companies registered with and regulated by the MoEHE. There were 1,053,513 children enrolled in the academic calendar 2015-2016, distributed in the 1st-10th grades throughout 1,285 public schools, 353 UNRWA schools, and 316 private schools in Palestine (Abualrob, 2019; UNICEF, 2018). There were approximately equal numbers of co-educational schools, all-girls, and all-boys schools. It should be noted that

private schools did not fully adhere to the official educational levels but included a wide variety of grades, including, though not limited to, 1st-2nd grades, 1st-3rd grades, 4th-7th grades, 1st-10th grades, 5th-12th grades, 10th-12th grades, and 11th-12th grades, respectively. On the other hand, UNRWA only provided education programs for Grades 1-9, in which, afterward, students were supposed to continue to either public or private schools (the only exceptions were the UNRWA schools in Shufat Camp in East Jerusalem, where Grade 10 classes were available).

It should also be noted that the educational phases in Palestine were planned exactly according to the level of the International Standard Education Classification (ISCED) developed by UNESCO to facilitate international comparisons of educational indicators. Therefore, the pre-primary stage in Palestine was in agreement with the pre-primary phase of the ISCED level 0 for pre-primary education, the preparatory stage (1st-4th grades) matched with the ISCED level 1 for primary education, the enablement phase (5th-10th grades) conformed to the ISCED level 2 for lower secondary education, and the secondary education (11th-12th grades) was identical to the ISCED level 3 for upper secondary education.

The education sector in Palestine is also fragmented, reflecting the broader administrative fragmentation already discussed in this section:

- The MoEHE, headquartered in Ramallah, is responsible for managing the education sector in Palestine at the national level. In addition to overseeing the provision of education services in West Bank public schools through its 17 district offices, the Ramallah MoEHE office also oversees private schools offering education.

- Despite the political division between the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, there is a parallel MoEHE office in Gaza City which oversees the provision of education services in the public schools through its seven district offices.
- The UNRWA also offers education facilities mainly for children registered as refugees in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, but with some exceptions to the provision. For example, if there is no MoEHE school within a certain distance from the place of residence of a non-refugee child, but there is a closer UNRWA school instead, then the procedure is to encourage that non-refugee child to attend the UNRWA school. The UNRWA's Amman headquarters is responsible for providing strategic guidance to the education services rendered by field offices across Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, and Palestine. The two UNRWA field offices in East Jerusalem and Gaza city oversee the establishment of education services in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, respectively (UNRWA also provides Palestinian refugees with education facilities in Iraq, Lebanon, and Jordan). Eight percent of West Bank primary education students and 60 percent of Gaza Strip basic education students attended UNRWA-managed schools (MoEHE, 2016). Of the 610,088 students in the West Bank and 248,059 of the 443,425 students in the Gaza Strip, 48,776 were registered in UNRWA elementary schools. The two field offices had working relationships, mainly for knowledge exchange and coordination, with the relevant MoEHE offices in Ramallah and Gaza city (UNICEF, 2018).

1.2.4 English Language in Palestine

Historically, Palestine has been the birthplace of many religions and many languages. As a result of frequent colonization by neighboring nations, Palestine has a

long history of triglossia, where local languages were spoken alongside more glamorous languages of government, culture, and lingua franca. In spite of this, it should be noted that throughout Palestine's history, its rulers and upwardly mobile population have been forced to become bilingual, if not multilingual. Hebrew has been used as a liturgical language by Palestinian Jews, and Latin was later brought to the region by the Romans. The Classical Arabic of the Qur'an then became the prestige language used in government, written correspondence, and religious education in the newly formed Muslim community when the Arab armies of Caliph Omar invaded in the late 7th century. Over time, the original Syriac Aramaic of Palestine was replaced by Arabic, adapted and notarized as a Palestinian Vernacular, to the point that it was adopted as its first language by even the Christians and Jews of the region (Kirkpatrick, 2016). Thus, Palestine's Christian, Jewish, and Muslim cultures shared Palestinian Arabic as a spoken language and had Greek, Aramaic, Hebrew, and Classical Arabic as their respective liturgical languages. Furthermore, Armenian was spoken in the region by the Armenian Christian minority. In addition to French, Italian, German, and early forms of English as the main languages spoken by the Hotchpotch invading armies (Amara, 2003), the conquest of the Western European Catholic crusaders in the 12th century also reintroduced Latin into the area (Kirkpatrick, 2016). While the occupation of the Crusaders was short-lived, their linguistic legacy was the establishment of Western languages of Latin, French, and Italian as languages of Western culture and affinity among the Christians of Western European Catholic schools. The incorporation of Palestine into the Ottoman Empire introduced a new linguistic dimension as the Turks dominated the region, where Turkish became the language of the government and the upper elites. Until the end of World War I, when the British Mandatory Period came to an end, Turkish official status continued.

At a later stage, the English language occupied a significant status in Palestine since the establishment of the British Mandate in 1922 linguistically proclaimed the rise of the language. On the other hand, Hebrew, which was being recovered among European Jewish settlers, became ever more significant as the number of Jewish immigrants grew. British missionary schools (Anglicans, Presbyterians, and Quakers) had already adopted English as a language of instruction to some parts of the Palestinian community, among other foreign missions such as those from Germany, Russia, France, and Italy in the late Ottoman era (Amara, 2003; Marten, 2006). Hence, with the complete British administration of Palestine, English was proclaimed as Palestine's official language alongside Arabic and Hebrew, which made it the preferred mode of communication among Jewish settlers (Amara, 2003). Amara also noticed that Arabs and Jews had different schools and that Jewish settlers, who were newcomers in Palestine, were compelled to learn Arabic while the Arabs were not expected to learn Hebrew (ibid.). The British Mandate's consequences for the English language status have been various. It changed Turkish as the government's de facto language in view of the massive waves of Jewish immigration from Eastern and Central Europe. English, which previously was regarded as an impartial language, quickly became a lingua franca between the various European Jewish settlers and the original populations who usually spoke Palestinian Arabic as a mother tongue (Amara, 2003). Therefore, English became a common second language studied at Jewish, Christian, and Muslim schools in the region in terms of language training (Bianchi and Abdel Razeq, 2016).

English language education in Palestine formerly started with an order where teaching should be given starting from the fifth grade (at the age of 11 years old). However, at a later time, the Palestinian Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MoEHE) decided that students should start studying English at the first-grade level (at

the age of 6 to 7 years old). The benefits of such a shift in the policy have been debated by many educators and researchers. For example, Shehadeh and Dwaik (2013) challenged the axiom that in English Language Teaching (ELT) sessions, "earlier is better." They suggested that instead of wasting valuable money and effort on ELT in the earlier grades and spreading resources too thinly over too many grades, the educational authorities should consider returning to fifth-grade English teaching and concentrating on improving the quality of instruction. As a result, there is no consensus among Palestinian educators and researchers on when the introduction of EFL in Palestinian public schools should start. Unfortunately, the situation definitely may have a negative influence on English teaching quality, especially if most Palestinian EFL teachers disagree with such a policy (Kirkpatrick, 2016).

