Motivating Language Learners during Times of Crisis through Project-based Learning: Filming Activities at the Arab International University (AIU)

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Abstract—Times of crisis and the critical conditions that Syrian students have experienced during the last six years have a significant influence on their level of motivation, their academic performance and their attitudes towards their study in general and language learning in specific. This study explores the effects of project-based learning through video making on students' motivation and attitudes towards English courses in comparison to the negative effects produced by the traditional teaching which is mainly based on textbooks. This research is carried out at Arab international university, Foreign Language Center. A total of 24 intermediate students from three different majors participated in the study. Data were drawn from a number of resources including group discussions and informal notes, student self-evaluation questionnaire, and students' performance results. The learning outcomes were remarkable. The motivational level and the attitudes of the experimental group in the second part of the course in which project-based learning sessions were held improved and witnessed a difference in performance comparing it to the first eight weeks of the course in which traditional teaching approach was implemented. Moreover, the learners have improved their linguistic skills when attempting to write the video scripts in addition to developing their oral presentation skills, team work, and their organization and planning skills.

Index Terms—motivation, students' attitudes and feelings, times of crisis, project-based learning, and documentary video production

I. INTRODUCTION

According to Dornyei (1998, 2010), motivating students in English as a foreign language classrooms is not an easy task and it embeds various psycho-sociological and linguistic factors. While motivation is "such a complex phenomenon" (Petrides, 2006, p.2) that has different definitions(Liuliene & Metiuniene, 2006), it is used in this paper to refer to some strategies that can change students' negative attitudes towards learning English and increase their motivation in times of crisis.

Students' anxieties caused by crisis and war can greatly affect students' academic performance, their learning, and most importantly their motivation. Thus, instructors, along with administrations, are responsible for assisting those students to overcome these difficulties and to cope with the current difficult conditions. How to achieve this and how to motivate students in such situations is one of the main concerns of many teachers in Syria.

In this paper, students' viewpoints about this issue, that's their negative attitudes of English language learning and their lack of motivation were elicited. Depending on their responses, I was able to suggest and apply some strategies that assist in motivating students.

II. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Students during Times of Crisis

The term crisis in general is defined as a series of events that affect a certain country, such as "economic or financial collapses, epidemics, genocides, mass terrorism, natural disasters, political or civil unrest, and wars" (McVay, 2015, p.19). The Syrian crisis that started in 2011 produced most of the aforementioned events that affected the whole country in all different aspects of life including the field of education and created an 'education emergency'(Deane, 2016). Researches stressed the importance of education, but this field is "a second-order priority in conflict and post-conflict contexts" (Deane, 2016).Little importance is given to higher education when the issue of education is addressed in conflict contexts, and the main focus is on basic and secondary education (Deane, 2016). University students should be given a lot of attention and the higher education should be the focus of ministries and agencies in times of crisis because of two major factors: first, the higher education is an essential part to "the building of human capital" which is defined as "the accumulated stock of education, knowledge and skills" (Deane, 2016). Second, because it is considered a "platform for mitigating tension, and a mechanism of security protection" (Deane, 2016).The difficult conditions the are

usually caused by conflict unrest affect students in diverse ways, one of which is that learning becomes hard due to the hard times students experience (Shore, 2006). Another notable effect of the "intense feelings of fear, horror, or helplessness" is stress (Schwitzer, 2003, p.53). And it is often   leads to adjustment disorder that makes people find it difficult to function at work, school, and even home.

Another typical reaction is "loss of motivation" (Maertz, n. d). Students in general become indifferent and careless about their studies. They turn into merely passive receivers of knowledge, and as (Shor, 2006) put it: "unhappy students rarely complain so often and so loudly in class; they just drop the class, or figure out how to get their A or B and sit through it".

