



EFFECTIVE TEACHING OF ENGLISH THROUGH DRAMA

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ABSTRACT

The use of dramatic presentations to help students learn English as a second language is discussed in this article. It makes an effort to catalog the many positive outcomes that may be achieved by incorporating theater into the English language education. Drama has been shown to inspire pupils and provide an environment conducive to critical thought. places emphasis on the ways in which a learner-centered classroom may be developed to improve the language abilities of EFL students. The study makes use of two different theatrical methods: a written play and improv. The teacher-researcher used a case study of advanced English language learners as a means of doing qualitative research. It also explains the value of theatre and identifies the language abilities that may be fostered by participation in dramatic exercises.

KEYWORDS: Drama, language, learning, teaching

INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, the ability to communicate in more than one language, and especially English, is more important. There is no avoiding the need of knowing English if you plan on traveling or communicating with locals in a country where that language is not spoken. A young person's employability and ability to connect with individuals from other countries online both benefit greatly from their mastery of a second language. This is why it's important for kids to realize the relevance of learning English, rather than merely doing so because it's required. And here is where instructors of the English language may provide a hand and provide motivation.

We all know that learning a new language is a lengthy and difficult process, but we also know how crucial it is in today's world. It's important for us to remember that student disinterest is rising, particularly in secondary school. Keeping our kids interested and engaged in their English courses is a constant challenge for us as educators. Drama is a great way for kids to improve their pronunciation, speaking, and listening abilities, as well as their ability to work together and communicate well in a group, so it would be a good place to start grabbing their attention.

Drama in English language teaching classes

In drama, students actively connect with, explore, and gain insight into the world in which they find themselves via the assumption of a variety of roles and circumstances. This is not limited to linguistics, since cross-cultural and linguistic communication is essential to social interaction. When students are a part of a drama ensemble and immersed in a made-up situation, they share a moment of intensity that involves emotions, facial expressions, gestures, movement, and a heightened awareness of others that they might not have had in a more traditional classroom setting.

People exist on several levels, including the physical, the cerebral, and the psychological. It's important to take into account the kids' (total) requirements and strengths while encouraging them to study a foreign language. In other words, we can't only focus on language and ignore the other, more tangible, demands. Usually, acquiring a new language is a head-only endeavor. Using logic and solving problems in fabricated scenarios. Drama may be used to help students improve their physical, creative, imaginative, and emotional reactions to different learning environments. Fundamentally, theater frees the learner from the constraints of the traditional classroom atmosphere and organization, allowing them to rely on their own experiences and creativity in producing the material on which part of the language session is based.

All participants will be able to tap into their innate skills of mimicry, expression, and physicality thanks to these exercises. Since they capitalize on the unexpected emotional force created when emotional memory is evoked by a stimulus and when a person is brought together with others, they are dramatic and excite curiosity.

Students may gain confidence, learn to take ownership of their work, develop skills in problem-solving, management, and directing, and get a sense of accomplishment via drama. Students' organizing and critical-thinking abilities are honed via the many tasks inherent in teamwork. Their lives will be better served by these resources. These abilities will serve students well in the workforce, where they will inevitably be required to collaborate with others, and in job interviews, where they may be confronted with a sudden, unexpected question that requires them to think on their feet.

People all throughout the globe appreciate the enjoyment and knowledge-sharing that the theatre provides. Traditional African storytelling and drumming, Turkish shadow puppets, Chinese opera, Greek tragedy and comedy, and fully produced plays and performances are all examples of the many styles of theater practiced across the world. Theater performances, of any kind, may leave an impression on an audience that will last a lifetime. When we talk about "drama in education," we're referring to the practice of using theatrical methods for instructional rather than just amusing ends.

This goal may include influencing audience members' education, outlook, or actions. There has always been a connection between learning and having fun. Theatrical productions have been used to inform audiences about events happening in other parts of the world from their earliest days. There has been a remarkable revival in recent years in the use of drama and the theatrical arts in classrooms. Several stage productions centered on topics vital to social education. There

has been a global trend toward using works of fiction as a means of spreading information and shaping public opinion.