In addition to what has been mentioned, the standards of English instruction are also influenced by many factors, including overcrowded classes, few periods of instruction per week, and lack of access to technology. According to Shehadeh and Dwaik (2013), another obstacle to learning and teaching English is the cultural vacuum, making the two processes seem meaningless and unattractive to students. Furthermore, the two authors noted that young students who need to learn English seldom acquire critical thinking skills in Standard Arabic before learning English because of the triglossic aspect of the Arabic language. Such situation is expected to hamper students' growth in English speaking skills. Without any doubt, such variables in Palestinian public schools, particularly the overcrowded classes, present serious challenges to English language teaching (Kirkpatrick, 2016).

Politically speaking, throughout the centuries, Palestine has suffered the war-torn situation, where the occupation has affected the policy of education in Palestine and the

whole elements of the education system, including teachers, students, parents, and curriculums. In this regard, the war has been divided by historians into two phases:

- The 1947-48 Civil War in Mandatory Palestine (sometimes referred to as an "intercommunal war") in which the Jewish—supported by the Arab Liberation Army—and Arab communities of Mandatory Palestine clashed when the area was still entirely under British rule.
- After 15 May 1948, the 1948 Arab-Israeli War marked the end of the British Mandate and the birth of Israel, in which Transjordan, Egypt, Syria, and Iraq intervened in the sending of expeditionary forces entering former British Palestine and engaging the Israeli forces (Axelrod, 2014).

Currently, the Palestinian territories which includes the West Bank, East Jerusalem and the Gaza Strip, represent several interesting and dynamic sociolinguistic realities. Despite the fact that the majority of the population in these areas speaks Arabic colloquially, several other languages, including Classical Arabic, Turkish, and French among Christian groups, have been used in education. The British Mandate period, however, considered the establishment of English within Palestine as a significant language of political, economic, and cultural force. But a new language, Modern Israeli Hebrew, was introduced to the region with the creation of the occupation of areas that were once part of the British Mandate of Palestine. Nevertheless, English has survived, partly as a colonial leftover but also gradually as a window for Palestinians into the world.

1.2.5 Palestinian Official Educational Policy

Only at the beginning of the last century did the teaching of English in Palestinian high schools begin. The new curricula, Jordan's West Bank curriculum and Egyptian curricula in Gaza, were maintained by the Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip after the 1967 war. However, teacher training has not been on the educational agenda, and teaching has only gained some publicity in the past 20 years (Yamchi, 2006). In government schools, the Palestinian Ministry of Education sometimes hires teachers who only have a Bachelor English language and Literature, or a Master of English language and literature degree rather than a degree in teaching English as a foreign language (TEFL). After being shortlisted based on their overview application forms, the applicants have to pass an examination in English. However, the new teachers do not engage in teacher-training programs until starting their work. During their first year of work, the in-service teachers are enrolled in training courses and workshops for the purpose of qualifying them in the field of teaching English. This form of teacher education gives priority to current teaching techniques and recent strategies. Novice teachers are supposed to attend these courses and workshops on Saturdays and also in summer holiday or during the working days.

With respect to learning English in the Palestinian context, the English language is learnt and taught as a foreign language not as a second language. Such position usually hinders the Palestinian students in their efforts to learn English or to use it as a means for communication. Nevertheless, English is known as a global language and it is characterized by the rapid growth of the number of speakers around the globe (Canagarajah, 2007) and the privilege of several global organizations as the official language (Kirkpatrick, 2016). Such a situation makes learning English a strong instrument for gaining access to technology and information (Kam, 2002).

Learning English as an additional language (either in the sense of a second or foreign language) can have different goals for learners. Some of the reasons are to travel to other nations where the primary means of communication in these countries is English. Other goals are to conduct business with English-speaking individuals and to access global data (Fatiha et al., 2014). Language consciousness is paired with intercultural competence, as Canagarajah and Ashraf (2013) maintained. The need for language teachers and students to be conscious of the richness of the linguistic characteristics (e.g., lexical objects and pronunciation) of the first languages of English learners and their effect on their use of English for communication purposes is one example of this language knowledge. Teachers are then expected to raise students' awareness of the existence of their language education of various social norms of English-speaking personalities (Cheng, 2012; Mirzaei & Forouzandeh, 2013).

1.2.6 Using Drama and Educational drama in EFL Classroom

Drama is increasingly gaining popularity in both formal and non-formal education, with conferences, professional journals, initiatives, and workshops concentrating on drama approaches. Drama about practical learning, creativity, as well as personal and social growth within or outside the classroom has become very popular, as evidenced by numerous National Drama Conferences. According to the congress website, the 21st Drama in Education Congress (2017) addressed drama both within and outside pedagogical environments (Karagianni & Papadopoulos, 2019). Theater and drama practices are related to the museums' non-formal pedagogical environment from this perspective. As a result, museum experiential learning and realistic understanding through drama have attracted the attention of international scientific communities (T. R. K. Bsharat & Barahmeh, 2020; Karagianni & Papadopoulos, 2019).

Using drama in foreign language classes is an effective method which yields several benefits. Albalawi (2014) maintained that the use of drama in the language classroom enables the teacher to present the target language in a more communicative and contextualized way. As a result, the class could be turned into an interactive classroom. Successful activities and exercises in the classroom provide learners with opportunities to negotiate meanings, broaden their language resources, understand how language is used, and engage in substantive intrapersonal exchanges (Saputra, 2015). Thus, using drama in education is seen as an instrument for initiating the learning progression rather than as an artistic method. Drama, moreover, has a progressive impact on the learning aspect of English as a second language (Ronke, 2005). Also, as cited by Ronke (2005), Bolton and Healtcote strongly argued that drama can be used not only in drama lessons but also as a means of teaching English. This is because when the tasks are genuine, students can receive the vocabulary where they can relate their experiences to the tasks. In addition, drama can be seen as an authentic activity in which learners apply their own established experience to the transition from scripts to their acting, such as crying when they feel helpless or laughing in a fun situation (Ishak, 2009). Drama, meanwhile cannot be limited to mere entertainment since it can help in advising individuals on various aspects. Instead of just going to the theatre to watch a show or a play, it is important to understand what is not readily apparent on stage and learn from it. This process can help language teachers and students in a variety of ways. In other words, there are different techniques and activities used in theater in the preparation of a performance, many of which may have an important educational value in terms of language teaching (Alvarado, 2017).

