

**STUDENT PERSPECTIVES ON CLASSROOM DISCUSSIONS IN THE ENGLISH
LANGUAGE CLASS A CASE STUDY OF CHEMWANIA HIGH SCHOOL**

BY

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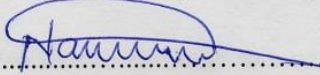
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**A RESEARCH REPORT SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF LANGUAGE AND
LITERATURE OF BUSITEMA UNIVERSITY IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF THE DEGREE OF BACHELOR
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DECLARATION.

I, **Nawari Benon** declare that this research titled "student perspectives on classroom discussions in the English language classes in Chemwania high school" is entirely my own and it has never been done in any University or institution of higher education

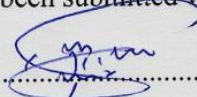
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DEDICATION

I dedicate this report to my loving parents Mr. Chemonges Titus and Chebet Vanis for their continuous support towards my education journey and always being on my side and believing in me. I'm where I am because of you, I love you so much.

I would also like to dedicate this work to my siblings Mr. Chemakeki Elly, Mr. Mutai Evans, Chesang Colivia, Kwemoi Caleb, Chelimo Eric, Chemutai Tracy and Koech Emmanuel Chemonges and the entire family because they have always been there for me. I hope I will make you proud one day.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

First and foremost, I would like to thank the Lord Almighty for the grace he has given me to carry out this research. I would not have accomplished it if it were not for God.

Also great thanks to my supervisor Dr. Tendo Shira Namagero for the patience, sacrifice, tolerance, time and the wonderful guidance she gave me during this research, may Almighty God reward your efforts and bless you in abundance, long live doctor. Not forgetting my wonderful and heaven-sent family for the abundant love and support both financially and spiritually, most especially daddy. You are such a nice dad and a hero to me.

Table of Contents

DECLARATION.....	Error! Bookmark not defined.
ENDORSEMENT BY SUPERVISOR.....	Error! Bookmark not defined.
DEDICATION.....	ii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT.....	iii
SUMMARY.....	vi
CHAPTER ONE.....	1
1.0 INTRODUCTION.....	1
1.1 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY.....	1
1.4 Purpose of the study.....	4
1.4 Aims of study.....	5
1.5 Objectives of study.....	5
1.6 Research questions.....	5
1.7 Significance of the study.....	5
CHAPTER TWO.....	6
2.1 LITERATURE REVIEW.....	6
CHAPTER THREE.....	21
3.0 METHODS OF DATA COLLECTION.....	21
3.1. RESEARCH METHODS.....	21
3.2 Study Area.....	21
3.3. Study Population.....	22
3.4 Sampling Criteria.....	22
3.5. Research Methods And Instruments.....	22
3.6 Data Analysis Proceedures.....	22
3.7 Ethical Considerations.....	23
3.8 Limitations of The Study.....	23
CHAPTER FOUR.....	24

4.0 PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS.....	24
4.1. Table showing sex of respondents	24
4.2. Analysis and interpretation of data for validation of hypothesis one and two	24
4.2.1. Predominantly used methods of Critical thinking (C.T).....	24
4.3. To establish the benefits of classroom discussions on critical thinking.....	25
4.3.1. Do you benefit from classroom discussions? How	25
4.3.2 What are some of the obstacles do your learners go through when conducting classroom discussion.....	25
4.3.3. How often do learners discuss in class.....	26
4.4. what is the students perception in participating in class discussions	26
4.4.1. Do you like classroom discussions?.....	26
4.4.2. Apart from English language do you enjoy classroom discussions in other subjects.....	27
4.4.3. What other ways can you as a learner understand English other than classroom discussions...	27
4.5. what is student’s perception on expressing agreement in class discussions	28
4.5. Is disagreement allowed In your discussion group	28
4.5.2. Do such discussions have an impact	28
4.5.3. Classroom discussions are very important in all subjects	29
CHAPTER FIVE	30
INTERPRETATION AND DISCUSSION OF RESULTS	30
5.1 Interpretation.....	30
5.2 Discussion of results	30
5.2.1 To establish the benefits of classroom discussions on Critical thinking skills	30
5.2.2. Investigate students’ perceptions towards classroom discussions.	31
5.2.3. Establish the impact of classroom discussions in developing learners Critical thinking skills in the new lower secondary school curriculum.	31
5.3 CONCLUSION.....	32
5.4 RECOMENTATIONS	32
REFERENCES	34

SUMMARY

This research project is set out to analyze the students' perspectives on classroom discussions in English language classes in Chemwania high school in Kween district. The research carried out comprises four perspectives that were given by learners of English language. The problem investigated was that classroom discussions are a key to critical thinking yet most people ignore them and focus on other ways which lead to critical thinking ignoring classroom discussions.

Class conversation is a beneficial mechanism that involves students' listening, thinking, and speaking abilities. It is a tool used in most language classes to promote student involvement and solicit their feedback, allowing them to improve their comprehension of the lesson. While this student-centred method has its advantages, having students to actually engage in a debate can be difficult. This may be attributed to a lack of enthusiasm and curiosity among students, as well as language incompetency, to list a few factors. The aim of this study is to discover out how students feel about engaging in class discussions and voicing their agreement and dissatisfaction using the English language as the tool of instruction. The participants in this research are senior one and senior two students of Chemwania high school, a school in Kween district. These students study English language as one of the compulsory subjects in the school curriculum, and they are required to take the English for Oral Presentation course as part of their class learning and teaching requirements. This comprehensive research discovered that students' perceptions of engaging in class debates, as well as voicing consensus and opposition, were relatively poor to medium. Their negative impression suggests that the students could be confronted with barriers that prevented them from having productive class discussions. The findings of this research would have important consequences on how class discussions are used in language classrooms.

The study was guided by three objectives which are. To establish the benefits of classroom discussions on critical thinking, to investigate the student's perspectives to classroom discussions and lastly, establish the impact of discussions in developing learner's critical thinking skills. Three questions were set to meet the objectives above and they are as follows, how do students perceive classroom discussions in English language classes in Chemwania high school, how do specific discussion practices influence critical thinking engagement and outcomes and finally, why discussions are mostly employed in the new lower secondary School curriculum. It's qualitative in nature because it is concerned with developing explanations of social and

educational phenomena. This means that there has to be some observations on human nature so as to understand it in its given state. Data was collected using the methods of interviews, focus group discussions close reading and document review and were analyzed using data analysis methods of sorting, translating, transcribing and interpreting. The study found that research was carried out on learner's different viewpoints on classroom discussions in Chemwania high school.

keywords: Class discussions participation; expressing agreement; expressing disagreement; benefits of class discussions, perspectives, opinions, views about classroom discussions.

CHAPTER ONE

1.0 INTRODUCTION

In this study the researcher examines the student's perspectives on classroom discussions in the English language classrooms in Chemwania high school of Kween district in the new lower secondary School curriculum, modern researchers do agree that discussing an idea make Learners think and respond critically and possibly we can know the impact of such discussions towards critical thinking. In my own perspective, I would agree that classroom discussions foster critical thinking among learners in many ways and it should never be underestimated in any circumstances(Facione, Facione, & Giancarlo, 1996).

1.1 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY.