There are different strategies and teaching practices that can be employed to deal with students during times of crisis and assist them to cope with their harsh conditions. In 2007, Therese A. Huston and Michelle Dipieto (2007) conducted a survey which revealed that students appreciate the fact that their faculties and instructors acknowledge the crisis and take an action about it in the classroom, such as "incorporating the event into the lesson plan or topics for the course" (Huston & Dipieto, 2007, p.21). However, bringing up the issue and mentioning the hard events cab be "counterproductive for students" if nothing is done to support them (Chick & CFT staff, 2001/2013). Thus, the teaching practices should be adjusted according to the ongoing variables that are occurring (Shore, 2006).

Researchers suggest varied strategies when approaching difficult conversations (Chaitin, 2003). One of them is to allow students to set "the ground rules" (Chick & CFT staff, 2001/2013).. A thing that will help them to "share their thoughts, emotions, and ideas (and) find power at a time when the crisis has left them feeling powerless'(Chick & CFT staff, 2001/2013). Another strategy is that when the institutions show their commitment and care for the students by providing and facilitating the best services especially during times of crisis. Consequently, students' level of commitment and social integration will increase (Braxton, Hirschy, & McClendon, 2004. P.73).

Project Based Learning (PBL) Learning by Doing: An Overview

Project Based Learning (PBL) is not a new approach and giving students projects to do is an old teaching practice (Thomas, 2000; Merkham et al, 2003).Project based learning is mainly student –centered which leads to produce an end product (Bell, 2010).A common agreement regarding what constitutes PBL has not been reached yet in which most instructors incorporate PBL activities in their classes using different forms of projects and different contents (Moursund, 1999). However, it is agreed upon that PBL can be implemented individually or in groups, and it includes researching a topic and presenting it using different methods of explanations, such as diagrams, footages, images, etc. (Blumenfeld et al., 1991; Demirhan, 2002; Yurtlok, 2003; Gultekin, 2005).

Characteristics and learning outcomes. PBL, as suggested by research, leads to many positive outcomes for both students and instructors. These outcomes can be categorized as follows.

Active engagement and motivation. When implementing PBL, a high level of students' engagement is reached (Belland, et al., 2006; Brush & Say, 2008). This approach is different from the traditional, didactic approach that keeps students passive receivers of knowledge (Bell, 2010), and the "average noise level is much higher than in traditional classrooms" because students are actively engaged in group work and/or pair work. (Moursund, 1999, p.13). PBL gives the opportunity for all students including high achievers and low achievers to be actively engaged and to learn more than they do in traditional classes (Mergendoller, et al., 2006; Mioduser & Betzer, 2003).

PBL contributes as well in increasing students' motivation to learn (Blumenfelled et al, 1991). Instructors who implement PBL in their classes notice an improvement in students' attendance, participation and willingness to do assignments (Bottoms & Webb, 1998). According to Bell (2010), and Moursund, (1999). PBL is intrinsically motivating and this makes students work harder and be more willing to do extra challenging tasks while working on their projects.

Before commencing any project work, a careful planning to get started is essential (Bell, 2010; Moursund, 1999; Hakkarainen, 2011). According to the Moursund (1999), instructors shouldn't have high expectations of their students and before starting any project they should do what is called "a needs assessment" (p.49) to know the experience of students and their background information; for example, instructors can ask students about whether they have worked on any project before, time management, working with groups, etc.

Collaboration. Students can work on their projects in teams and "their joint collaborative efforts are often coordinated through technology" (Moursund, 1999, p.12).Working collaboratively results in many positive outcomes on students, one of which is learning to be more responsible because they are fully aware that they have to finish their allocated tasks on time. Holding responsibility towards colleagues "provides more motivation for students than if they were only responsible to the teacher" (Bell, 2010, p.40). Another positive outcome is that students interact more with friends and make new ones (Belland, et al., 2006; Lightner, et al., 2007). Also, in order to collaborate and cooperate successfully, students learn other fundamental skills like listening skills, respecting others, and self-evaluation (Bell, 2010). He stated that students "evaluate not only their projects, but also the success of social interaction" (P.41). Through collaboration students have the opportunity to learn from each other and to "provide constructive feedback to themselves and to their peers" (Moursund, 1999, p.13).