Drama-in-Education (DIE) is the use of drama as a way of teaching throughout the curriculum. It is used to increase the consciousness of learners, to allow them to

look at reality through imagination, and to look below the surface of meaningful acts. Drama-in-education has been evaluated by academics at different levels as a powerful tool in teaching (Idogho, 2018). It also provides learners with the direct experience required by our method of effective learning, where teachers encourage students to explore the foundations of surface reality through drama. If the teachers give students a context of a situation or encourage them to think about it, they build their understanding of the situation. When they ask the students, "If you were in his/her position, how would you do that?", "What kind of personality can you think of at a given moment?",the teachers then activate the empathy of the learner with the person or circumstance being studied (Idogho, 2018). Ulldemolins (2014) claimed that "Drama is doing; drama is being, and drama is something that we engage in daily when facing difficult situations". Courtney (as cited in Ulldemolins, 2014), defined drama as "the human process whereby imaginative thought becomes action, and the whole process is based on internal empathy and identification, as leads to external impersonation." Drama, thus, is what leads to the physical representation of feelings and thoughts (Alvarado, 2017).

The usage of educational drama in language teaching allows us to explore our planet through the eyes of others. Moreover, educational drama aims to bring real-life situations to the classroom. Hence, it is an effective educational resource with a significant positive influence on the cognitive, social, emotional, and physical growth of students (Wulandari, 2019). Drama is seen as a systematic structure of thinking, language, and feeling based on Helen Nicholson, who pointed out some energetic and imaginative ways for practicing drama, such as helping students to gain a new understanding wrapped with an imaginative and personal engagement with the work. Drama, in other words, helps restore the overall situation by changing the learning procedure when it starts with context and heading toward the form of language.

Likewise, drama makes language learning more practical and helps to prepare students for real-life circumstances (Idogho, 2018). Furthermore, drama can be utilized to teach different subject matters, such as math and science, in addition to English. Findings of previous research indicated a variety of advantages related to drama that resulted in positive effects for students and teachers alike (Alvarado, 2017; Idogho, 2018; Ustuk & İnan, 2017; Wulandari, 2019). Finally, DIE is an educational approach that converts the idea of teacher-based classrooms into a different context-based classroom with more emphasis on students' needs and concerns. Through this initiation, it helps them to revisit their expertise through a series of individual or group role-plays to achieve a new understanding (Adıgüzel, 2014). In school, it is possible to think of DIE in a variety of ways. Drama in Education, for example, can be seen as a topic by itself that seeks to discuss and explore topics such as interpersonal relationships (O'Toole & Burton, 2002) and conflict management (Chinyowa, 2013; Ustuk & İnan, 2017).

Educational drama, according to Belliveau (2005), Joronen et al. (2011), Lindberg (2015), Mages (2010), and McNaughton (2010), helps students to develop the socio-emotional skills needed for a good social change. Such skills, which are related to successful communication of emotions, self-empowerment, collaboration, and respect for the thoughts, wishes, and needs of others, improve children's interpersonal relationships (Kuranchie & Addo, 2015; Mavroudis & Pagona, 2019).

Responses resulting from individual actions and choices cannot be ignored in educational drama, just as they cannot be overlooked in real life. It is possible to replay events and scenes multiple times, particularly if students make different choices each time, which may lead to different outcomes. This method aids children in better understanding the relationship between cause and effect, developing a sense of shared responsibility, problem-solving versatility, and repeating a skill before they master it.

All in all, drama in education inspires those who engage with its plays to think deeper, helps them to ask questions about how and why, and encourages them to participate in the world around them through innocent experiments. It also helps to experience the joy of belonging to a group, focuses their attention for long periods of time on developing their listening and observation skills, and gradually. interact more effectively with their peers (Dogru, 2017). Good interactions and relationships can be portrayed in educational drama, provided that a social space exists where everyone can guide, name, and test their feelings by exerting complete control over them (Galazka, 2016). Educational drama is a teaching technique that encourages equity pedagogy for all students while also assisting in the growth of healthy interpersonal relationships (Behak & Bsharat, 2021; Mavroudis & Pagona, 2019).

Educational drama entails participation, collaboration, professional development, and positive attitudes; meanwhile, drama leads to real-world solutions when procedures are handled psychologically, emotionally, and physically (Ackroyd, 2006; D. R. Johnson, 1984). In a recent study of the creation of personal meanings and multicultural prospects among child participants who built meanings and identities through drama, the researchers found that collaborative drama strengthened self-understanding (Fitzpatrick & Rubie-Davies, 2013).

In language classrooms, drama activities may provide students with many benefits. Alvarado (2017) described many principles of drama in education as presented by linguistic educators and researchers. First, drama promotes active learning with greater motivation for students. It encourages students to take part in real-life activities and challenges. Drama also helps learners to develop self-confidence and trust, and it also brings real-life situations into the classroom. Moreover, drama provides unforgettable experiences. In addition, it stimulates students' intelligence, imagination,

and ingenuity, and helps them become more empathic and effective communicators as a result.

1.2.7 The Benefits of Using Drama in Foreign Language Teaching

Drama has cognitive, mental, social, and aesthetic potential in education, but few studies have explored its relationship with foreign language pedagogies. Furthermore, drama can naturally combine all language skills according to the conventional classification, including listening, reading, speaking, and writing, as well as introducing learners to authentic language and challenging them to communicate naturally (Ntelioglou, 2011). Thus, drama presents language as a vital authentic mode of communication, resulting in a fluent, purposeful, and generative language since learners need to remain alert to listen and demonstrate their understanding in immediate and creative responses as a result of the context. All in all, drama helps students improve their ability to communicate in increasingly dynamic and imaginative circumstances.

Žero (2014) pointed out to a special strong connection between creative play and language. Furthermore, according to O'Neill and Lambert (1990), there is a two-way mechanism when drama is used in the teaching of other subjects. First and foremost, these topics will provide drama with serious and worthwhile material, as well as a compelling backdrop for the fiction. Second, using drama techniques enlivens and illuminates the presentation of specific topics outlined by the subject matter. Students are also influenced by the power of drama because they are more likely to find meaning in the game, which reinforces their interest and confidence, as well as their ability to work seriously and constructively.

The benefits of drama are also highlighted by many other educators. According to O'Neill and Lambert (1990), one of the most beneficial contributions that drama adds

to teaching other subjects is that it creates a conducive environment for a variety of language use. In certain cases, language is both the foundation of drama and the means by which it is realized. Drama does, in fact, provide a strong incentive to use speech, and as a result, this speech is embedded in a context and circumstance where it serves an important organizational purpose. When students are asked to deliberate, discuss, make decisions, and determine implications, they must draw on their entire language vocabulary and tools, which helps them improve their language skills. Furthermore, according to (Dougill, 1987), drama exercises help learners gain trust in their use of the target language because the drama situation helps them to practice the language. Also, according to Žero (2014), communication and conversational skills grow as learners come up with scenarios, assign roles, slip in and out of these roles, and thus direct the action. The learner can gain an understanding of the power of language through this imaginary activity. Indeed, Žero (2014) highlighted a number of advantages of using role-playing and drama in an EFL classroom. While the study centered on preschoolers, the same concepts can be extended to students of any age. Žero divided the advantages into two categories: Learning by doing, for starters, offers a memorable learning experience that benefits both the participant and the community, and drama, for another, enhances communication skills and fluency (Eskelinen, 2017).