Classroom discussion is a sustained exchange between and Among teachers and the students with the purpose of developing student's capabilities or skills and expanding student's understanding both shared and individual of a specific concept or instructional goal(Kugelmass, 2001) .

A perspective is a particular way of regarding something or attitude towards or a viewpoint, it is used to clarify, asses, the true value, importance or significance of something.

In the light of pedagogics, educational theorists and researchers of teaching composition in particular, have a long history of advocating replacing teacher-centred pedagogies with student-centred ones (Bruffee 1984; Rubin & Hebert 1998). The reason for this is due to the abundance of benefits that it offers, such as autonomous learning that helps to bolster students' academic achievement and encourage deeper learning (Leo 2007). In line with the student-centred approach, class discussion is commonly employed as a method of teaching in ESL classrooms (English as Second Language) (Thomas 2017). This method, in particular, aids in encouraging students' active participation in language learning that lays a solid foundation for them to acquire the target language successfully (Leo 2007; Asoodeh, Asoodeh & Zarepour 2012).

However, for some students of ESL, class discussion might be a challenging stepping stone to help them acquire the target language. Hofstede (1986) explicates that cultural differences may hinder students from conversing using the target language due to uncertainty when learners are

not confident in the language. Other barriers such as peer pressure, students' socioeconomic background, and lack of exposure to the target language also exacerbate the situation, as stated by Ismail (1994).

Despite the barriers, it is a basic need for any ESL student to effectively know how to speak and communicate orally. According to Brown (2001), ESL learners "discover language by trial and error, by processing feedback, by building hypotheses, and revising these assumptions in order to become fluent". These are some prominent elements embedded in the class discussion method. While the method is valuable in helping students to learn and acquire the target language, to help students break the barriers, teachers need to invest time and assist students in working to enhance their speaking skills. This study, therefore, will bring forth the exploration of students' perception of participating as well as expressing their agreement and disagreement in class discussion using English language as the medium of instruction.

Critical thinking is a common course in college and University settings today, frequently taught as a way to improve thinking, the art of critical thinking involves an approach to thinking, more importantly to learning that embraces changing how one thinks about thinking (Brookfield, 2012). Critical thinking incorporates how learners think and apply thought to understand how thinking can be improved through classroom discussions. Typically, a person is deemed critical thinker to the extent they he or she generally they are thinking in an intentional manner. The basic idea undergirding the study of critical thinking is simple, to determine strength and weakness in one's thinking in order to maintain the strength and make improvements by targeting the weaknesses (Murawski, 2022).

Critical thinking has its roots in the works of such notables as Socrates, Thomas Aquinas, Francis Bacon, Rene Descartes, John Lockie, and sir Isaac Newtown in its earliest times (R. Paul, Elder, & Bartell, 2018). More modern contributions can be attributed to John Dewey, Ludwig Wittgenstein and Jean Piaget among others, work completed by Robert Ennis in the classroom and reflected in the work place. Ennis focused on critical thinking as a learned skill that could be transferred to the workplace if taught and as a result of many years of research, analysis, teaching and practice, Ennis concluded that critical thinking is focused on deciding who do believe or do (R. W. Paul, Elder, & Bartell, 1997).

Vincent Ruggiero writing in the art of thinking. A guide to critical and creative thought describes thinking as “any mental activity that helps formulate or solve a problem, make a decision, or fulfill a desire to understand. It is searching for answers while reaching for meaning. He notes that thinking may not always be a conscious effort. There are forces at work--beneath the surface so to speak-- within the unconscious that dictate one’s overt thinking. An example might be driving to a daily destination such as work without consciously remembering each landmark along the route. This type of thinking occurs without much critical thought at all. Indeed, the brain seems to be on auto-pilot in this situation. Critical thinking according to Ruggiero is more attuned to thinking that occurs to solve problems, analyze issues or make decisions. Staying with the aforementioned example, if the road normally driven is blocked or closed, the driver would need to critically think about an alternate route. Which route is shortest to the destination? Which route might not be blocked like the one encountered? What could happen if that route were taken? All these questions are examples of critical thinking based on a problem needing to be solved(Tanner, 2005).

Problem solving is the ultimate intent of critical thinking for many scholars who study the phenomenon. Skills in problem solving, issue analyses and decision making are increasingly expected of employees. Evidence is growing that critical thinking is “expected” in the workplace. More than 400 senior HR professionals were asked in a survey to name the most important skill their employees will need in the next five years(Moralee, 1989). Critical thinking ranked the highest – even more than innovation or the application of information technology. This response reflects how the nature of work and the skills required have been changing dramatically(Chartrand, Ishikawa, & Flander, 2009).

1.3 Problem statement.

In today's information saturated world, classroom discussions and critical thinking skills are Vital for English language learners to navigate complex issues, evaluate information and make informed decisions. While research highlights the importance of critical thinking in ELS classrooms, the specific impact of classroom discussions on the development of these skills remains unclear, therefore this research aims to ascertain the impact of classroom discussions to Fostering critical thinking skills

Many researchers have done some of research topics in the English language for example, importance of critical thinking on learner's performance, how learners acquire knowledge through critical thinking and how learners adapt new knowledge through discussions in the class setting. It's therefore a disservice not to investigate how classroom discussions impact learner's critical thinking, which this research aims at knowing.

This research therefore aims to;

Investigate the students' views or perspectives on classroom discussions in Chemwania high school.

1.4 Purpose of the study.

The main purpose of studying the perspectives of classroom discussions among the learners is to understand how effective this teaching method is in developing this crucial skill in students. Critical thinking is widely recognized as essential for success in both academic and professional settings, and educators are constantly seeking effective ways to cultivate it in their students.

To provide evidence for the effectiveness of classroom discussion: Despite the widespread belief in the benefits of discussion, robust research evidence is needed to demonstrate its clear impact on critical thinking skills. This can help educators justify the use of discussion and advocate for its inclusion in curriculum and pedagogy.

To identify the specific elements of discussion that contributes to critical thinking: Not all discussions are created equal. Research can help pinpoint the specific elements of a well-structured discussion, such as open-ended questions, respectful disagreement, and diverse perspectives that are most conducive to critical thinking development.

To inform the design of effective classroom discussions: By understanding what works and what doesn't, researchers and educators can develop more effective strategies for structuring and facilitating classroom discussions that specifically target critical thinking development.

To address potential challenges and equity concerns: Implementing discussion-based learning effectively can be challenging. Research can help identify and address potential obstacles, such as ensuring all students have opportunities to participate and ensuring discussions are inclusive and respectful of diverse viewpoints.

1.4 Aims of study.

To investigate the scholars' perspectives on classroom discussions in Chemwania high school.

1.5 Objectives of study.

Establish the perspectives of students towards classroom discussions in Chewania high school

Investigate the students' attitude to classroom discussions

Establish the impact of discussion in developing learner's critical thinking skills

1.6 Research questions.

How do students perceive classroom discussions in English language classes in Chemwania high school.

What is students perception in in participating in class discussions.

What is student's perception on expressing agreement in class discussion?

1.7 Significance of the study

By investigating the views or perspectives of learners towards classroom discussions and its impact on learners critical thinking in ELS classrooms.