LITERATURE AND REVIEW

Saman Masoumi-Moghaddam et al (2018) This research set out to investigate how using drama and drama methods and practices in the context of teaching and learning English conversation may help to foster productive classroom settings for the acquisition of the language. Thirty undergraduates (both male and female) from Ardebil's public secondary and high schools who had taken English as a foreign language were surveyed for this research. Control and experimental groups were created. A Test-Retest was used to compare the two groups before and after instruction on the desired linguistic competencies. Two contemporary plays were taught and rehearsed in a classroom setting, and a second exam was given after students had had experience with these pieces of contemporary theatrical discourse. Participant observation (both direct and indirect) and interviews were employed to compile the data for this study. Data analysis found that the Control group did not exhibit any statistically significant gain in their English proficiency, whereas the Experimental group showed striking improvement in their English conversational skills by using dramatic speech.

Betlem Soler Pardo (2020) As a language is more readily learned when the materials used to teach are more attractive, language instructors are always striving to create an environment in which students may completely develop their communication abilities via activities or exercises including a stimulus. With the advent of the Communicative Approach, theatre has been investigated as a teaching method for the delivery of language lessons. This piece serves a dual function: foremost, to analyze the value of theatrical performance in light of the many arguments in favor of using it as a teaching tool. Second, by presenting the performance of eight plays based on popular tales in the classroom through a series of practical activities using the task-based learning methodology, we hope to bring more attention to the advantages and disadvantages of using theatre to teach a foreign language at the university level.

Ahmad Issa Altwessi, Razan Yaseen Maaytah (2022) For the purpose of research, one group of sixth graders participated in theater classes via a designated unit of the English textbook, while a second group of students received the identical material taught in the more traditional fashion. An oral pre- and post-test with thirteen questions each and a student attitude questionnaire with thirty-five items across four categories were used to gather data for this research, which used a quasi-experimental method. Seventy students make up the study sample; 35 each are assigned to the experimental and control groups. The research found that the use of theatre as a teaching tool improved students' ability to communicate in English. Moreover, the outcomes demonstrated the potential benefits of using theater activities technology to boost English language speaking abilities over more traditional methods of instruction. The study's findings also showed that students who took drama lessons had a more optimistic outlook on their learning and improved academically. The research concluded that the drama exercises should be developed and included into the instruction of English language skills.

Stefanie Giebert (2014) The essay explains how theater may help college students learn a language and how it can also help them develop their professional skills. The post will begin with a quick introduction to the many types of drama used in language classrooms. The advantages of

this method will be discussed, including the fact that it helps students learn a language more effectively by placing it in context, that it makes lessons more remembered, and that it boosts students' social and personal skills. The next section explains how using drama as a teaching tool might help students learn a language in a business setting. Productions in the Theatre Specializing in Business English.

Evelyn Gualdron et al (2018)The E Theater is an interdisciplinary theater group at Universidad Nacional de Colombia that has been teaching English as a foreign language through the medium of theater since 2008. This article presents the results of a qualitative study based on the group's application of a theater content-based methodology for L2 learning over the course of several years, with the support of theater and language experts. A longitudinal semi-structured survey, individual interviews, and a focus group were used to compile the data. As a consequence, participants reported improvements in their ability to produce and understand L2 texts, their intercultural competence, and their cognitive processing of the language studied.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Participants of the Study

Twenty students enrolled in the English Language and Literature Department's English as a Foreign Language program participated in the research. Three weeks were used for the research investigation (two sessions per week). The class was broken up into four groups of five, with each member of the group performing a certain role depending on the nature of the activity at hand.

Instruments of the Study

This study made use of a theatrical text authored by the renowned Irish dramatist J.M. Synge: scene one from his 1905 play *Riders to the Sea*. The fact that it is a one-act play with a single location and little stage instructions makes it more manageable for the actors to put their skills to use in creating the play. The book was chosen for its symbolic and idiomatic language, which presented a greater challenge to the students who would be putting on the play.

Research Procedure

There is no problem incorporating drama into the English curriculum. There is a "possibility of applying additional dramatic activities in the future, so creating continuity" and a "opportunity to raise awareness of paralinguistic aspects, linguistic accessibility, intrinsic interest, practicability in terms of class time, student numbers, and space". By providing students with consistent opportunities to study and experience the target language in a variety of relevant, realistic circumstances, regular activities (such as drama/theater instruction and performance) have the potential to desensitize students' speaking fear.