1.2.8 The Structure of Educational Drama and Speaking Skills

According to Alvarado (2017), theater and drama are valuable techniques for teaching English in the classroom, as they allow students to assimilate their language learning in fascinating and diverse ways. The drama also has the potential to offer true learning. Moreover, Drama, for instance, involves verbal language learning through the use of language, scripts, vocabulary, and reading. In addition to verbal learning,

intrapersonal learning is also acquired through drama activities which refers to the emotions and feelings involved in the drama, characteristics, and how we react as an entity. Interpersonal learning, on the other hand, comes from collaborating with others to construct a scene or role-play (Ashton-hay, 2005). The current drama technique encourages learners to articulate the dialogue well in a speaking skill performance (Aini et al., 2014). Thus, Noaman (2013) maintained that while improving speaking skills and literature appreciation, this educational drama increases imagination, originality, sensitivity, fluency, versatility, emotional stability, collaboration, and moral attitudes, to name a few. In addition, it facilitates their language growth and strengthens their positive self-concept after having acquired critical thinking skills. By involving the senses as an essential part of the learning process, it can also improve their understanding and retention of learning so that it can provide a solid foundation for learners to bridge the gap between their receptive and efficient abilities. As a result, their effective speaking skills are improved, and the language itself is tested and created by the students themselves. In such a situation, the students speak plainly, although some of the scripts are hard to understand. Drama also encourages respect for peers and community cohesion so that the voice of students can be loud and clear; while words are easily heard and understood.

1.3 Theoretical Framework

The aforementioned sections discussed the various benefits of using cooperative drama in EFL classrooms and its potential to enhance students' communicative and speaking skills. Students who tend to use cooperative drama are given the opportunity to construct language, use language and then play with the language. These potentials

pave the way for four theories to intervene and shape the framework of the current study. These theories will be discussed in details in the coming sections as follows:

- Constructivist Theory.
- Cooperative Learning Theory.
- Experiential Learning
- Active Learning Theory.

1.3.1 Constructivist Theory

Figure 1.1: The Constructivist Theories

The Constructivist theory can be divided into two approaches: the first is the cognitive constructivists, which is led by Piaget, who claimed that children create information through interaction within their social and physical world by focusing on their experiences (Simina & Hamel, 2005). Secondly, the main role of the social environment is emphasized by social constructivism, which maintains that learners as individuals develop their own knowledge through interaction with other learners. In social constructivism, reasoning is thought to evolve in social circumstances (Aydin,

2016); In addition, it is stressed that the co-construction of meaning is illustrated within a group activity and that social constructivism is more concerned with meaning than structure (Ustuk & İnan, 2017). Furthermore, constructivism claimed, based on the work of developmental psychology, that through their interpretive relationships with and experiences in their social settings, people create meaning. Previous information and interactions are believed to play an important role in learning and form the basis for subsequent behavior. It focuses the mind of the learner on the "why" of learning and opens the door to rational thought and intellectual growth (Manus, 1996). From a holistic and cognitive viewpoint, Piaget, a Swiss psychologist, explained the creation of awareness, stressing that there are several channels used to create understanding, such as reading, listening, exploring, and experiencing. The Russian psychologist, Vygotsky, introduces the social and cultural factors of learning and emphasizes their role in knowledge building. The social constructivism model of Vygotsky (Vygotsky & Cole, 1978) emphasized the value of learning to create understanding in context through experiences with others in the social contexts in which information is to be applied.

For the constructivist method to work, students need to be active and engaged during the lesson. Furthermore, students often have to take responsibility for their learning outcomes in the constructivist classroom, so commitment and motivation become an integral part of students' learning behaviors to be constructivist learners (Sajadi, 2015). Educational cooperative drama during the reading and acting out of plays offers such contact. To contribute to a deeper understanding of literary works, students should explore and ask questions.

The Constructivist Approach is viewed by instructors as a guide to discovering, understanding, and making sense of what people learn. The instructor is also considered to be the guide that makes students note and then correct their lost points and faults

(Şimşek et al., 2009). Instead of social or conventional educational means (Aldridge & Goldman, 2007), the constructionist theory required that awareness be built through contact with the world and relationships (with both adults and peers). Therefore, students learn not only from the words of the teacher but also from educational experiences created in the classroom (Spooner, 2015). Bada and Olusegun (2015) also claimed that constructivism was in direct contrast to conventional learning which is based on lecturing, and that learners and teachers were in an ongoing and active learning process. The significance of learning, therefore, arises from the construction of the environment, classroom, and peer engagement of the students. In learning, participants help each other achieve the learning goals (Fernandez-Rio, 2016).

The constructivist theory supports the idea that individual differences can be addressed using diverse teaching styles and that the use of alternative teaching approaches can positively impact the teaching process. Furthermore, (Barrett & Long, 2012) stated that the most important theme in the academic framework of the constructivist theory is a rigorous procedure in which learners create new concepts or theories based on their understanding. Also, (Jha, 2012) agreed that the constructivist theory accentuates the importance of learners' dependence on cognitive structures. Loyens and Gijbels (2008) stated that constructivist learning theory refers to the technique of knowledge construction that empowers individuals to learn information by changing and molding their intellectual concepts to attain new knowledge. Likewise, using educational drama with cooperative teaching and learning will empower both the teachers and the students and also build their knowledge of learning the English language as a promising means for growth.

Meanwhile, Cooperative Learning (CL) is similar to the cognitive view of learning since CL allows learners to revise and expand their knowledge. Students will

benefit from being divided into groups because they will be able to communicate with one another, which will help them develop a good knowledge foundation. Furthermore, active learning is an important component of language learning, and cooperation allows students to manipulate resources and share experiences in order to learn by constructing concrete concepts. As a result, CL is a tool for assisting students in interacting with one another in order to build their knowledge. Furthermore, CL is a teaching approach that puts the student at the core of the language-learning process rather than the instructor. It encourages students to interact with one another in order to gain experience from their peers. In the sense that students become involved and connected to the classroom, it aligns with activity theory. This allows students to develop their language skills, increase their motivation, reduce their anxiety, and engage equally in class.

Behaviorism, cognitivism, constructivism, and comprehensible input are all philosophies that support cooperative learning. This is because the main objective of cooperative learning is for each group in the classroom to achieve a particular goal and for each person to become proficient in the skill or lesson they are studying (Yassin et al., 2018). Cooperative Learning also has origins in social constructivism and Vygotsky's (1934/1986; 1978) and Piaget's (1934/1986; 1978) cognitive developmental theories (1951). According to these developmental theorists, as students collaborate, socio-cognitive rivalry encourages deeper thinking. Vygotsky went on to say that all learning and growth is socially created, and that it begins on a social level before moving to the individual level. Both Piaget and Vygotsky consider the learner to be an active agent, but Vygotskian theory stresses that learning is a social creation of information that takes place in ever-changing historical and cultural contexts (Sawyer & Obeid, 2017).