Inform ELS teaching practices by providing evidence-based recommendations on discussion strategies and formats that optimize critical thinking development.

Empower ELLs to become more active and engaged learners who can analyze information, form informed opinions, and participate effectively in diverse communities.

Contribute to the broader field of education by offering insights into the complex relationship between discussion-based learning and critical thinking skills development and how such helps them.

This research addresses a critical need in ELS education and has the potential to significantly improve the learning outcomes of ELLs, equipping them with essential skills for success in their academic, professional, and personal lives.

CHAPTER TWO.

2.1 LITERATURE REVIEW.

This study focuses to identify and ascertain the students' perspectives, the impact and the importance of classroom discussions in fostering critical thinking skills among learners of the English language. Classroom discussion is the most agreed tool which helps in learner's attainment of critical thinking skills both locally and also abroad. Modern researchers agree that it's through classroom discussions that critical thinking can be attained in ELS classroom especially in the lower secondary school. In the new lower secondary school for example critical thinking and classroom discussions are mostly emphasized in which one is attained through the other.

Maryam Sa'eerpoor and Monsoor Fahim in their research "The impact of teaching critical thinking skills on reading comprehension on Iranian EFL learners" argue that despite all efforts and costs of foreign language teaching in Iran, students suffer from difficulties in language learning skills. The problem appears to be educational system that teaches traditionally, teachers do their best to teach what to think rather than how to think (shufferman 1991) effectively about the subject matters which is termed as critical thinking. This study did not at all focus on on the impacts of classroom discussions on critical thinking which I am therefore going to focus on my research

Soon Yen Foo(1) and Choon Lang Queck (1), writing for Malaysian online journal of educational technology made a research on developing student critical thinking through asynchronous online discussions believe that online discussions among members of the society and the real world settings, Online discussions help foster how people think critically , they argue that critical thinking is being recognized as an essential skill for people and most importantly students to master in the 21st century. Previous studies have suggested that teaching Critical thinking through asynchronous online discussions (AODs) can be one of the effective ways to equip students with such 21st century skill in the educational settings. This study has a huge gap on the impacts which classroom discussions have on learners critical thinking, they did not do more research and assessment of the impact classroom discussions has on critical

thinking skills which if not done can be concluded has a desservice which my research is going to work upon .

Nada Alsaleh (Teaching Critical thinking) many researches agree with Dewey's point of view that critical thinking begins with students engagement with a problem for example Kurfis (1998.p.2) defined CT has an investigation whose purpose is to explore a situation , phenomenon , question , or a problem to arrive at a hypothesis or conclusion about it that intergrades all available information and that can therefore be convincingly justified . Moreover Pithers and Soden (2000.p.238) state that critical thinking involves being able to identify questions worth pursuing, being able to pursue one's through self directed search and interrogation of knowledge. A sense of that knowledge is constable and being able to present evidence to support one's arguments. Therefore, in regards to about the teaching of critical thinking, it's important to note that for one to teach critical thinking skills or think critically , a discussion must be done that is why I found it necessary to deal with classroom discussions impact on Critical thinking because it would be a questionable decision not to focus on the impacts f discussions towards Fostering CT Among learners which my study is going to deal with

Christopher P.Dwyer in an evaluative review of barriers to critical to Critical thinking in educational and real world settings , stresses Critical thinking(CT) is a metacognitive process - consisting of a number of skills and dispositions, that through purposeful , self regulatory , reflective judgement , increases the chances of producing a logical solution to a problem or a valid conclusion to an argument (Dwyer 2017, 2020. Dwyer et Al 2012 , 2014 , 2015 , 2016. Dwyer and Walsh 2019 , and Quin et Al 2020) . In light of the large aforementioned body of research focusing on enhancing CT through instruction , a growing body of research has also evaluated the manner in which CT instruction is delivered. However , the impact and importance of classroom discussions on Critical thinking attainment has not been focused on and researched out that is why my focus is highly on how discussions help learners think critically .

Based on her review of the literature on participation in postsecondary classrooms, Rocca (2010) concluded that higher levels of student participation lead to improved learning outcomes, increased student motivation, and engagement in “higher levels of thinking, including interpretation, analysis, and synthesis” (p. 188).

Rocca argues that discussion is a powerful means for increasing student participation and engagement and, ultimately, student learning; yet, only two of studies reviewed in this section directly considered whether discussion led to increased student participation. Francisco, Nicoll, and Trautmann (1998) examined the effect of four different teaching methods—cooperative learning, discussion, concept mapping, and lecture—in a chemistry course with 94 students. Each type of teaching was integrated with lectures over the course of the semester. Students perceived higher levels of participation during the discussion format. The researchers offered no objective measure of “participation,” however. Hardman and mirrosz worked with four college instructors to implement “recitation-breaking” strategies designed to facilitate interactive discussions. These teachers were able to create “space in the [classroom] discourse for the students to elaborate on their ideas” (p. 290) that, the researchers concluded, led to higher levels of student participation.

Despite the arguments favoring discussion in postsecondary classes, the available research indicates that discussion in postsecondary classrooms is fairly rare and, when faculty do provide opportunities for discussion, relatively few students tend to participate. For example, based on surveys of economics faculty in 1995, 2001, and 2005, Watts and Becker (2008) reported that, as of 2005, on average, 83% of class time in economics courses was spent on lecture. Watts and Becker note, however, a slight movement over the years toward what they referred to as “instructor-student” discussions. Discussions among students (“Student-student” discussion) were much rarer. Similarly, Nunn (1996), based on observations of 20 upper-level social science courses, reported that, on average, less than 1 min of class time was devoted to any form of student talk, although there was considerable variation across classes with 15 classes spending between 1% and 9% of instructional time on student talk and two classes spending between 20% and 23% of instructional time on student talk. It is unclear how much of this talk qualified as discussion. Benzing and Christ (1997), in a survey of over 200 economics professors across the United States, found that 14% of faculty indicated using class discussion “all the time,” 24% “very often,” 24% “often,” 33% “sometimes,” and 5% “never.” Most of the respondents indicated that they had begun incorporating more discussion into their classrooms over the previous 5 years although, again, the meaning of discussion is not clear. Jensen and Owen (2010), based on their analysis of data from economics classes at 34 universities, observed that postsecondary educators have been generally reluctant to abandon lecture in favor of more

discussion. Opportunities to participate in class discussions may differ across disciplines, however. Based on a linguistic analysis of interactions in 196 classes in 130 university courses, Csomay (2005) concluded that students in Education courses were most likely to be given opportunities to participate in discussions in their classes while Engineering students were least likely to have opportunities for discussion.

Even when given the opportunity, many students still do not participate in classroom discussions. Rocca (2010) cites an abundance of research indicating that relatively few students participate regularly in their courses even when offered the opportunity, and many students do not participate at all. Students may be more willing to participate in smaller classes than large ones, however. This finding is supported by Nunn (1996) who, based on observations, field notes, and observational checklists in 20 upper-level undergraduate courses, determined that only about one quarter of students participated in discussions. There was a wide range of participation across the classes ranging from a class in which there was “no participation” to four classes in which participation in discussion ranged from 40% to 63% of the students. A survey of students in these same classes indicated that approximately half of the students reported that they participated in class discussions infrequently or never. Foster (1981), on the other hand, found high levels of participation among third-year medical students in small, “clinical discussion groups.” Over the course of 62 small-group sessions, all but 4 of 119 students participated in small-group discussion suggesting that high-achieving medical students are willing to participate in class discussions.

