

Effect of Teaching through Drama on the Communication Abilities

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Abstract: *There are various methodologies to teach English as a foreign language, although some of them are more commonly used than others by English teachers. The use of drama in teaching of a foreign language is not a new approach-its beginnings can be traced back to the 19th century. This paper presents the findings of the study on the effect of teaching through drama on skills such as Speaking, Reading, Writing and Comprehension on the communication abilities of EFL/ESL learners with respect to their levels of education.*

Keywords: Language, Teaching, English, Drama

1. Introduction

Language faculty is the most important quality of human beings. In this sense, (Tokgoz,2006) the most important features that make the humans different from the other living beings are speaking, thinking, reasoning and judgment abilities. Training is said to play an important role in order to get achievements to the mentioned abilities. In addition, Training plays a crucial role in shaping tomorrows' leaders. Regarding to this, teaching is hope for better understanding and more successful futures. The importance of English is measurable by its increasing expansion in several nations throughout the world. And since English is an international language and the most widespread language in the world, a professional trainer should consider some methods of teaching to fulfill this important issue. The process of teaching for foreign language teachers means motivating students by presenting dynamic, creative, meaningful, and enjoyable language classes. Numerous techniques and materials- readings, films, simulation games, role - plays...are available to teachers to assist them in the process of acculturation in the classroom (McGroarty and Galvan, 1985). The researchers have decided to investigate one of the best methods of teaching in order to reach to precious goals. So, the purpose of this survey is to find out the effect of teaching English to non-native speakers through drama techniques.

2. Previous Studies

Drama and theatre arts have been around since ancient times. It appears that in the beginning of the Twentieth Century, Harriet Finlay-Johnson, a village teacher, was the first to employ dramatic techniques in general education in the English-speaking world. In the early 1920's, two American women, Viola Spolin and Winifred Ward, used an improvisational approach to drama. In 1930s, drama existed in school program (Çevik, 2006). In the 1960s, researchers became increasingly interested in studying language development in children. But they were not particularly concerned with the use of drama. However, according to

Bolton (1993), only a small number of influential linguists, such as Hourd (1949), Britton (1972), Dixon (1975), Rosen (1973), and Moffett (1968) took interest in drama as a tool for developing children's language abilities. Moffett, (1968) described drama as "the matrix of all language activities, subsuming speech and engendering the varieties of writing and reading." In 1970s, the relationship between drama and education, the role given to drama teachers, the subjects, usage area of the instructions, conclusions and responsibilities are reorganized and drama method began to be used in learning-teaching process with the meaning of today (San, 1996). In 1979, Dorothy Heathcote, appeared in Drama in Education. For Bolton, she was „the greatest drama teacher of all times" (Bolton, 1993). Heathcote's method was based on the „whole class" format, and the activities were topic-based. For the next several years, developments in the use of drama to foster language learning came primarily from Canada (Carrol, 1980; Booth, 1989) and Australia (Parsons, 1984). In Great Britain, the introduction of the "National Curriculum" in 1990 led its English Language working party to reinforce the dramatic method as a tool for English teachers in the UK (Bolton 1993). It is difficult to trace the history of drama in education to determine with certainty who first tried out drama in an FL/SL class, as it is not specifically documented. Schewe (1993) praised the British Drama in Education model, as it was very practical and helpful through practical application and experimentation. It was in the late seventies in which happened an important shift towards the communicative approach in FL language teaching and learning. He defined FL teaching as both a „scientific" and an „artistic" discipline, and encouraged FL educators to see themselves not only as scientists but also as artists (Schewe, 1993). Since then a few good publications have appeared describing in more or less detail the different dramatic approaches that attempt to bridge the fields of theater arts and FL teaching and learning (Fitzgibbon 1993; Kao and O'Neill 1998; Tselikas 1999; Bräuer 2002; Even 2003). However, a comprehensive, systematic typology and terminology for drama-based foreign language instruction is still in its initial stages (Even, 2003). By the end of the nineteenth century, German educators had already begun to address the concept of action-oriented teaching for FL

instruction, even touching on the importance of the interplay between mind and body for FL instruction. As a result, most researchers in the field of Drama in Language Education came from English-speaking countries due to the much closer relationship between the fields of Drama and Education to that of non-English speaking countries. The British drama in Education approach seemed to be the most suitable starting point by providing a theoretical basis and leading to significant new developments.

3. Source and Sample of the Study

The study is mainly based on the data collected from primary sources gathered from an institution named Nibrasul Islamic and Arts Collage in Trivandrum City, Kerala, India. In this study, 60 male students were randomly selected. They were of Plus 1, Plus 2 and 1st Degree Course students; divided into two groups, namely; 30 as the Control Group (10 of Plus 1, 10 of Plus 2 and 10 of 1st Degree Course) and 30 as the Experimental Group (10 of Plus 1, 10 of Plus 2 and 10 of 1st Degree Course). A course of 20 sessions of teaching conducted for each group using intended method of teaching. Two tests, an Oxford Placement Test as a general proficiency test and a teacher-made post test used as the instruments in this study.