1.3.2 Cooperative Learning Theory

Cooperative Learning (CL), where small groups of students with different abilities work together on different projects, and problem-based teaching, where students work together in groups to solve an open-ended problem using a variety of materials, encourages greater student participation and leads to greater encouragement for students (Jung, 2017). Throughout the course of learning and teaching, the English teacher will develop cooperative relationships, according to Nan (2014). To this end, an active learning environment needs to be developed by teachers to enhance interaction and communication between the topic or between educators and students. An example of cooperative learning grouping is when teachers constantly strengthen the spirit of partnership and cooperation, as well as aspire to explore and infuse the essence of the issue, following some of the cooperative learning principles (Eachempati et al., 2017).

According to M. P. Li and Lam (2013), the main principle underlying CL is Vygotsky's social constructivism. Cooperative Learning, according to Jacobsen (1989), is a learning method in which students work together to accomplish a shared goal. It is part of the teaching and learning process in which students work together in small groups to maximize their own and others' learning (D. W. Johnson et al., 2010). The purpose of CL is to create an atmosphere in which group success determines or affects individual success (Slavin, 2010). It is one of the student-centered approaches that has been recorded in the literature as a successful method for assisting students in the development of substantive communication skills, realistic learning skills, and information comprehension skills (Darmuki et al., 2018; D. W. Johnson & Johnson, 2008; Slavin, 2011).

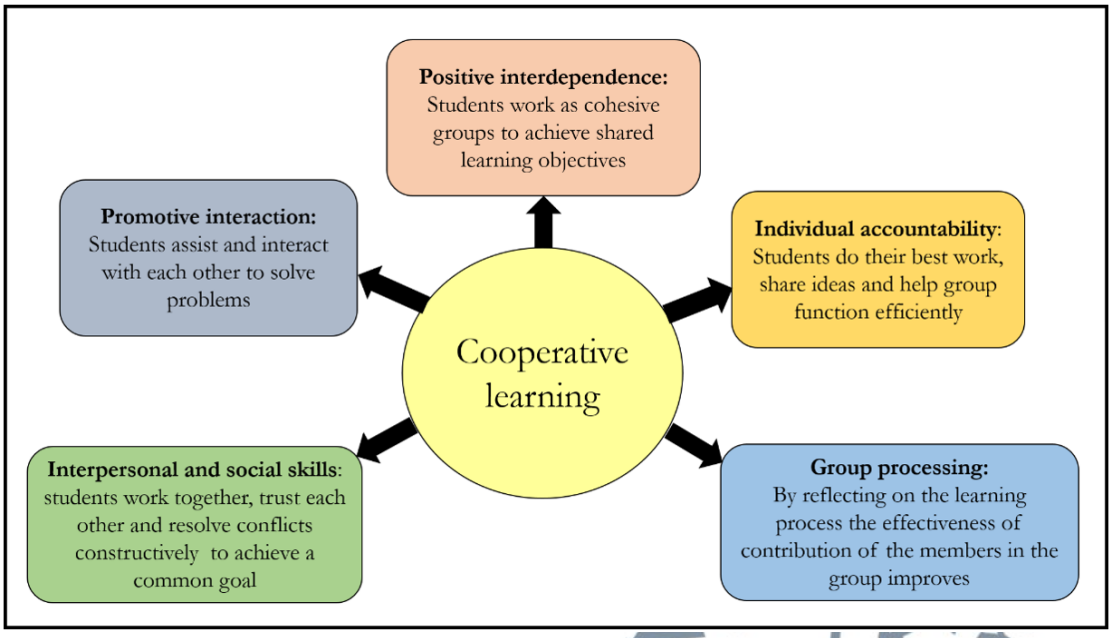

Figure 1.2: Five Basic Components of Cooperative Learning.

1.3.3 Experiential Learning Theory

Experienced learning and active learning are processes that have been shown to contribute to the better participation of students. Students of active and experiential learning are more involved in the learning process and more content with learning from a variety of academic subjects (Jung, 2017; Marin, 2015).

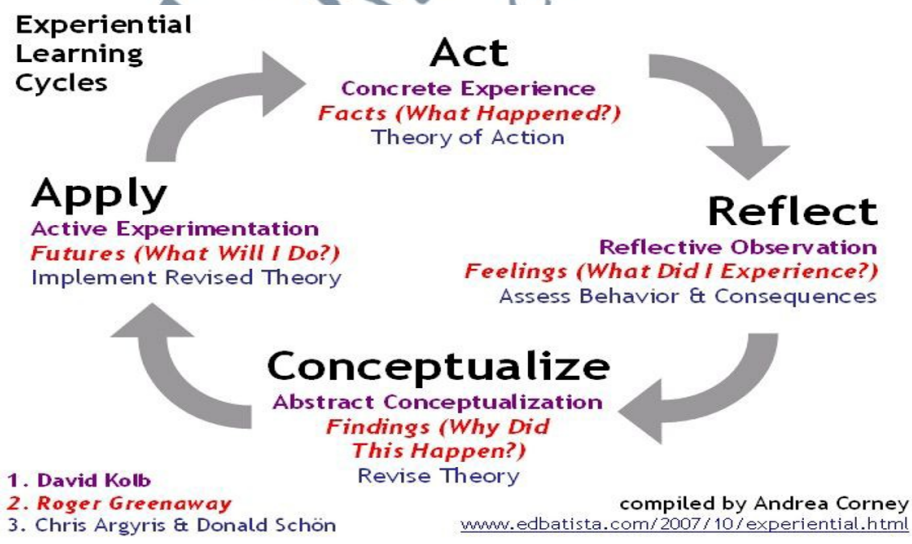

Figure 1.3: The Experiential Learning Cycle.

In addition, experiential learning and constructive learning build on the constructivism paradigm. Experiential learning, under the umbrella of the constructivist approach, allows students to engage in the learning process through engaging interactions that involve spontaneous discussions, while the teacher has to provide realistic tasks that enable students to speak impulsively and learn from their errors (Marin, 2015). Students can make mistakes when engaging with their classmates during the use of Educational Cooperative Drama (ECD) in connection with experiential learning. These mistakes, however, enable students to develop their abilities for communication, reading, and understanding, as well as to take power and have influence over their learning (Marin, 2015).