A number of researchers have attempted to identify factors that account for students’ reluctance to participate in class discussions. Based on a survey and focus group interviews of 400 second-year social work students, Hyde and Ruth (2002) concluded that shyness and lack of preparation were the main reasons students chose not to participate in class discussions. Other research suggests that race and gender may also affect student participation in class discussions. Kaufmann (2010), for example, found that whole class discussions in an ethnic studies course tended to be dominated by White females while working-class students of color were likely to feel silenced. In her review, Rocca (2010) found that females were less likely to engage in any form of class participation—including discussion—than males. Based on a survey of students for 51 courses at a private, Midwestern university, Fassinger (1995) reported that males saw

themselves as more confident and more involved in class discussions while females saw themselves as more prepared for class, more interested in the subject matter, and more interested in peers' comments and questions than males. Wade's (1994) study of education majors' attitudes toward discussion indicated that three fourths of the men surveyed thought that their ideas "always" or "often" made an important contribution to discussion, but less than half the women indicated similar confidence in the quality of their contributions.

Atkinson (1997) called for educators' attention to be cautious in teaching language learners critical thinking skills. Atkinson described critical thinking as a social practice imprinted in English-speaking cultures, believing individualism and self-expression were culturally unique to Western cultures. Educators might be imposing values that did not align with learners' cultural values by teaching critical thinking skills. Atkinson believed that Asian culture emphasized contextualization, consent, and relationships with the world, which impeded analytical skills by Western norms. Of course, Atkinson did not claim that language learners did not think; rather, learners had their own ways of thinking from their respective cultural backgrounds, and it, in most cases, did not align with Western logic and arguments (Atkinson, 1997, 2003; Cutrone, 2010; Park, 2013, as cited in DeWaelche, 2015). Thus, pressuring language learners to decontextualize and align with the Westerners' norms could draw potential problems (Atkinson, 1997, 2003; Cutrone, 2010). Despite the consideration of learners' cultural differences, other educators criticized the stereotypes implied in the previous point of view, which indicates the tendency to dichotomize the world into two cultures, the West and the East (Kubota, 1999; Kumaravadivelu, 2003). The categorization of viewing Western as critical, analytical, decontextualized, and Eastern as vague, ambiguous, relational demonstrates how culture was understood as "fixed, objective, homogeneous, ahistorical, and apolitical [...] [that did] not recognize the organic and plural nature of culture influenced by political and ideological forces and intricate power relations within the culture and between cultures at a certain time" (p. 17, Kubota, 1999). The labels also overlooked the complexity of postcolonial and poststructuralist views of cultures.

Further, the argument that language educators should not impose different ways of thinking on language learners lacked poststructuralist and postcolonial concerns (Kubota, 1999,

2004). Language educators should include critical pedagogies to help learners find their voices in the world rather than being consumed by the ideas dictated by the government or the world (Kubota, 1999; Crookes, 2012; Sultan et al., 2017).

The most potent argument for discussion in postsecondary classrooms is its potential for boosting student achievement (Rocca, 2010) by engaging students in higher levels of learning (Wade, 1994). Indeed, there is some evidence supporting the claim that discussion positively affects student learning in college classrooms. Harton, Richardson, Barreras, Rockloff, and Latane (2002), for example, examined the impact of an approach to discussion called “Focused Interactive Learning” (FIL) on student achievement in five undergraduate psychology classes. While in class students responded in writing to sets of multiple-choice and opinion questions and then discussed their answers for 1 to 2 min with other students. Occasionally, this was followed by whole-class discussions. These discussions were undertaken for every other chapter in the psychology textbook and, overall, students performed better on end-of-chapter test items they had discussed than on chapters they had not discussed.

De Grave, Schmidt, and Boshuizen (2001) also reported a positive effect for discussion on student achievement. Forty-eight first-year medical students were assigned to either an experimental group that participated in a problem-based discussion of blood pressure regulation prior to reading a chapter on this topic or to a control group that participated in a discussion of a problem of vision before reading the chapter on blood pressure regulation. Students in the blood pressure regulation group recalled 25% more information from the text than control group students who had not discussed blood pressure regulation.

Other researchers have found similar effects for discussion. Christianson and Fisher (1999) reported that students enrolled in a discussion/laboratory biology class, compared to students enrolled in large lecture/laboratory classes, developed a deeper understanding of osmosis and diffusion. Similarly, Lyon and Lagowski (2008) found that students in a general chemistry class who volunteered to participate in small discussion groups outperformed students who did not participate in these groups on course examinations and final grades. Birney and McKeachie (1955) reported that students taught by discussion generally achieved superior performance on measures of thinking, retention after the final exam, motivation, and attitude change.

Positive effects for discussion go beyond exam scores and course grades. Josten (1996), for instance, examined the effect of discussion on the reading comprehension of 80 “developmental readers” in a 2-year college setting. One week before the final exam, some sections of the course used traditional highlighting and recitation to address a text and the other sections used an inquiry-based, decision-making process as a guide for student-led discussions of the same reading. At the end of these sessions, students were asked to write everything they could remember about the topic of the reading/discussion and respond to eight prompted recall questions requiring various levels of thinking. Josten concluded that, although the combined scores for the discussion and control groups were not significantly different, the sections of those instructors Josten deemed to have adequately prepared to lead the discussions performed significantly better than the control group. This finding suggests that not just any sort of discussion will be effective, an issue addressed in greater detail below.

Levin (1995) reported that discussion was a “crucial variable” in in-service teachers’ ability to learn from case studies. Experimental and control conditions each consisted of 12 teachers subdivided into two groups of six teachers. All groups read and wrote about a case and then read and wrote about the same case a second time several weeks later. Between these two events, the experimental group participated in a discussion of the case study. The second time they wrote about the cases, teachers in the discussion group, compared to the teachers in the control group, elaborated on their original thinking, displaying changes in their understanding of the case study. Levin concluded that teachers in the control group failed to present any new ideas or insights after their second reading of the case.

In a related study of pre-service teachers, Copeland and Decker (1996) reported that students who discussed video cases in groups of three were somewhat more effective adopting, transforming, or creating new ways of making meaning of the vignettes they worked with over one third of the time. However, since there was no control group, it is not clear if other approaches to reviewing case studies would have been equally effective. Bolt (1998) also reported an improvement in physical education students’ “general propensity to identify problems and propose solutions” (p. 96) when they participated in case study discussions.

Discussion has also been found to positively affect student writing. Hewett (2000) compared the influence of in-class and online discussions on students’ revision of their writing. Hewett

collected data from two sections of the same course, one a “traditional oral classroom” and the other a “networked computer classroom.” Discussion in both environments focused primarily on students’ writing although the discussion in each setting had different characteristics. Oral talk, for instance, was more focused on abstract, global idea development, whereas discussion in the online environment focused more on concrete writing issues and management. Despite these differences, students in both environments used ideas generated during discussions to revise their writing. No evidence was offered about the effectiveness of these revisions, however.