Student-centered learning and authenticity. Students have the freedom to choose their topics and "to shape their projects to fit their own interests and abilities" (Moursund, 1999, p.12).Thomas (2000) stated that "projects are students driven to some significant degree (and) realistic not school-like" (p.3-4). The roles of students who work on projects is

central in which they work almost autonomously in designing, solving problems and the process of making decisions. (Thomas, Mergendoller &Michaelson, 1999). Students are given the opportunity to plan, implement, and evaluate their projects that are related to real life beyond the classroom (Blank, 1997). So, project based learning is related to constructivism which is an educational theory based on the idea that students construct their new knowledge and building on their current context and skills (Fosnot, 1996). PBL usually engages students in real-world projects and consequently they learn both real world applications of skills and analytical thinking (Boaler, 1999).

Video production-supported PBL. This generation of students is overwhelmed by technological devices (Hofer & Owings-Swan, 2005), yet these technologies are not used as they should be used inside the classroom. Those students need a different model of teaching and learning that teach using technology more than the previous generation that mainly implement the traditional teacher-centered model of education (Mehlinger and Powers, 2002; Hofer & Owings-Swan, 2005). Many researchers come to an agreement that there is a need for more student-centered approaches (Bransford, Brown & Cocking, 1999), and students need to contribute in constructing their own knowledge and understanding through their active engagement in the learning process. (Jonasssen, 1991).

"Digital movie making offers an opportunity to harmonize the use of technology to support student centered pedagogy" (Hofer & Owings-Swan, 2005, p.104). Movie making is a PBL activity that can be defined as using multiple forms of media, such as photos, sounds, narration, images, etc. in order to deliver certain understanding. (Hofer & Owings-Swan, 2005, p.104).

Research has reported numerous outcomes of video making activities. First, Rayn (2002); Burn et al (2001); Hoffenberg and Handler (2001) pointed out that video making increases students' motivation and enjoyment. Second, it enhances students' creativity according to New (2006); Reid, Burn, and Parker (2002). Third, student- centered video projects are learner -centered and authentic (Kearney& Schuck, 2003). Fourth, Jonassen, Howland, Moore and Marra (2003) stated that video making promotes meaningful learning. Finally, video making increases students' understanding of the subject matter (Kiili, 2005; Strobel 2006).

Aim

As mentioned at the beginning of this research, one notable reaction to the current Syrian crisis is loss of motivation. Thus, the aim of this study is to motivate students in English language classrooms, to enhance their academic achievements, and to change their negative attitudes that they hold as a result of times of crisis and that is through using project based learning approach, mainly video making.

The significant of the study is its value to other teachers at the university to consider adopting project based learning activities after investigating its effects and benefits on motivating students.

III. METHODOLOGY

Research Context

The research is carried out in the Foreign Language Center at Arab International University in Syria. The center offers four English remedial courses; zero, elementary, pre-intermediate, and intermediate. Each class meets three times a week for 90 minutes over a sixteen-week semester. The courses focus on teaching academic English that enhances the four skills; reading, writing, listening and speaking. The objectives of these courses vary between teaching basic language skills and sub-skills, paragraph and essay writing, reading for literal comprehension and critical reading, and finally oral presentation skills. Each student does the placement test to determine their English level, and some are exempted based on their English placement test scores. These remedial courses are graded on a pass/fail basis, the scores of these courses don't affect a student's GPA.

Most students usually complain about the repetition in objectives from the elementary to the advanced courses. Instructors as well complain about students' weakness in using the language, and they also complain about students' lack of motivation and commitment.