According to research, Yet, the instructor must be properly prepared beforehand in order to keep any theatre activity going in the language classroom. Prior to beginning class, teachers must decide on their goals for the session and choose a book based on their students' current language abilities and areas of interest. Several drama activities, such as using a written play or improvising, may be used to use theatre in the language classroom.

Major Findings

The instructor found it difficult to deal with drama in her English as a Foreign Language classroom. Due to historical and cultural factors, pupils were not given the opportunity to experience theatre, which contributed to the difficulty of the text and the level of skill required to execute it. Nonetheless, students were able to overcome their anxiety about public speaking by utilizing theatre as a tool for studying English and uncovering its aesthetic elements. All three phases of the activity saw students actively engaged, with a clear focus on the job at hand and a desire to express their own unique perspectives and perspectives. Students were no longer passive once the instructional goals were met. They were able to overcome their reluctance to speak out in class, engage in conversation with their classmates, and take pleasure in working together on projects.

Improvisation

Another important theatre style that may be used to teach English is improv, in which students are given a scenario and asked to come up with a response on the spot. Students may write the screenplay, discuss the plot and structure, and even practice a few scenes together, but without a rehearsal of the dialogue, the performance will have to be entirely improvised. Improvisation is a kind of theater in which "thoughts and emotions are stressed, and in which students construct individuals and relationships by playing out events using voice and movement, but without a previous plot" (Davies, 1990, p. 94). One of the best parts of this theatrical exercise is that there is no script that must be memorized. Three weeks were needed to complete the job (two sessions per week).

After spending time with a dramatic text and learning about the conventions and procedures of drama, students were given the task of writing and producing a screenplay that would be presented in an improvised fashion. The subject matter may be a rip-off of *Riders to the Sea's* screenplay or an alternate interpretation of the play's finale. Students were able to work together and express their creativity while also focusing on register, vocabulary in context, and fluency. The instructor acted only as a facilitator and supervisor while the students worked in small groups. The opening scene of the play was read aloud by the instructor. Next, we had the class split into four groups of five students, each of whom played a distinct role in the production process: one read the material, one wrote the script, one checked the terminology in a dictionary, one edited (revised and corrected), and one designed the show (acting and body language).

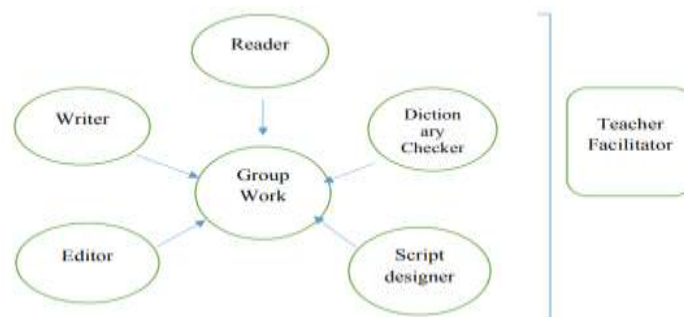


Figure 1. Students' Functions in the Group work

Important Results The students worked together really well in the first stages of the course to come up with the original concept for the improvised play. Several kids were worried leading up to the performance and on the day of the show since they couldn't utilize a script. Yet, as students started performing the improvised pieces, apprehension subsided, and a beautiful spirit of collaboration and creativity emerged, which sometimes resulted in humorous circumstances and outcomes. Because of it, I felt less pressure and more inspired. The overarching goal of this collaborative effort is to improve students' abilities to express themselves via speech by encouraging them to collaborate, share ideas and decisions, and structure dramatic remarks.

Major results from both applied drama activities in the case study are listed in the table below:

Table 1.

Learning Achievements

Participants	Achievements
Twenty (20) Master Students of English Literature & Civilization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading aloud the dramatic text. • Writing the script. • Communicating verbal and non-verbal language during performance. • Listening to one another. • Improving self-esteem, critical thinking, and autonomous learning.

Employing drama as a teaching tool for English exemplifies the connection between the logical and emotional components of language acquisition. Learners will develop proficiency in both the linguistic and nonlinguistic (para)components of communication by actively engaging in linguistic activities. Students get a broader perspective on the world and its inhabitants via the extra-linguistic realm of play, which in turn fosters more tolerance and understanding. In addition to bolstering students' speaking skills and bringing instructors closer to their students for more accurate diagnosis, classroom presentations and group discussions also provide teachers with an opportunity to get to know their students on a more personal level. Students who are able to articulate their thoughts and emotions without inhibition gain problem-solving skills, self-assurance, and the flexibility to succeed in a variety of settings.