While the studies reviewed above support the efficacy of discussion in postsecondary classrooms, other researchers have found discussion to be no more effective—and sometimes less effective—than other pedagogical approaches. Liefeld and Herrmann (2002), for example, compared two sections of a consumer studies course. Both sections did the same readings and both sections participated in class presentations and lectures, but one section spent 1 hr per week in discussions of class readings. The other section did not participate in discussions but instead took and retook quizzes based on course readings to the point of mastery. The researchers created a 60-item test based on course readings for pre- and post-tests. Students in both groups performed at significantly higher levels on the post-test; however, the mean score of the mastery-testing group was significantly higher on the post-test than the mean score of the seminar-discussion group.

Garside (1996) found that discussion was no more effective at promoting student learning than lecture in six sections of an undergraduate interpersonal relations course. Half of the sections were assigned to a lecture condition and half to a discussion condition in which small groups of students responded to questions provided by the instructor through discussion. The intervention was limited to a single class meeting. Based on a test of course content, including questions deemed to require high and low levels of critical thinking, the lecture condition produced significant learning from pre-test to post-test with regard to the total score, lower-level items, and higher-level items. Discussion produced more learning from pre-test to post-test only with regard to higher-level items. Although both the discussion and lecture conditions produced gains in student learning from the pre-test to post-test, there were no significant differences in the post-test scores of the two groups.

Stone (1997) also reported that discussion was no more or less effective than lecture for acquiring information presented during a museum tour. Six intact college art education classes were assigned randomly to one of the three conditions: a lecture condition, an inquiry/discussion tour, and a control group. In both treatment conditions, students were given factual information, but in the discussion groups, students were encouraged to ask questions and make comments to which the guides responded to with remarks and/or queries. The dependent measures included a multiple choice pre-test and two post-tests, one given immediately after the tour and another 3 weeks later. Based on comparisons of the pre- and post-test conditions, Stone concluded that students in both intervention groups did significantly better than the control group in the post-test condition, but neither group did well on retention as measured by the second post-test.

Bobby et al. (2012) compared the performance of students who were asked to reformulate multiple-choice questions in a biochemistry module individually and in small discussion groups. Although students' gains from the individual task and the small-group discussions were substantial, there was no advantage for either the individual or small-group discussion conditions, and this was true for various categories of students (low achievers, medium achievers, high achievers).

Two widely cited studies from the 1950s, Eglash (1954) and Guetzkow, Kelly, and McKeachie (1954), also reported no advantage for discussion over other pedagogical approaches. Eglash (1954), for example, examined two sections of a course taught by the same instructor, one organized around small and large discussion group, the other taught through lecture. No differences were found in the achievement of the two groups. Guetzkow et al. (1954) compared the effect of three instructional approaches: drill-recitation, group discussion, and study tutorial. All students experienced a common lecture, used the same textbook, and were given the identical assignments. Teaching methods differed only in weekly supplemental sections. There were no significant differences between the groups in terms of educational achievement.

The research on the efficacy of discussion in postsecondary settings is decidedly mixed. However, the research reviewed above focuses mainly on student performance on traditional quizzes and exams and, in this context, discussion may be no more or less effective than other pedagogical approaches. Proponents of discussion argue that discussion has the potential to engage students in higher levels of thinking and critical reflection (e.g., Auster & MacRone,

1994; Crabtree, Royeen, & Mu, 2001; Wade, 1994) as well as providing fertile ground for collaborative meaning making (Eeds & Wells, 1991; Townsend & Pace, 2005). The traditional assessments utilized in the studies reviewed above may not be sensitive to these outcomes accounting for the mixed results.

A few studies do suggest that discussion is an effective means for stimulating higher forms of student learning. Haroutunian-Gordon and Tartakoff (1996) routinely engaged students enrolled in a course on problem solving in mathematics and music in an approach called “interpretive discussion” in which discussion focused on evidentiary-based claims in response to open-ended questions. Haroutunian-Gordon and Tartakoff’s qualitative analysis of discussion transcripts shows students engaged in high-level mathematical thinking. No claim is made that discussion was the cause of this high-level thinking; the authors argue, however, that interpretive discussion provided the context within which this kind of thinking occurred.

Lehman and Scharer (1996) found that discussion affected the quality of pre-service and in-service teachers’ interpretations of texts (as opposed to simple recall of textual information). Students were asked to read a piece of young adult fiction and record their responses to the text in writing as they read. They were then asked to participate in whole-class discussions of the text. Following the discussion, both pre-service and in-service teachers’ (n = 129) text-based responses to the text were judged by the researchers to be “more analytical, inferential, and evaluative in relation to the literary textual elements” (p. 31).

Self, Baldwin, and Olivarez (1993) used a test of moral reasoning (arguably a form of higher-level thinking) to assess the effectiveness of a film-discussion course for medical students designed to develop “more humanistic, compassionate, and caring physicians” (p. 383). The researchers reported significant differences in posttest scores between a group that took the course for two semesters and a control group that did not take the course but not between a group of students that took the course for only one semester and the control group. Unfortunately, because of the design of the study, the only conclusion that can be drawn is that a course that included films and discussion taken for two semesters was better at improving medical students’ performance on a test of moral reasoning than taking no course at all.

Like research on the efficacy of discussion in general, research on the efficacy of discussion as a means of promoting higher levels of thinking is mixed. Thyer, Jackson-White, Sutphen, and Carrillo (1992) examined student performance in two graduate classes in social work. One class responded in writing to study questions based on the following week's readings and then presented their answers in class. The other class was taught through a structured teaching method called "learning through discussion" (p. 239) where each student was responsible for presenting a summary of readings to the class as a means of stimulating discussion. Based on student performance on an "essay-type" test, the authors reported that students in the study question group made significantly higher gains on their scores for the critical analysis assignment compared to the structured discussion group. Also, as summarized above, Garside (1996) found discussion no more (or less) effective than lecture in improving student performance on test items deemed to require higher levels of thinking.

Student perceptions of classroom discussion in college classrooms

A number of researchers have used student perceptions as an indirect measure of the efficacy of discussion in postsecondary classrooms. Windschitl (1999), for example, persuaded two science instructors to include brief, small-group discussions in their classes around questions that did not have "single discrete answers that could be recalled or generated quickly . . . but rather the questions would encourage elaborated higher-order thinking" (p. 23). Discussions average approximately 5 min. At the end of the semester, students were asked to respond to several statements (e.g., "the small group discussion questions helped my understanding of the lecture material" [p. 25]) using a 5-point Likert-type scale. Students indicated that, while they felt that the discussions supported their learning, 5 min was insufficient for meaningful discussion.