4. Data Analysis

To analyze the effect of teaching through drama on the communication abilities of EFL/ESL learners, three groups of students with different levels of education were selected and tests such as *Mean*, *Standard Deviation*, *t- test*, *ANOVA* and *Regression* were computed.

5. Analysis of Data

There have been 40 marks for four items each carrying 10 marks. It should be mentioned that for test of *Speaking* skill, the learners were asked 10 questions to answer orally, for *Writing* skill they have been asked to write a passage of 200 words by their own words and for *Reading* part there has been a text asking the learners to read carefully and answer the related questions including of five True-False and five of multiple choice questions. The final component is *comprehension* in which there were ten sentences asking the learners to rewrite them by their own words. In this study *Speaking*, *Reading* and *Writing* considered as the main skills which are of important qualifications in learning ESL/EFL. *Comprehension* is the other component which can be considered as an umbrella term for the first three skills. The researchers considered forty marks for total including each element ten marks. Ten questions for *Speaking* skill asked to be answered orally by each learner. For *Reading* part, there was a text asking the learners to read carefully and answer. *Writing* is the third component in which the students were asked to write a passage of about 200 words. The final component is *Comprehension* that there were ten sentences asking the learners to rewrite them by their own words. As a result, achievement in communication can be considered as the main idea regarding teaching EFL/ESL.

Table 1: Mean marks of the total students

Components	Mean	SD
Speaking	50.25	19.99
Reading	66.83	21.71
Writing	40.25	21.16
Comprehension	56.83	19.00

Source: Primary Data

From Table 1, it can be seen that the maximum mark obtained for the sample students is for *Reading* (mean score = 66.83) followed by test related to *Comprehension* (mean score = 56.83) and then related to *Speaking* (mean score = 50.25). The minimum mark was obtained for *Writing* (mean score = 40.25). From the result it can be inferred that the most difficult component of learning ESL/EFL is *Writing* followed by *Speaking*. *Reading* is found to be the easiest component in process of learning ESL/EFL.

6. Effect of Teaching Through Drama on the Communication Abilities

To study the effect of teaching through drama on the communication abilities of EFL/ESL learners, this section deals with the comparison of level of achievement of control and experimental students in the mentioned components. The analysis was carried out separately for students of different educational levels and students as a whole. From the following table it can be seen that for students in Plus 1 the significance level of t-test for *Reading* and *Comprehension* is less than 0.05 indicating that there is a difference in the marks of control group and experimental group. It can also be seen that the mean marks of *Reading* and *Comprehension* are higher for students of experimental group compared to that of control group. The achieved marks of these two components is the same (mean score= 57.00) for experimental group whereas in control group it is 35.50 and 38.00 respectively. In addition, since the significance level of t-test for *Speaking* and *Writing* is more than 0.05, there is no difference in the mean marks of control group and experimental group.

Table 2: Mean marks of students in Control and Experimental Groups with test of significance

Sample	Subjects	Control		Experimental		t	Sig.
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
Plus 1	Speaking	44.50	20.88	58.00	18.14	1.544	0.140
	Reading	35.50	4.97	57.00	19.61	3.361	0.003
	Writing	37.00	14.18	42.00	23.00	0.585	0.566
	Comprehension	38.00	14.76	57.00	19.47	2.460	0.024
Plus 2	Speaking	38.50	15.99	54.50	17.39	2.141	0.046
	Reading	64.00	16.47	78.00	10.33	2.278	0.035
	Writing	34.50	10.66	41.00	17.29	1.012	0.325
1st DC	Speaking	51.00	19.12	55.00	25.06	0.401	0.693
	Reading	83.00	16.36	83.50	9.44	0.084	0.934
	Writing	37.00	23.12	50.00	33.00	1.02	0.321
	Comprehension	64.00	15.78	70.00	14.14	0.896	0.382
Total	Speaking	44.67	18.84	55.83	19.83	2.236	0.029
	Reading	60.83	23.86	72.83	17.75	2.211	0.031
	Writing	36.17	16.28	44.33	24.73	1.511	0.136
	Comprehension	51.00	19.00	62.67	17.41	2.48	0.016

Source: Primary Data

In Plus 2 group of learners as the significance level of t-test for *Reading* and *Speaking* is less than 0.05, there is a difference in the marks of control group and experimental group. It can also be seen that the mean marks of *Reading* (78.00) and *Speaking* (54.50) are higher for experimental compared to that of control group. Moreover, there is no difference in the mean marks of control group and experimental group for *Writing* and *Comprehension* components. For 1st DC students as the significance level of t-test for all components is higher than 0.05, there is no difference in the marks of control group and experimental group. The table also shows that the achievement of total students in control and experimental groups differ significantly in *Speaking*, *Reading* and *Comprehension* as the significance levels of the t-test is less than 0.05. The maximum achievement of the students in the experimental group is found in the case of *Reading* (control group = 60.83; experimental group = 72.83). The difference in their marks is 12.00 per cent. *Comprehension* is the other important area where teaching through drama made significant improvement. Teaching through drama can increase 11.67 per cent marks in *comprehension* and 11.17 per cent in *Speaking*. But the new method of teaching cannot make any significant improvement in the *Writing* ability of the total students as the significance level of t-test is found to be greater than 0.05. To put into a nutshell, there is a significant difference in the mean marks of *Reading* and *Comprehension* in control group and experimental group for Plus 1 group of students. For Plus 2 groups of students, there has been a positive effect on *Reading* and *Speaking* skills in experimental group. And finally, since the level of significance is more than 0.05 in all components, the new method is not effective in 1st DC students.