Participants

A total number of 24 intermediate students at Arab International University participated in the study between 18 and 21 years of age. 6 students are majoring in Information Technology Engineering, 12 students are majoring in Business Administration, and 4 students are majoring in Architecture. The participants were divided into four groups.

Procedures and Instruments

The design of this research is both qualitative and quantitive. In order to cast light on the issue of motivating language learners during times of crisis, I draw on data gathering from group discussions and informal notes, students' performance results, and students' self-evaluation questionnaires.

Ethical issues were taken into considerations. We had the approval of the concerned university bodies to carry out the research, and the participated students were given a written permission to carry on their projects (documentary videos about the university in the temporary locations).

Project based activities took place in the second part of the course, over a period of 8 weeks in which students have one session a week related to the projects. In the first session, students had an introductory lesson (90 minutes) about the meaning of project-based learning, what they're supposed to do and how, the benefits of it, and the timeline of the process. The participated students were informed of the research purposes and how they would figure out the difference between the first part of the course which was mainly traditional learning based only on textbooks and the second part

which involved some project- based learning activities. Then, students were given some suggested activities that they could work on and they also shared their own ideas. Most of the students were interested in filming activities; making documentary films about their faculties, and they all agreed to work on the same theme.

Students worked in groups of six and they had the freedom to choose their partners. At the end of the session, they were asked to search for information about video production and one students who had previous knowledge about video making volunteered to give a presentation about it. Thus, the second session focused on sharing the knowledge acquired by students to tackle the task at hand. Students were also shown some examples of documentary films about some international universities.

In The other four sessions, students discussed their work and progress, the difficulties they face, and they were provided with the assistance as needed.

The participants took care of the whole video production process: writing the manuscripts, shooting, preparing the interviews' questions for both students and professors of the concerned faculties, arranging interviews' appointments, editing, and preparing the final presentation.

Other than the classroom meetings, each team created WhatsApp or Facebook groups for easy communication with each other, and I was added into them. They even arranged informal face to face meetings outside the classrooms in cafés to discuss their projects and their allocated roles.

At the end of the course, a final assessment meeting (4 hours) was organized, during which, students showed their videos and gave presentations about their learning process: the difficulties they faced, the learning outcomes they gained, their experience of working in groups, and the feelings they experienced while working on the projects.

Using different types of instruments to collect data helped in giving clearer views on the researched topic and making more reliable inferences and findings.

IV. RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

Group Discussion and Informal Notes

A group discussion with students was held regarding the benefits they gained from the first four weeks of the course; their opinions of the teaching methods, their learning outcomes, and their attitudes. At the end of the discussion, they were asked to write down their preferences and what they like to have in the rest of the course. The discussion and the students' written feedback were around two main themes as follows.

Negative attitudes towards learning English and motivation. The majority of students agreed that they were not interested in attending their English courses and considered it an extra burden on their tight schedule. Some said that they could barely attend their main subjects due to the difficult circumstances of the country, and most of the time they put their life in danger the moment they left their homes. One of the students suggested that: "Attending English courses should be optional under these difficult conditions, or they should be temporarily cancelled until we return back to the main locations." Other students supported the English courses, but they complained about the temporary locations and the fact that they did not have a separated language center. One noted: "If there is an English language center similar to the main one back in Gabbageb, I think things will be better and we will love it and enjoy it more." However, a good number estimated highly the efforts paid by the university administration and the directorate of the Foreign Language Center to provide good services that facilitated the process of English learning. A student mentioned that: "Actually, I don't think the temporary locations form any obstacles. The classes have good equipment, such as PCs, OHPs, and even some faculties provide internet access in the classrooms." A few students raised an interesting point related to their emotional situations and the stress resulted from the current civil war and how it affected everything in their life even their studies. A student noted that:

"This crisis influenced us, it's not whether we love English or not, whether we are motivated or not. It's whether there's a meaning in everything in our lives. Miss, just look at our faces and you can see that we became like robot, like zombies! No feelings whatsoever."