Wade (1994) used interviews and a questionnaire to explore undergraduate education majors' beliefs and attitudes toward class discussion. Students indicated that they learned from discussions but, again, many students believed that not all professors provided sufficient time for in-depth discussions. Other researchers also report favorable response to discussions. Based on a 10-item survey and focus group interviews, Randall (2009) reported that students in a course on adolescence believed that literature circle discussions increased their understanding of literature, in part by allowing them to hear the perspectives of other students. Brazeau, Hughes, and Prokai (1999) found that students in a first-year pharmacy course generally liked small-group, case-

based discussions and believed that these discussions supported learning although they felt that 50 min was insufficient to achieve all the goals the instructor had set out for the discussions. Crabtree et al. (2001) reported that students in an occupational therapy course indicated that an approach called “learning through discussion” led them to think critically about issues raised in the course. Crabtree et al. noted, however, that at least one of the students in the course was highly critical of the “learning through discussion” process. Jensen and Owen (2010), drawing on a data set that included students enrolled in introductory economics courses from 34 universities, concluded that, overall, students preferred classes with less lecture and more discussion and that classes with more discussion were, from the students’ perspective, more likely to encourage them to take economics coursework in the future. Other researchers have also reported that students indicated that in-class discussions made their courses more interesting (Josten, 1996) and enhanced their learning (Finkel, 1999; Hamann, Pollock, & Wilson, 2012).

There is also some evidence, based on student perceptions, that discussions may have a positive effect on students’ oral and written communication skills. Based on an end-of-course survey of second-term MBA students, Dallimore, Hertenstein, and Platt (2008) concluded that the students felt that participation in discussions improved their oral and written communication skills while enhancing their learning overall and generally increasing their confidence.

Based on focus group interviews with 43 sophomores and juniors Roehling, Vander Kooi, Dykema, Quisenberry, and Vandlen (2011) identified three main reasons that students valued discussions. From the students’ perspective, discussions made learning more active, resulting in deeper understanding and promoting perspective taking. Not all students have been entirely positive about discussion, however. Eglash (1954), for example, found that students in a lecture-only section of a course—compared to students in a discussion section—had more favorable attitudes toward the course. Although there were no differences in achievement between the two sections, Eglash reported unfavorable comments from students in the discussion section including the assertion that the reliance on discussion amounted to an abdication of instructor responsibility. Harton et al. (2002) reported that, while students were relatively positive about a “focused interactive learning” approach to discussion, they felt that this approach had more of an effect on interpersonal relations than their learning despite the evidence presented above that students performed better on end-of-chapter test items they had discussed than on chapters they

had not discussed. Faw (1949) also found that, while students indicated a preference for “student-centered” discussions, two thirds of students who participated in these discussions expressed reservations about the intellectual rigor of this approach despite the finding that these students outperformed students assigned to non-discussion groups on course examinations.

Class Discussion is focused on knowledge construction by using dialogues with a specific purpose of encouraging students’ participation in their own learning. It is expected that students’ increased participation will make them responsible for their own and other students’ learning (Thomas 2017). In class discussions, students actively construct their understanding of topics, encourage general participation and invite opinions from their peers. In the context of the present study, class discussion is defined as oral interaction amongst students with the aim of developing knowledge on the topic discussed.

Class discussion is a learner-centred approach that is widely applied in most English as a second language (henceforth ESL) classroom to encourage students to become increasingly independent and self-directed in their learning (Green, Christopher & Lam 2008). This means that students are required to reflect on their own and others’ performances rather than merely relying on the teachers to disseminate knowledge. When there is an active engagement between students and their learning, they will be able to develop the ability to think critically (Pollock & Hamann n.d.), construct new knowledge and eventually evolve into effective life-long learners (Green, Christopher & Lam 2008).

For ESL students, learning the target language may pose some challenges, considering that each language has its own set of rules. The challenge is greater for ESL students who have limited exposure and access to learning English, as in the Malaysian context, where native English speakers are not always available. This is similar for some Malaysian ESL students, specifically the Malay students in the present study. Thus, they need continuous support and opportunities to engage in discussions and express themselves in the target language to assist their learning of English language. Class discussions in the ESL classrooms act as both a method to develop students’ thinking skills and also a means for language acquisition.

One of the benefits of class discussion is that it contributes to higher level thinking through the questioning that occurs during the discussions. Generally, discussions will involve higher order

thinking based on Bloom's Taxonomy (1956), provided that the lesson is planned with a higherorder thinking objective in mind (Collins 2014). Class discussions also offer a format for students to think critically and integrate information (Roehling, Lee, Dykema, Quisenberry & Vandlen 2011).

Additionally, class discussion also has an impact on students' affective development, including their beliefs and attitudes about various concepts (Thomas 2017). However, Meirovich (2012) mentioned that participative practices such as class discussions are useful only when students possess certain information and knowledge to partake in it; yet, even with these prerequisites they might have difficulty expressing themselves. This might be the case of Malay ESL learners who are mainly exposed to using their mother tongue in their daily conversation, thus when involved in class discussions in the English language classroom, they may have a certain anxiety and fear of being disapproved or even ridiculed (Weaver & Qi 2005). Hence, their participation in the class discussions may be affected by the emotional climate of the ESL classroom and their level of confidence in using the language.

Furthermore, cultural differences can also have a negative effect on ESL students' success in learning English language. Sangpanasthada (2006) listed specific examples of how cultural influence may lead to discouragement of using the target language. He noted that in oriental cultures, criticism is often viewed as confrontational, and therefore avoided. ESL students who are not used to giving or receiving criticisms may feel uncomfortable when asked to engage in critical thinking activities like class discussion, and avoid to judge or be judged, so they may not participate actively in class discussions. It is also acknowledged that in some cultures, expressing one's opinion in public is considered as being boastful or self-promoting, and this attitude often inhibits ESL students when they are required to participate in class discussions or interact with other students. Due to these cultural differences, it is important to ensure that ESL students are feeling comfortable to participate in class discussions with their peers.

Since class discussions have direct impact on students' cognitive skills, Piaget's (1952) cognitive theory is worth reviewing. The researcher explained that two processes are involved in cognitive development, namely assimilation and accommodation. Cognitive growth happens when assimilation and accommodation constantly interweave. Although Piaget's cognitive theory does not consider language as a constructive factor in cognitive development, he

emphasised that cognitive structure is important for language acquisition. Also, Piaget (1952) did not explicitly relate his theory to education, but later researchers (Blake & Pope 2008) have explained how features of Piaget's theory can be applied to teaching and learning languages. The ensuing sub-sections elaborate further on the process of adaptation to the world, which happens through assimilation and accommodation.

CHAPTER THREE

3.0 METHODS OF DATA COLLECTION

3.1. RESEARCH METHODS

3.1.1. Interviews

The researcher used interviews to collect his data. I interviewed a variety of students to find out what they know about my research area . Therefore, the respondents I met had a lot of knowledge about discussion and thinking critically and they were very positive . Among my respondents was 15 year old senior one student Mary Chesuro who happens to a student of Chemwania high school in Kween district.

3.1.2 Focus group discussions.

I was able to gather a group of different respondents and find out from them about what they understood by critical thinking and discussions and how they are used and also how they go hand in hand with one another, most of the interviewees included were students from Chemwania high school since English language is a compulsory subject in the ordinary level and they were of great help to me.

3.1.3 Close reading.

Understanding the perspectives of classroom discussions among learners. Close reading was necessary to understand how they see discussions in their classes

3.1.4 Document review.

Reviewing documents that were relevant for example various researches on class discussions and critical thinking, I visited the school main library and various books and documents on classroom discussions on the importance and learners viewpoints on the same. Newspapers, book reviews, cyclopedias and articles from the internet are also responsible for this data.