7. Effect of Teaching through Drama on the Communication Abilities

In order to find out the effect of teaching through drama on the communication abilities, binary regression analysis was carried out. The dependent variable selected was the continuous variable representing overall achievement of the students. The independent variable selected is the dummy variable representing method of teaching with reference category as traditional method. Table 3 presents the model summary of the regression model for effect of teaching method on the achievement of students.

Table 3: Model Summary of the Regression Model of Effect of Teaching Method on the Achievement students

R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
0.427	0.182	0.168	11.58148

Source: Primary Data

The R square of the regression model is found to be 0.182 indicating that 18.2 per cent variation in the achievement of students is determined by type of instructions namely; traditional and drama method.

Table 4: Result of ANOVA of the Regression Model of Effect of Teaching Method on the Achievement of students

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	1733.437	1	1733.437	12.923	0.001
Residual	7779.583	58	134.131		
Total	9513.021	59			

Source: Primary Data

The significance level of ANOVA is found to be less than 0.05, indicating that the fitted regression model can be used to study the variation of achievement of students of control and experimental groups.

Table 5: Coefficients of the Regression Model of Effect of Teaching Method on the Achievement of students

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
Constant	48.167	2.114		22.779	0.000
Group	10.75	2.99	0.427	3.595	0.001

Source: Primary Data

The Unstandardized Coefficients of the dummy variable representing experimental group is found to be 10.75 indicating that students in the experimental group has about 10.75 per cent of marks higher than those in the control group. From the result it can be concluded that teaching through drama significantly increased the ability of students. The equation (1) represents the fitted regression model for estimating the achievement of students.

$$\text{Mark} = 48.167 + 10.750 \times E_D \quad \dots\dots (1)$$

From the equation it can be estimated that the mean achievement scores of control and experimental groups of students are 48.167 and 58.917 respectively.

8. Total Achievement

Table 6 presents the model summary of the regression model of effect of teaching method on the total achievement of students.

Table 6: Model Summary of the Regression Model of Effect of Teaching Method on the total Achievement of students

R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
0.480	0.230	0.217	10.759

Source: Primary Data

The R square of the regression model is found to be 0.230 indicating that 23 per cent variation in the achievement of students in total achievement is determined by the type of instruction namely drama method.

Table 7: Result of ANOVA of the Regression Model of Effect of Teaching Method on the Total Achievement of students

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	2005.103	1	2005.103	17.323	0.000
Residual	6713.568	58	115.751		
Total	8718.671	59			

Source: Primary Data

As the significance level of ANOVA is less than 0.05, it can be said that the fitted regression model can be used to study the variation of achievement of students of control and experimental groups. The residuals of the regression model is found to be normally distributed which can be seen from the below figures.

Table 8: Coefficients of the Regression Model of Effect of Teaching Method on the Total Achievement of students

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
Constant	42.614	1.964		21.695	0.000
Group	11.562	2.778	0.480	4.162	0.000

Source: Primary Data

The Unstandardized Coefficients of the dummy variable representing experimental group is found to be 11.562 indicating that students in the experimental group has got about 11.562 per cent of marks higher than those in the control group and the effect is found to be significant as the significance level of t-test is below 0.05. From the result it can be concluded that teaching through drama significantly increased the ability of students in total achievement. The equation (2) represents the fitted regression model for estimating the total achievement of students.

$$TotalMark = 42.614 + 11.562 \times E_D \dots \dots \dots (2)$$

From the equation it can be estimated that the mean achievement scores of control and experimental groups of students are 42.614 and 54.176 respectively. Consequently, it is evident that the effect of teaching through drama on the communication abilities of EFL/ESL is effective and hence rejects the null hypothesis that the effect of teaching through drama on the communication abilities of EFL/ESL is not effective.

9. Conclusion

There is a significant difference in the mean marks of *Reading* and *Comprehension* in Control Group and Experimental Group for Plus 1 group of students. For Plus 2 groups of students, there has been a positive effect on *Reading* and *Speaking* skills in Experimental Group. From the result it can be inferred that the most difficult component of learning ESL/EFL is *Writing* followed by *Speaking*. *Reading* is found to be the easiest component in process of learning ESL/EFL. It can be concluded that teaching through drama significantly increased the ability of students in total achievement. Finally, this new method should be applied at school level to get good result.

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