At the end of the discussion, most students agreed to the suggestion of doing something new, some outdoor activities beyond the textbooks. Something that they would enjoy doing rather than being merely passive receivers.

Content and teaching methods. Students reported different viewpoints regarding the instructed course book, Pathways 3. A good number admired the series, its academic and scientific structure, but others complained about the density of the book content. They even went further and revealed that the textbooks were boring and not that enjoyable.

As for the teaching methods, students' responses indicated that they preferred having more interactive activities. Many options were proposed and the whole class agreed to undertake some project based activities; making documentary videos about their faculties.

Student Self-Evaluation Questionnaire.

The questionnaire focuses on three main themes as mentioned below.

PBL vs. traditional learning. In the questionnaire, students gave high ratings for the statement measuring the types of teaching they prefer. (83.3%) agreed that PBL was better than the traditional teaching, whereas (16.6%) liked to cling into the " usual, safe and comfortable activities of the book" as one of the students put it. However, even those who preferred the traditional teaching agreed to the statement that said "I enjoyed the project activities more than those of the textbooks." (100%). Analysis of the questionnaire data, revealed that students were interested in the self-centered

learning offered by PBL as opposite to the traditional learning which was manipulated mainly by the instructor and the course book. Students rated favorably the fact that they were responsible for doing most of the projects' tasks. Most of them agreed with the statement "My partners and I were personally responsible for our video assignments" (33.3% agreed, 66.6% strongly agreed). Also, (83.3%) agreed with the statement that said "I have the freedom to plan, apply, assess, and be more creative." Interestingly, the analysis of the questionnaire showed that some students made use of their prior knowledge and turned to their own practical experiences to complete their assigned projects: "I was able to utilize my own experiences as starting points for learning in the PBL tutorials." (83.3% agreed). In the questionnaire, the majority of students enjoyed the collaborative mode of teaching (team work and pair work) which was limited in the traditional teaching. They agreed that the course was highly collaborative and cooperational and their collaboration, both in the PBL sessions in the class and in the video production teams, was connected with the sense of community, joy, and enthusiasm. Moreover, the questionnaire data revealed that students had improved their skills in and knowledge of team work, collaboration and cooperation (33.3% agreed, 66.6% strongly agreed).

Students' attitude, commitment, and confidence. The analysis of the questionnaire suggested that students changed their negative attitudes towards the English courses that they usually have to become more positive (66.3%), but a good percentage did not change their attitude (33.3%). In addition, the questionnaire indicated a change in students' attitudes towards the university at large. This was measured through the statement: " Our video assignment enabled me to appreciate the facilities provided by the university despite the difficult conditions." (50% agreed, 33.3% strongly disagreed, and 16.6 % disagreed).

Many students agreed with the statement that measure their level of commitment: "Working on the projects increased my level of commitment." (66.6% agreed), but there is a good number that remained demotivated and indifferent (33.3%). Also, according to the questionnaire analysis, students became more confident to use English outside the classroom while working on their projects. (83.3%).

Students' feeling. The analysis of the questionnaire data indicated that a good number of students experienced positive feelings during their learning process and while working on their projects. This was measured through the statement: "Video assignments helped us to find power at a time of crisis and helped in reducing the stress." (66.6%). Those students also commented on this statement saying that they had feelings of interest and a sense of belongings. One student wrote: "such activities reduce the tension and the indifference that we are experiencing nowadays". Another student added:

We experienced nice feelings while working on our projects that we were able to go outside the classroom, to conduct interviews with professors and other students, to laugh while working on the videos, to notice the beauty amid these difficult conditions cause by this hideous crisis

An interesting comment said that: "forget about the mortars and the terroristic attacks, be a real student, there's a life outside.". However, some students were not positively influenced and did not have the same feelings as their colleagues (33.3%). Those students also provided further comments about the issue. One of them wrote:

"Working on the projects can't change the chaos of our mind caused by this ugly war". Another student added: "well! No, I still have that feeling of nothingness inside me, I'm still stressed, afraid, and living day by day. Not certain of anything around me!"