1.4 Conceptual Framework

The current study aims to explore the significance of using cooperative learning and educational drama in English language classrooms, especially in the teaching of speaking skills. This aim is related to the aim of exploring the influence of Educational Cooperative Drama (ECD) on the learning of the English language among Palestinian seventh graders in the war-torn Jenin. The process of exploring the expected influence is based on four major theories that contribute to the structure of ECD. Thus, constructivist theory, experiential learning theory, active learning theory, and cooperative learning theory are used for formulating the conceptual framework. The researcher claims that the basics of these four theories can be used and activated through using ECD and ECD, in turn, is affected by these theories since students need to be active and engaged with various activities in the EFL classroom so as to be active learners who can create meaningful language to communicate. Such claim motivates the researcher to combine educational drama with cooperative learning to adopt a new

approach, which is Educational Cooperative Drama (ECD). Hence, an active learning environment needs to be developed by the teacher to enhance interaction and communication between the students themselves and with the teacher as well. To succeed and achieve the educational goals, the students need to work cooperatively together to maximize their own learning and enhance their skills. This newly suggested approach is expected to include new activities for enhancing English teaching and learning, especially enhancing speaking skills.

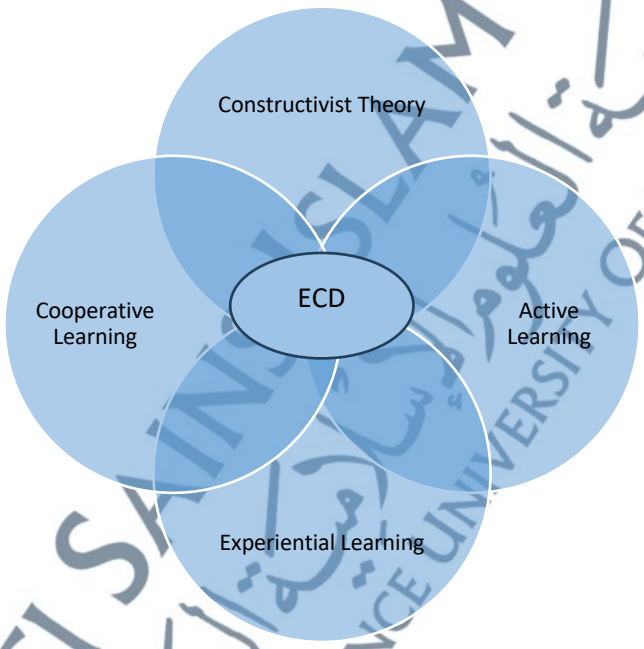

Figure 1.4: The Conceptual Framework of the Study.

1.5 Statement of the Problem

This section discusses the problems facing the Palestinian students when learning English as a foreign language. To the researcher's best knowledge, these problems are manifested in three major areas: low proficiency in the English language, the war situation in Palestine as well as the methods and strategies used by most EFL teachers.

The first problem is centered around students' low proficiency in the English language, mainly in practicing the speaking skill. This problem is largely faced by EFL students in Jenin city which is considered a war-torn city due to the continuing attacks of the Israeli soldiers. According to data collected from the Directorate of Education in Jenin, students in the seventh grade showed weaknesses in their speaking skills during the last three scholastic years from 2016 to 2018, which was revealed in their achievement. In addition, the researcher observed that the evaluation system regarding the seventh grade gives 15% for listening and speaking skills, 15% for vocabulary, 30% for reading skills, 20% for language (grammar), and 20% for writing skills. This evaluation system means that the speaking skills are only given 7.5 % according to the records of the Ministry of Education in 2019 (see Appendix 1). Hence, there is a need to find out alternative methods and techniques that can enhance the students' speaking skills and fill the gap in this particular domain.

By the same token, the low level of English language proficiency may be due to the methods of teaching used by the majority of teachers in primary schools. Most teachers tend to give priority to accuracy activities at the expense of fluency task, whereas language training focuses on literacy skills rather than on using language for communicative purposes. This might have resulted from teachers' lack of knowledge about the importance of emphasizing English language use in the classroom (Jawabreh, 2015). It was found that many teachers in primary grades in Jenin schools face the problem of teaching the English language communicatively, although the Palestinian curriculum is structured on the communicative approach of teaching. Typically, most teachers are accustomed to using traditional methods to teach language skills including lecturing, talk and chalk and others which are mostly focused on teaching reading and writing and that the majority of EFL teachers prefer to use the Arabic language

especially when teaching grammar (Abu Riash, 2011; Jawabreh, 2015; Jondeya, 2011; Romahi, 2010). Consequently, most EFL learners in Palestine face difficulties when communicating in English.

The lack of language usage inside the classroom is another problem that impedes the Palestinian students of learning to communicate. Although the Palestinian students learn English as a foreign language from the first grade, very limited opportunities are provided to enable them to use the language outside the classroom (Al-Majdalawi, 2005). In addition, EFL teachers use their mother tongue in the classroom and they often encourage students to use their mother tongue during speech exercises, which may impede the development of students' communicative competence (Aboura, 2017; Alhabbash, 2012; Farah, 2012). Such a situation decreases the effectiveness of speaking activities because if Arabic is permitted all the time, the EFL students will not be motivated to use English.

Another issue is the political situation in Palestine, where the Israel occupation has a destructive impact on education in general. Israel stepped up its geographical segregation strategy during the second intifada (Aqsa uprising), which started in 2000 by planting hundreds of military checkpoints in the West Bank and Gaza Strip and erecting the Segregation Wall to close off Israel's Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPT) (Ibheis & Ayad, 2012). The impact has been devastating on Palestinian education ever since the Apartheid Wall deprived the Palestinians of their right to learn and to move as well. Furthermore, the attitude of the teachers and the students were influenced by this situation, which also influenced the teaching and learning process. In addition, school children used to face movement problems when going to and from school, as illustrated in Figure 1.5.

Figure 1.5: Arresting Students on Their Way to School (Majd Ghaith, 2015).

The inhumane situations which were imposed by the last occupation on earth caused the suffering of millions of people, including death, handicaps, trauma, and exploitation. It may take years for the educational system to recover from the war. During these years, the entire generation is expected to lose a lot. Going to school will raise the likelihood of conflict being survived by the students. Schools should equip children with the skills and abilities they need to remain safe and withstand the consequences of conflict. Schools are critical in protecting children and fostering their emotional and social growth by giving them comfort, protection, and opportunity. A sense of normalcy is provided by the school routine, and the school atmosphere is one in which students are able to be students, not expected to act like adults (Nicolai, 2007).

In addition to limiting movement by checkpoints, closures, and curfews, the Palestinians suffer from traumatic events inflicted by armed and/or military violence. There are regular traumatic incidents such as night attacks, explosions, house

demolitions, physical abuse, and fatalities (El-Khodary & Samara, 2019, 2020). Palestinian children who live under occupation are affected by insomnia, fear of the darkness, phobias, depression, bedwetting, social isolation, negative social interaction, aggressive conduct, forgetfulness, and school truancy. These sufferings indicate that under the current conditions, it is almost difficult to have normal childhood in Palestine when the whole life is affected, especially children's potential psychological well-being (Abualkibash, 2020; Altawil, 2008; El-Khodary & Samara, 2019, 2020).