3.2 Study Area.

The study area of this research titled “assessing the impact of classroom discussions on learners’ critical thinking skills ” is Chemwania high school Kapraron town council in Kween district

being the school with learners who do English language and therefore are the appropriate respondents to research on.

3.3. Study Population.

The targeted populations of this research are learners of lower secondary School of ages between 14 and 18 because those are the students in the ordinary level of secondary School education in Uganda as a whole and also in Chemwania high school in particular.

3.4 Sampling Criteria.

The Sampling criteria for this research was that respondents were selected bearing in mind of their understanding of the topic. In this research, 15 students were selected from senior one and senior two since senior four have busy schedules because they are preparing for the final assessment of their four-year course. Seven were girls while eight other were boys of age between 14 and 17.

3.5. Research Methods and Instruments

Face to face interaction. On 18/July/2024, I interacted with my respondents at Chemwania high school who gave me the right information on their perspectives about classroom discussions.

Phone recording. Because the respondents were faster in the talking, I used phone recording in order to analyze later what they had said during my final report.

3.6 Data Analysis Procedures

This is a technique of making references by systematically and objectively identifying specific characteristics of messages and using the same to relate to the subject matter being studied. It therefore, provides a qualitative image of the respondents in questions, ideas, attitudes and feelings. In my analysis, I also explained the impact of classroom discussions on Critical thinking skills. . This section aims at establishing the uses of discussion on CT in ELS classes. The questions were sought to explore the contribution of classroom discussions on CT to the aesthetic and thematic beauty of ELS classes.

3.7 Ethical Considerations

I informed my respondents that I wanted to interview them such that they can be aware of my intentions and expectations. Consent was also sought before I could start recording their responses; I found it ethically important to inform people when you want to record their voices which they accepted. Learner's privacy was put into consideration while conducting this research.

3.8 Limitations of the Study

The data /content presented by learners was limited due to biases among learners of coming into an encounter with a new person which also resulted in biased responses as they shied away. Bias of language as also another issue, most of them were using the local language to critically explain some hard terms which they didn't know in English which the researcher could not understand.

Area limitations were also a problem in a way that accessing learners was hard they were busy with other classes' schedules.

CHAPTER FOUR

4.0 PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

4.1. Table showing sex of respondents

Name of school	Males	Females	Total
Chemwania high school	07	08	15

Considerations were given to neutrality, the class more female than male students. There were 08 girls and 07 boys from both senior one and senior two whom I collected data on Chemwania high school who were available for interviews.

4.2. Analysis and interpretation of data for validation of hypothesis one and two

The hypothesis of the study is to show that using classroom as a method to attain critical thinking skills as improved English language learning. To test the hypothesis, learners were issued questionnaires and observations were carried out. The findings are presented below.4.2.1.

4.2.1. Predominantly used methods of Critical thinking (C.T)

Classroom discussions	05
Practical teaching	07
Personal reading	04

The majority of the learners in Chemwania high school used classroom discussions to attain critical thinking skills in the English language classroom (07) some believe in teaching and doing tasks practically which helps them to solve issues hence critical thinking (05), and (04) of them said personal reading of textbooks and notes helps them think Critically and solve issues.

While we raise some concerns about the way critical thinking is attained by students in secondary schools, we strongly emphasize that we are not in any way opposing teacher note making in classroom. Therefore, Roca argues that discussions is a powerful means for increasing student participation and engagement and ultimately, student learning, yet only two studies reviewed in this section directly considered whether discussion led to increased student

participation. Francis, Nicoli and Troutman (1998) examined the effect of four different teaching methods -Cooperative learning, discussion, Concept mapping and lecture in a chemistry class with 94 students.

4.3.To establish the benefits of classroom discussions on critical thinking

4.3.1.Do you benefit from classroom discussions? How

Learners benefit from classroom discussions, 99 percent of the learners said they benefited allot from classroom discussions .They said that classroom discussions helps them in the following, achieve critical thinking, cooperation, problem solving, and communication. 19 said it helps them attain critical thinking , 6 said classroom discussion helps them to communicate well , 3 respondents said it helps in attaining problem solving skills and 2 of the 30 respondents believed that classroom discussions increases their cooperation abilities.

4.3.2 What are some of the obstacles do your learners go through when conducting classroom discussion.

I interviewed the English language teacher at Chemwania high school and also some of the questions were explained on the challenges facing when discussing. He said among challenges facing learners in classrooms discussions are limited time, noise making in class, reluctance by some learners and lack of close supervision by teachers. In which most learners believed those were the main challenges they went through while conducting classroom discussions as seen in the table below

Problem	Number of students
Limited time	10
Noise making	09
Reluctance by some learners	06
Lack of close supervision	05

4.3.3. How often do learners discuss in class

How often	Student's Number
Every time	08
Occasionally	03
Rarely	02
Never	01

Besides developing the four language skills of speaking, writing, reading and listening, discussions can assist in student's vocabulary growth, Maryam and Fahim Mansour claim that classroom discussions can offer the same potential for vocabulary learning as texts read through repeated encounters with unknown words. However their research provides evidence that discussions mostly help in attaining vocabulary and grammar. Students believed that discussing a topic in English at least thrice in a week will help them solve issues and think critically and also answer questions.

4.4.what is the students perception in participating in class discussions

4.4.1.Do you like classroom discussions?

During my research, I found out that most of the students had a positive attitude towards classroom discussions. Learners said it was fun discussing with their colleagues as solutions to most of the problems in English language were solved easily as compared with activity or assignment or even homework. 70 percent of the interviewees argued that not only in English language classes should be discussed but also other subjects too especially in the new lower secondary school curriculum.

Table showing how students perceive classroom discussions.

How do you perceive classroom discussions	Number of students
Best way to understand.	10
Good way to understand in class	03
Not decided	02

4.4.2. Apart from English language do you enjoy classroom discussions in other subjects.

Classroom discussions are part of every subject in class in any school environment. Most of the learners agreed that classroom discussions should be the major method of teaching critical thinking and other aspects in all subjects offered in, Chemwania high school. However some were in argument that classroom discussions should not be only method but also other methods be used like lecture method, individual reading and teacher supervision reading and answering questions . As indicated from the table below most of the learners favored classroom discussion as compared to other method as of instruction

How often discussions should be used in all subjects.