Students' Performance Results

The activity results included the students' produced documentary videos on the university faculties in the original campus and the relocation to temporary buildings in Damascus because of the war.

Video's summaries. The videos' contents could be summarized as follows:

The first video: a documentary on the Faculty of Informatics Engineering at Arab International University. A group of IT students produced a documentary of 5:40 minutes on their faculty. They started by presenting general information about the university with footages of the original campus and their faculty. Then, they presented the faculty departments, specialties, and mission. After that, they mentioned the circumstances that made the university move into safer temporary locations in Damascus. Two interviews were conducted; one with the Dean of the Faculty in which he introduced the faculty and encouraged the students to keep developing their language skills. The other interview was with a professor at the university.

The second video: a documentary on the Faculty of Business Administration at Arab International University. A group of BA students produced a documentary of 8 minutes on their faculty. They gave general information about the University and specific details about their faculty supported by footages of both original and temporary locations. They mentioned the different specializations at the faculty, facilities and the provided services. Three interviews were conducted; two of them were with students discussing why they chose to study business and specialized in a certain branch. The third one was with the Dean of the faculty. He talked about his academic qualifications, the scientific agreements with international organizations and universities, and listed the events held at the faculty.

The third video: a documentary on the Faculty of Business Administration at Arab International University. Another group of BA students produced a documentary of 2:27 minutes on their faculty. They immediately started talking about their faculty. They focused on the educational benefits offered by their faculties. Most of the footages were of the temporary locations in Damascus city. Two students were interviewed; one talked about the exchange students and the other mentioned the academic benefits she got from the faculty professors.

The Fourth video: A documentary on Arab International University as a whole academic institution. A group of Business and Architecture students worked on a documentary of 8 minutes on the whole university, its founders, different faculties, the university mission, original and temporary locations, events, services, developments, employees, and the academic staff. They conducted many interviews with different faculty members, Deans, employees, and students. They also interviewed the Head of the Foreign Languages Center at the university and talked about the services of the center, its staff and the academic curriculum.

Videos' analysis. These videos were analyzed according to six dimensions: planning and scriptwriting; content; technical elements; language and mechanics; oral presentations; collaboration and timeliness. The analysis is presented in the tables below.

TABLE.1.
PLANNING AND SCRIPT DIMENSION

Dimension	Video 1 (accomplished)	Video 2(satisfactory)	Video 3 (below standard)	Video 4 (excellent)
Planning and script	*Students researched and wrote a good script. *There was a clear plan that was adhered to during production. *Group members defined their roles.	*Students need help to research and write a better script. *Most group members had roles. *The plan is a bit vague; they deviated from the task in the middle and towards the end of the video.	*Students need to research and write a better script. *Plan is not clear; students need to be reminded to stay on task. *Some group members had roles, but others performed very few tasks.	*The script is creative and clearly written. *All group members had defined roles. *They have a definite plan and steps that they adhered to during the production.

TABLE.2.
CONTENT DIMENSION.

Content	V1:	V2:	V3:	V4:
	*There's a clear focus throughout the video. *The good explanation shows good efforts. *The supporting details are logical and help in understanding the project's main idea. *The images and the graphs relate well to the content.	*Fairly well documented and organized. *The focus is maintained throughout the video, but becomes unclear in some parts (students' interviews). *Good explanations show good efforts.	*Doesn't present the theme clearly. *Some of the supporting information doesn't seem to match the main idea or appears as a disconnected series of scenes. *The project has a focus, but it strays from it at times. *Less efforts of students' learning are reflected in the project.	*Strong message. The video covers the topic completely. *It includes thorough information and notable understanding of the topic. *The focus is clear. Excellent evidence of students' learning and efforts are reflected.