Furthermore, the effect of occupation becomes bigger and bigger, and the following are some of the key constraints of the occupation that affect the Palestinian life.

- Violence. Military and Israeli settler violence create instability, which inhibits planning micro- (enterprise) and macro- (government) projects. Death and disability due to this abuse impair the capacity to function and research and have long-lasting physical and mental health consequences. The threat of violence on a regular basis hinders the work of manufacturers, distributors, and staff, resulting in a long-term decline in productivity. The geographical and political distinction caused by the internal violence between the West Bank and Gaza creates Governance logjams, overlapping organizations, and lacking rational policy-making (UN, 2018).
- Restrictions on movement. Due to checkpoints and Israeli barriers, the difficulty of moving within the West Bank, within Restricted Access Areas in Gaza, and into and out of Gaza itself continues to complicate the transport of people and goods. The physical isolation of Gaza from the West Bank and then East Jerusalem from the rest of the West Bank limits the scale of the Palestinian market and prohibits both exports and imports. Back-to-back transport

procedures and other security measures required by Israel slow the movement of goods and create additional expenses, which reduce competitiveness. The result is a series of highly fragmented and distorted local economies with limited growth opportunities (ROFAS, 2018; WHO, 2017).

- Human rights abuses. Workplace abuse (in addition to death and injury cases) has affected access to education and safety, often rising to the point of severe violations (United Nations Security Council, 2016). In particular, children have endured violations of their rights enshrined in the Convention on the Rights of the Child (1990), of which Israel is a State Party, with long-lasting implications. The destruction of homes and buildings, either as a result of an unjust system, in war, or as a form of retribution, often has long-term economic consequences on those families and communities which have invested their resources in these lost structures (ROFAS, 2018).

The occupation also influenced the standard of education in the State of Palestine, which was also related to the prolonged war, repeated rounds of armed struggle, and occupation. This includes instances of abuses of the right to education, such as attacks and threats of attacks against schools and on students or teachers; student arrest and detention; and other interventions. The right to education, such as limits on entry and delays at checkpoints, the use of military school facilities, and the destruction of schools or classrooms; the Gaza blockade also affects the availability and cost of materials to construct and rehabilitate schools, resulting in scarcity of school accommodation and overcrowded classrooms. For students living in West Bank Region C, which is under Israeli control of administration and Security, East Jerusalem, and the Gaza Strip, the

negative impact of occupation and conflict on education is the most serious (UNICEF, 2018; United Nations, 2018).

Based on the above-mentioned three issues, conducting this study is considered as timely as it aims to solve these issues. In response to the above–mentioned critical issues, the current study seeks to provide a new method that invests in Educational Cooperative Drama (ECD). As for the second issue, which is the presence of occupation, the use of ECD is hoped to help both the teacher and the students in improving the English language. In this regard, Nelson Mandela, the South African anti-apartheid activist, argued that education plays a powerful role that has the potential to change the world, especially when education can communicate our voices to the world and also builds a new future for teaching the English language. Finally, the methodological approach is unique as it is entirely qualitative since it employs observations, semi-structured interviews, recordings, videos, and artifacts, unlike previous studies. The summary of the issues and expected solutions is presented in Figure 1.6.

1.6 Research Questions

The current study aimed to answer the following research questions:

1. How does Educational Cooperative Drama (ECD) influence the learning of the English language among Palestinian seventh graders in the war-torn Jenin?
2. What are the challenges faced by EFL teachers in Palestine when using Educational Cooperative Drama (ECD)?
3. How do the teachers and students perceive the use of Educational Cooperative Drama (ECD) in a Palestinian seventh-grader speaking skills classroom?

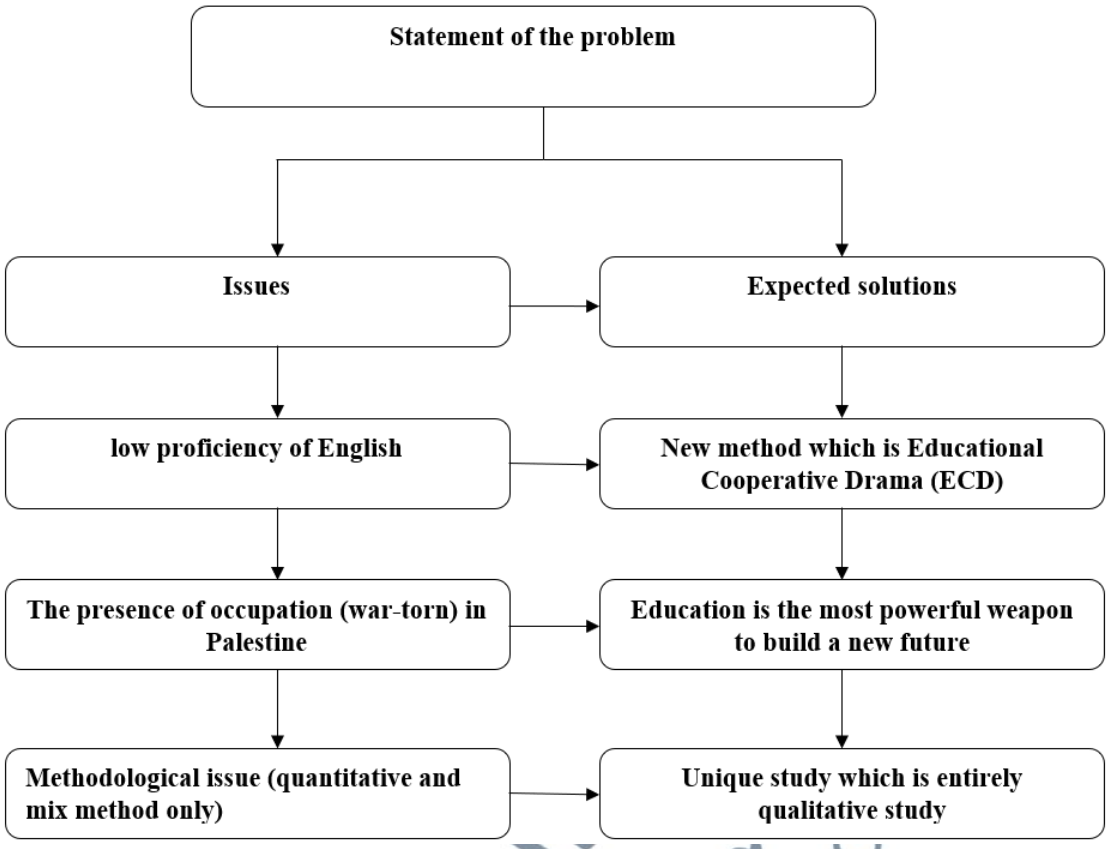

Figure 1.6: Issues and Expected Solutions in the Statement of the Problem.