Opinions	Number of respondents
Every time	09
Occasionally	04
Rarely	01
Never	01

4.4.3. What other ways can you as a learner understand English other than classroom discussions

Personal reading	08
Teaching	05
Watching videos	02

08 of the 15 students believed that they attained critical thinking skills in ELT through also other ways like personal reading as they say it is fun to read an English language related content and understand it, 05 of the students believed in teacher lecture method reading and 02 in watching videos

4.5. what is student's perception on expressing agreement in class discussions

4.5. Is disagreement allowed In your discussion group

Most of the believe that there is room for disagreement of views and opinions in most discussions groups thy are selected into.as indicated in the table below

Level of respect for opinions	Number of students
Every time	07
Occasionally	05
Never	03

4.5.2. Do such discussions have an impact

School	Has a positive impact	Has no impact	I don't know
Chemwania high school	11	01	03

According to the student responses, the use of classroom discussions in teaching a Critical thinking has great impact to learners because the learners are able to mediate and rehearsal answering tasks and assignments activities in the curriculum, learners believe that when they discuss in class, they are able to think critically and solve issues as maybe assigned by the teacher. Classroom discussions also increases learner's participation in class and even mastery of key concept whenever they are discussing. On the other hand, discussion is complicated as it's time consuming and some learners are not cooperative as seen from the table above, in fact some make noise when they are discussing. However, majority of learners agreed that language lessons which involve discussion were more fun and they understood more and eight out of ten indicated that they liked classes involving discussion as they impacted on their C.T. Same can be seen in regards discussion helped learners maintain their interest and concentration while in class. There was however a great greater spread in answers about whether discussions helped students to gain confidence in speaking to their classmates 85% strongly agreed, three out of ten

disagreed and roughly one out of four neither agreed nor disagreed. Furthermore, the teacher commented on the supportive climate and the student’s courage in standing up in front of the class: “This is so nice! You smile, take good care of each other, and listen with enthusiasm. It is truly wonderful.” The teacher in school 10 also talked about the importance of a supportive climate, encouraging students to give positive feedback to make it less scary to stand in front of the class for the first time. The specified learning aim for language arts in the students’ weekly plan during the week of book presentations was as follows: Week plan, School: Comment on positive features of your own and others` presentations. Give advice on how to improve your own and others’ presentations. Participate constructively in developing criteria. Throughout the lessons, the teacher in School 10 gave verbal feedback and asked both process-oriented questions like “Did you find the book easy to read?” and more investigative questions like “Did you feel that you got to know the characters?”, inviting students to elaborate on their presentations. However, these questions were answered briefly and superficially, for example “Yes, it was written a bit about them, where they were born and such” (student).

4.5.3. Classroom discussions are very important in all subjects

Totally agree	12
Agree	02
Disagree	01
Totally disagree	00

As seen from the above table, most of the learners totally agree that classroom discussions are very important in all the subjects offered in their school 12,02 agreed that it is true classroom discussions are important while those who disagreed and totally disagreed were 01 and 00 respectively

CHAPTER FIVE

INTERPRETATION AND DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

5.1 Interpretation

From the interactions with teachers, it can be confirmed that teachers and students use classroom discussions to improve on the critical thinking abilities. They confessed to majorly depend on dividing learners into groups and giving an activity to discuss which makes them to think critically during the teaching and learning process as shown in the tables in chapter four above. More than fifty percent of the learners agreed that that using classroom discussions helps them in attaining Critical Thinking C.T, creativity and problem solving which is a positive impact of such discussions. On the side of the learners, they said they took interest in using classroom discussions to foster critical thinking skills because many learners come up with solutions whenever they discuss with fellow learners. Thus Critical thinking is most attained through classroom discussions in secondary schools. However, some teachers and learners also argued that classroom discussions seem to be more time consuming bearing in mind of periods given to English language lessons.

5.2 Discussion of results

5.2.1 To establish the benefits of classroom discussions on Critical thinking skills

Most learners whom the researcher interviewed agreed that classroom discussions have a huge benefit on their critical thinking skills. The students said that discussing an issue in class has helped in problem solving, whereby the teacher asks a Quiz and learners discuss it and come up with a solution. When learners discuss in class they tend to form groups which the researcher found it facilitates cooperation and unity among learners irrespective of age, race or cultural or social backgrounds of the learners. On an eye witness, learners were given a task to solve, when they did it alone (personal) they didn't perform well and when they discussed in groups and as a class the answers were good and they performed well helping them answer and attempt questions and activities easily.

During one purposive lesson/session, the teacher gave learners a critical thinking question to discuss in ten minutes and present the findings before the whole class. Their answers were all correct meaning classroom discussions has a huge benefit on Critical thinking.

5.2.2. Investigate students' perceptions towards classroom discussions.

The researcher found out that most students had a positive attitude towards classroom discussions. Learners said it was fun discussing with fellow learners as solutions to most problems were found easily as compared to personal work or homework task. 70% of the learners argued that not only English classes should discussions be carried out but generally all the subjects they study in the school should employ discussion method. Therefore, learners had a very positive attitude towards classroom discussions, topics studied especially needing critical thinking, learners opted for classroom discussions, they say diverse ideas which are not limited but shared by fellow students. However, a little percentage of learners had a negative mind/ thought or attitude towards classroom discussions, they argued that discussing in class wastes time in organizing groups and yet some learners do not contribute leaving and make noise thus making them understanding or critical thinking limited.

5.2.3. Establish the impact of classroom discussions in developing learners Critical thinking skills in the new lower secondary school curriculum.

Classroom discussions have a significant impact on developing learner's Critical thinking skills. Through discussions, learners are exposed to different perspectives and ideas which helps them think Critically and evaluate information objectively. Classroom discussions also encourage learners to ask questions, analyze information and make connections between different concepts. It helps learners to develop their reasoning and problem solving skills which are essential components of critical thinking. Additionally, it provides learners with an opportunity to practice effective communication skills such as active listening, respectful disagreement and constructive feedback. Classroom discussions also promote higher order thinking skills such as analysis, synthesis and evaluation, students are challenged to think critically about information presented, identify biases or logical fallacies and draw evidence based conclusions. They learn to do questions, assumptions, consider alternatives and develop well-reasoned arguments.

5.3 CONCLUSION.

From findings of this study, the following conclusions about the students' perspectives on classroom discussions were made.

There is a very positive attitude on classroom discussions and they perceive it as one the very best ways in studying and understanding. Classroom discussions play a vital role in teaching to attain critical thinking in chemwania high school which improves learner's problem solving, helps also in vocabulary, fluency pronunciation listening skills and active involvement in class activities and helps those who passively attend classes

Having four skills, the speaking skill cannot be properly nurtured and developed in learners by making them passive attendants, it is through classroom discussions that get them to think critically and use discussions to make social interaction thus attaining critical thinking.

5.4 RECOMENTATIONS

Teachers of English language need to adopt and put use of discussions in teaching and learning of English language classes. Having noticed the importance of classroom discussions towards critical thinking, teachers need to use them often during classes.

Classroom discussions involves formation of discussion groups; this research recommends that teachers should ensure that passiveness among students does not occur during group discussions for all learners to attain critical thinking. They should be supervised and guided by the teacher. Some become more passive when doing tasks and when discussing which affect their attainment of critical thinking C.T. Therefore, thee groups should be strictly followed to ensure every student participates.

This research basically focused on the students' perspectives, opinion and viewpoints on classroom discussions in the English language classes in the new lower secondary school curriculum.

The researcher recommends that further research can still be done on classroom discussions and critical thinking C.T. I therefore recommend other researchers to do research on the importance of discussions towards problem solving and other competences that need to be attained in the new lower secondary school curriculum like communication and collaboration. I would also like

to direct and recommend that anyone to do his or her research on how can critical thinking be achieved or attained apart from classroom discussions. I also urge other researchers to do their work on how creativity and problem solving can be achieved by learners in the new lower secondary school curriculum and the benefits of teaching learners' creativity.

I further urge that other researchers interested in the field of classroom discussions, critical thinking and the students' perspectives to do farther studies on the other diverse ways of understanding of English language classes for example personal reading, note making, lecture method and the learners perspectives on these teaching method.

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