TABLE.3.
TECHNICAL ELEMENTS DIMENSION.

Technical elements	V1:	V2:	V3:	V4:
	*The video was completed and contained all required items. *Editing wasn't done as it should be. *Audio and other enhancements were utilized but not for maximum effect. *There is smooth movement.	*The video was made, but it has very little if any editing. * There's little audio support. * Few photos are distorted, there are some technical problems, but the viewers are able to follow the presentation.	*The camera work is choppy. *The final production has technical errors. *The scenes are blurry. *Sounds and visual files have significant distortion. *The technical problems distract the viewers' ability to see, hear or understand the content.	*Camera is stable, smooth movements. *Images are well composed, sound and visual files are distortion free. *There're few technical problems, but none of serious manner.

TABLE.4.
LANGUAGE AND MECHANICS DIMENSION.

Language and mechanics	V1:	V2:	V3:	V4:
	*Language is used properly. *The video includes 4-5 grammatical errors, misspellings and punctuation errors.	*The video includes 5-10 grammatical errors. *There're some misspelling and punctuation errors.	*The video includes more than 10 grammatical errors. *There're misspellings and punctuation errors.	*The language is used properly and effectively. *Grammar, spelling, punctuation and capitalization are correct. *No errors in the script/text.

TABLE.5.
ORAL PRESENTATION DIMENSION.

Oral presentation	V1:	V2:	V3:	V4:
	*Fairly fluent delivery. Communicates ideas with proper voice. * Some mispronunciations. Introduced the project well and explained the steps and the difficulties they faced during production.	*There were some difficulties delivering the ideas and the projects' steps. * Some eye contact and poor voice projections. Somewhat confused. * Some mispronunciations, long pauses and vocal fillers. *No thorough responses.	*Great difficulties communicating the ideas and the steps that they've done. *Poor voice projections. *No eye contact, no introduction. Long pauses & mispronounced words. *Couldn't answer all questions.	*Well-rehearsed. *Communicated the ideas and the steps of the project very well. *Eye contact, voice, and pacing caught the audience's attention. *Responded to students' questions easily.

TABLE.6.
COLLABORATION AND TIMELINESS DIMENSION.

Collaboratin and timeliness	V1:	V2:	V3:	V4:
	*Group members worked well with each other. *Took part in most decisions. *Students met and had discussions regularly. *Students selected group members depending on good working relationships. *Most project deadlines were met. *Those that were late didn't have significant impact on the final project.	*The final product is the result of a group effort, but only some members contributed effectively. *Students selected group members according to personal preferences. *Only a couple of meetings were held. *Many project deadlines were not met resulting in some impact on the final project.	*It was obvious that the project was created by one or two students only. *Meetings were not held. * Low level of respect was evident within the team. *Deadlines were regularly missed resulting in a significant impact on the final project.	*Students met and had discussions regularly (even sometimes outside the classroom after lessons). *All members of the team were part of the final project-effective teamwork. *All project deadlines were met.