1.7 Objectives of the Study

The objectives of this study were three-fold:

1. To explore Educational Cooperative Drama's (ECD) influences on the learning of the English language among Palestinian seventh graders in the war-torn Jenin.
2. Explore the challenges faced by EFL teachers in Palestine when using Educational Cooperative Drama (ECD).
3. Explore the teachers' and students' perceptions of the use of Educational Cooperative Drama (ECD) in a Palestinian seventh-grader speaking skills classroom.

1.8 Significance of the Study

This study is of paramount significance as it is hoped to support EFL learning and scaffold learners in their efforts to master the skills of English in general and speaking skills in particular. The use of ECD is hoped to increase learners' cooperative skills and the use of genuine language as a way to improve interaction. Through employing ECD, EFL students are expected to trust their own communication skills, especially under war-torn effects where students need a better and more comfortable environment for learning English. Eyring (as cited in McCarthy, 2019) maintained that all refugees who have encountered psychological problems in their homelands as a result of abuse, trauma, or racism almost search for stability and acceptance in a new community (Celce-Murcia et al., 2014) and students also seek peace in their education. In addition to that, the learning methods need to be progressively made by trying new pedagogies, such as ECD, as a means to enhance English language skills.

On the other hand, the ECD method is hoped to be a powerful means that can enrich the English for Palestine (E4P) curriculum with effective activities, styles, and ideas. Thirdly, the English supervisors at MoE are expected to benefit from the results of the current study when they emphasize the importance of ECD in enhancing EFL students' speaking skills. Finally, future researchers might be encouraged to conduct similar studies with different populations and samples and with different skills. Furthermore, the results are hoped to add new insights into the literature review of new methodologies in the field of English language curriculum, particularly under abnormal war-torn situations.

1.9 Operational Definitions of Terms

For this study, the following operational definitions of terms are used.

1.9.1 Drama

In language teaching, drama plays a key role in encouraging students to engage in a more communicative environment. Drama-in-Education and its success in English Second/Foreign Language Classes (Saygili, 2015). In response to limited instructions from a leader, improvisation is an unscripted, unrehearsed, spontaneous series of acts, usually containing statements of who one is, where one is, and what one is doing there. The emphasis is, therefore, on interacting with characters, performing roles, and entering into the inner experience of fantasy and imagination. Saygili (2015) also defined drama here as any realistic and educational activity that stimulates the use of language in daily life and involves some hypothetical circumstance.

Aladini and Jalambo (2021) added that drama is about doing, being, and being normal. In order to cope with difficult situations, people engage in drama every day; Drama is an art in which students communicate in a social context that mimics real-life circumstances (A. Aladini & Jalambo, 2021). Thus, drama happens, drama exists, and drama is so normal. It is something we do every day when we face difficult circumstances. In addition, Alvarado (2017) defined drama as the process by which imaginative thought turns into action; drama is based on internal empathy and identification and leads to external impersonation. This leads to the physical representation of feelings and thoughts.

Therefore, the use of drama as a method for teaching English results in real communication; it offers teachers a broad choice of learner-centered activities to select for teaching in the classroom (Alvarado, 2017; Idogho, 2018).

1.9.2 Drama in Education

Aladini (2020) defined Educational Drama (ED) as a lived-through experience that travels along a spectrum of education that involves several types. It goes from basic role-playing, simulation, and hot seating to completely developed forms, but the emphasis remains on recognizing learning opportunities and how these forms can be coordinated. The researcher compiled that educational drama is a pedagogy that uses play-like approaches to facilitate the communication, interpersonal, cognitive, self-advocacy, reasoning, and speaking abilities of students. It is a playful attitude and, at the same time, very purposeful (A. Aladini & Jalambo, 2021). Furthermore, the use of drama as a way of teaching through the curriculum is Drama-in-Education (DIE). It is used to broaden the knowledge of learners, to encourage them to look at reality through imagination, and to look for meanings under the surface of behavior. According to (Idogho, 2018), "the objective of drama-in-education is understanding rather than playmaking, although a play may be made in the process." The primary concern is attitudes rather than characters, as the emphasis is on processes rather than products. Furthermore, A. A. Aladini and Abu Owda (2020) added that the Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) and Theater curriculum was helpful in increasing students' self-efficacy in learning English in general and learning English through drama in particular. According to the researchers, EFL Palestinian teachers should employ CLIL and drama as a strategy to improve students' self-efficacy (A. A. Aladini & Abu Owda, 2020).

For the current study, the researcher defines Educational Drama.as the use of drama as a method of instruction throughout the curriculum, where students are allowed to act out the lesson and improve their English in a fun way for both teachers and students.

1.9.3 Speaking Skill

Speaking skill is the ability to communicate with others in the target language that consists of accuracy, fluency, and comprehensibility. Oral expressions are outlined as follows (Aladini & Jalambo, 2021): Oral expressions include not just the use of the right sounds in the correct rhythm and intonation patterns, but also the choice of words and inflections in the correct order to convey the correct meaning. The researcher identified it as an act of communication that tends to share meaning through social interaction. Noticeably, it includes contact, functional, contact and message approach, and attentive and evaluative abilities.

Furthermore, speaking is the verbal use of language and a means for people to communicate with one another (Namaziandost, 2019). It is the act of bringing feelings into words in order for others to understand the meaning being communicated (Namaziandost, 2019).

For the current study, the researcher defines the Speaking skill as the capacity to speak English, as well as to communicate and express oneself in a spoken language, is the most challenging to master.

1.9.4 Educational Cooperative Drama

In this study, ECD is defined by the researcher as a suggested teaching approach to teach English in war-torn areas through integrating educational drama into cooperative learning. This newly suggested approach is expected to include new activities, strategies and tools for enhancing English teaching and learning, especially enhancing speaking skills.

1.10 Scope, Delimitation and Limitations of the Study

The main scope of this study is concentrated on determining if there was an influence of utilizing Educational Cooperative Drama (ECD) on Palestinian seventh graders' speaking skills in the war-torn Jenin city. This study has the following limitations:

- **Locative limitations**: the study was conducted in a private school in Jenin, a city in the West Bank, Palestine.
- **Temporal limitations**: the study was carried out in the first semester of the academic year 2020/2021.
- **Human limitations**: the participants of the study consisted of male and female seventh graders, English teachers, and English language supervisors in Jenin city.

1.11 Chapter Summary and Overall Structure of the Thesis

This chapter discussed insights into utilizing Educational Cooperative Drama (ECD) for Palestinian seventh-grader speaking skills in a war-torn Jenin city so as to enhance the educational system, curriculum, teachers, and students in the future. Also, it dealt with the effective role of the ECD, speaking skills, drama techniques, and war-torn cities in Palestine. Also, the chapter presented three theories related to this study; the constructivist theory, the cooperative learning theory, and the experiential learning theory.