Students were taught the target language via the use of Drama. The use of theater as a teaching tool is worthwhile. Reading comprehension, vocabulary, and, most importantly, the ability to use language effectively in everyday interactions are all strengthened as a result. The procedure is straightforward. The class might read a dramatic work of literature either in English or another language. We settled on the novel *Pride and Prejudice*. The book is lengthy, making it a tedious read for many kids in the classroom. As a result, we adapted the book into a screenplay that is shorter and easier to follow. When casting a play, it's preferable to have as many roles as feasible, like in "*Pride and Prejudice*," so that as many students as possible may take part. For each pupil, make a photocopy of the script. The next step is for the instructor to compile a list of the play's key terms and allocate dictionary lookups to the class. Then, you might give them a vocabulary quiz if you think it's necessary.

The next step requires students to read the screenplay and provide a list of characters along with a written description of each character. In addition to identifying the roles they would want to play; students should be invited to propose another classmate for each role. The rules they need to follow are as follows: Step one: Read the material and get it. 2. Look up the terms in a dictionary that you don't know the meaning of. They should have a firm grasp of their character and be familiar with every word it says before committing the text to memory. For the first time, they can even articulate it in their own tongue, enhancing both communication and understanding. The instructor may listen and take notes to assist the student adjust the pronunciation later, keeping in mind that clarity is what is vital at this level, when they read their parts in class or, even better, when they learn to recite their parts from memory. The students will remember the words and phrases much better than if merely prepared for an exam, and they will be able to utilize these phrases as tools in real life circumstances, provided they play out the roles and invest the conversation with passion.

The Greek root of the English word "drama" means "to do" or "to act," hence the term refers to any kind of activity. Performers in a play are tasked with embodying their roles onstage. Acting is a sort of communication since it involves the exchange of ideas between a performer and an audience. In order to prepare for a performance of a dramatic text, we must ask ourselves questions and make choices as we study the text. While reading a dramatic text, an actor must develop or construct part of this information while being loyal to what is contained in the text since the author does not provide us with all of it. The actor has to ask himself, "Who am I?" multiple times during the process. Who am I related to in this story? Why do they despise me? Can you tell me why they adore me? the list goes on and on.

An actor's primary responsibility is to convey to the viewer the actions that their character is doing within the context of the plot. The actor's ability to sympathize with and take on the perspective of his character depends on his knowledge of the story's backstory and the character's motivations; this understanding, in turn, is conveyed to the audience via the actor's performance. Students who are cast in leading roles in a play should be instructed to consider the motivations behind each line of speech, or what the characters are trying to accomplish by speaking a certain phrase. They should use verbs to explain what they are doing. The student's verbal repertoire will grow, and the complete phrase will come to life as the student delivers it as an action, making it easier to remember and utilize in the future, as well as providing a visual experience for the student and the audience.

Benefits of Using Drama in the EFL Classroom

A popular quote attributed to Benjamin Franklin goes, "Tell me and I forget. Instruct me, and I will learn. Make me a part of it, and I'll absorb it. Modern methods that emphasize student-centered class rather than teacher-centered class have made student participation in the learning process a primary goal. An successful learning environment encourages students to actively participate in ways that challenge them to think critically and creatively. In order to measure how actively pupils are engaged, a wide variety of techniques have been used. One of the most effective ways to increase the engagement of both educators and students is via the use of drama.

Drama is an excellent tool for use in the foreign language classroom, as research shows "With the use of theater, a language instructor may communicate the target language in an interactive,

communicative, and contextualized manner. Dramatization not only aids the instructor in addressing the four skills of language acquisition (speaking, listening, writing, and reading), but it also favors and promotes the study of certain frequently disregarded components of language, such as pronunciation and body language." And as Blanch (1974) elucidates "Action and conversation, the two pillars of theater, have a role in the study of foreign languages. A "drama lab," a kind of classroom activity that allows students to enact foreign language resources including tableaux, poetry, ballads, folklore, and plays, is one way to bring these into the classroom. A student's unique voice may be heard and the cultural significance of the language's setting can be vividly brought to life via the medium of drama."