When applying statistical calculations to the results at hand, it was found out that 50% of the learners had a clear plan and script to follow. 75% of the learners had good video content that coherently expressed their main ideas following a consistent theme. 75% of the learners were able to present their final product with less than 10 grammatical mistakes (including punctuation, spelling, and capitalization). 50% of the learners were able to present their project orally with minimum mistakes exhibiting good rehearsal. They also maintained a good eye contact, communicated their ideas clearly, and answered the audience's questions.
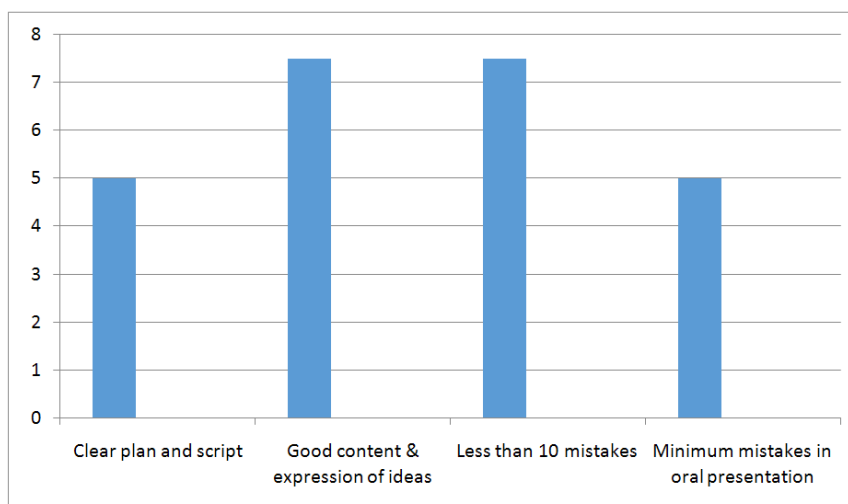

Figure.2.Percentages of learners meeting the four main linguistic dimensions of video production.

V. RESEARCH LIMITATIONS

There is a number of limitations spotted in the current research. First, the participants were not provided with proper initial training in collaboration and communication techniques which were stressed in (Johnson, 1986; Johnson & Johnson, 1989). Second, the instructor did not implement or force a general plan or time schedule for the filming activity (Koehter & Mishra, 2005). Third, both the learners and the instructor required further training with regard to using technology in filming sessions (Gibson, 1986; Norman, 1993). Furthermore, the number of the participants was relatively small. Finally, some university professors and students did not fully cooperate when they were required to. The participants found difficulties arranging interviews' dates and convincing the professors and students to take part in the documentary videos especially when they knew that they should speak in English.

VI. CONCLUSION

This study showed that implementing project based learning activities was of highly influential effects on motivating students who were affected by the crisis which is the main concern of this paper. It was clear that students' negative attitudes and feelings could be changed and turned into positive ones when you address the difficult conditions experienced by them and make the crisis part of the classroom's fabric and discussion. The filming activities have helped learners to acquire some important practical skills e.g. teamwork, organization and planning. Additionally, the linguistic skills have improved i.e. writing scripts which encompassed different aspects e.g. grammar, logical order, expressions of ideas, drafting, revising, spelling, and punctuation. Moreover, the activity has developed the learners' presentation skills which include: fluency in speech, correct pronunciation, tone of voice and clear delivery and communication of ideas.

APPENDIX STUDENTS' RATINGS OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF PROJECT BASED LEARNING ACTIVITIES DURING TIMES OF CRISIS.

Question	Agree	Strongly agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
1. I prefer traditional learning to doing Projects	33.3%	33.3%	16.6%	
2. The PBL sessions motivated me to attend the E courses regularly	66.6%	16.6%		
3. Working on the projects increased my level of commitment.	33.3%	33.3%	33.3%	
4. I enjoyed the activities of the project more than those of the textbooks.	16.6%	83.3%		
5. I have more positive attitude towards Learning English	33.3%	33.3%	16.6%	
6. Our video assignment enabled me to appreciate the facilities provided by the university despite the difficult conditions.	50%	33.3%	16.6%	
7. My partners and I were personally responsible for our video assignments	33.3%	66.6%		
8. Cooperation with my partners was successful	33.3%	66.6%		
9. I became more confident to use English outside the classroom	16.6%	66.6%	16.6%	
10. I have the freedom to plan, apply, assess, and be more creative.		100%		
11. Video assignments helped us to find power at a time of crisis.	50%	16.6%	16.6%	16.6%
12. We directed our own studying process in the PBL sessions.	66.6%	16.6%	16.6%	
13. I was able to evaluate my own learning during the course	83.3%		16.6%	
14. I was able to use my prior knowledge when working on the projects.	33.3%		33.3%	16.6%
Other comments:				

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