Drama Brings Literature to Life

The majority of educators recognize drama's benefits for teaching public speaking. It may come as a surprise that even the most abstract concepts may be understood better when acted out or shown. Literature may be made more engaging for pupils via the use of drama. It's more engaging than plain text, so it's good for visual students and good for recycling newly learned words. Although it's true that theater may be a kind of entertainment, its comedic potential should not be overlooked. When students are engaged in something they find rewarding, they are more likely to study while also relaxing and having fun. Quite frequently, the inability to learn is due to the student's fear of and discomfort with utilizing English. Students are more receptive to new ideas and learning will occur when they are engaged in an active and enjoyable activity. In order to better learn a second language, pupils need to feel comfortable speaking it.

As a result, the learner is more likely to untense and open up to the foreign language. They'll stop thinking about how challenging it is and start taking in the information. Having pupils shift their outlook on learning a new language from negative to positive may have a significant impact on their success. As an extracurricular activity, theatre sports are a great illustration of how theatrical skills may be put to use outside of the classroom. Loose Moose Theatre Company in Calgary, Alberta, is where it all began (Johnstone,1999). This kind of improvisational theater has gained popularity and practitioners all over the globe because it allows for both the audience and the performers to have a hand in producing a unique and authentic performance. Role-playing can be a tremendous driving factor, and theatre sports show just how true that is for both the performers and the spectators. There are already teams in a wide variety of nations utilizing various languages to put on an unrehearsed game for innumerable spectators, and the sport's popularity is expected to continue to rise.

Drama Reveals Aspects of the Human Condition

Consider how theatre may be used to teach students about the human experience; after all, our whole lives are really one big improvised performance (Price 1980). The pupils get an appreciation for the value of collaboration via the games they play. The activities encourage improvisation and lessen the inhibitions of shyness, two factors that often stifle education. As an added benefit, the games aid in the cultivation of in-class focus and friendships. Students learn coordination, mimicry, and attention while having a blast. Students are able to exercise their cerebral, emotional, and physical faculties in a secure and regulated environment via improvisation.

The group's unhappiness with the school administrator was on full show during their role-play. Nothing bad happened, and everyone in the class felt the same way. The study of drama in its purest form provides the learner with several entry points to introspection. It's one of the most real-feeling literary genres out there. This evolving process sheds light on and provides insight into many facets of our multifaceted existence (Price 1980). Given this, I think there are several hidden advantages to using drama in the ESL classroom. It would be a mistake to discount drama's ability to foster creativity. Sometimes, we don't give pupils enough opportunity to explore their imaginations because of our ingrained, repetitive school routines of memorizing and required subject matter.

What makes anything extraordinary out of the ordinary is the spark. If you want to come up with some brilliant new ideas, all you need is a healthy dose of imagination. Imagination is the key to elevating the mundane to the extraordinary. Our kids need to develop this quality further. The ability to dream is intrinsically tied to the motivation we have each morning. Theater has the power to preserve and reawaken that which our mundane everyday lives bury inside us. To create a better world, we need to use our creativity. Imagine and dream big if you want to achieve anything of value. This aspect of human consciousness is not to be overlooked. While it may seem inconsequential, the absence of creativity in one's dreams is analogous to living a life devoid of color. If we didn't have it, we'd all be worse off.

CONCLUSION

Drama is a useful tool for teachers of foreign languages to use into their lessons. Learners not only get exposure to grammatical structures in context but also gain insight into the language's expressive, directive, and informative potential via the medium of theater. Students' exposure to the target language and culture is enhanced via the use of theater. In ELT, drama tactics may be useful learning aids provided they are well-structured and explored. With drama, students are able to break out of the classroom's rigid structure and soar to the limitless heights of their own imagination and the human experience. By participation in real-world activities, students are able to overcome their inhibitions about public speaking and tap into their latent imaginations.

Using drama in English as a second language (ELT) classes helps students better understand the language, provides them with practice in using the language in authentic contexts, and boosts their self-esteem as they prepare to enter the real world. In other words, when drama is used effectively in the classroom, it transforms the focus from the language and the instructor to the individual students. Paralanguage practices provided by dramatic activities help EFL students progress toward greater fluency, maturity, motivation, physical participation, and interpersonal interactions. As a result, teachers may provide their pupils with instruction that is more relevant and grounded in reality.

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