



DEVELOPING FOREIGN LANGUAGES COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE IN READING AND SPEAKING THROUGH DRAMA-BASED LEARNING

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Abstract: This article explores the function of drama in language learning, emphasizing how it is becoming more and more significant in Uzbekistan. It lists main advantages of using drama in the classroom, including the development of creativity, better communication, empathy, and psychological well-being. It also examines the possible difficulties teachers may encounter in drama-based classrooms, such as problems with student engagement, classroom management, and grammatical errors. The communicative language teaching method is criticized in the article for emphasizing fluency over accuracy. Group activities included watching movies, reading movie reviews, introducing the casts and plots, giving input through presentations, selecting the plot, modifying and revising the screenplay, and then acting out the narrative in class. Students' perceptions of the impact of the drama-based projects on their overall language acquisition were investigated through questionnaires and semi-structured interviews. The findings showed that students gave favorable feedback on both their increased awareness and comprehension of the appropriate usage of the target language as well as their improved language skills.

Key words: drama-based classrooms, casts, plots, empathy, group activity, creativity.

Introduction

English has become an international language, and its variety of uses is expanding everywhere, including in Uzbekistan, due to the necessity of learning one or two foreign languages due to ongoing reforms and dynamic processes in all fields. The development of students' communicative competence has long been the goal of language instruction, and a whole language approach that seeks to integrate and apply students' language abilities in an actual setting can be successful and ought to be at the central to the language classroom. Students can develop communicative competence and consolidate what they have learned by using theater exercises in the classroom, where they are learning language structures in real-world contexts and through integrated assignments. Moreover, theater is imaginative, collaborative,



interactive, and expressive, it can be enjoyable and inspiring. Students can break free from the inhibition of speaking a foreign language by assuming other identities.

The President of our Republic Sh.M. Mirziyoev is also paying great attention to higher education system of Uzbekistan. On April 20, 2017 he signed a decree PQ2909 “On the measures of further development of the system of higher education.” This decree's objectives are to enhance the higher education system, evaluate the curriculum in accordance with the nation's top priorities for social and economic development, and provide conditions for preparing higher education professionals to meet international standards. For instance, it has numerous tasks, such as creating new generations of textbooks utilizing foreign sources, inviting foreign professionals to Uzbekistan, learning foreign experiences to send overseas teachers for training, etc. The study and instruction of foreign languages are currently highly valued. Without a doubt, there is a reason why it occurs. As our nation strives to gain a respectable position in the international community, the significance of our people's flawless proficiency in foreign languages can hardly be overstated. This is because our people envision their bright future as a life of cooperation and mutual understanding with their foreign partners. The explanation of language structure and the memorization of word usage and phrases continue to receive a lot of attention. Regarding language skills, they are frequently taught but are typically not considered as a whole. Independently and arranged with varying degrees of emphasis since reading and writing remain the primary abilities to be assessed on significant tests, more emphasis has nevertheless been focused on these skills. While speaking ability is still mostly disregarded because it is not assessed in the entrance exams, students have begun to enhance their listening abilities thanks to the recently added English listening comprehension test. The effectiveness of students' English learning is compromised since each language skill is taught independently, is test-driven, and is learnt in a decontextualized way. Students become upset with their limited ability to genuinely communicate with the language after years of mastering English.

Methods

The methods and procedures followed in the project take on the framework for project work proposed by Stoller (2002, pp.112-117). The steps and the responding themes are specified as follows:

Step 1: Agree on the theme for the project

Students were free to choose the type of films (i.e., either classic or contemporary) to work with. After discussion, students preferred contemporary films as the main themes to be explored.

Step 2: Determine the final outcome of the project.



- (1). Midterm project: midterm oral presentation for the selected film
- (2). Final Project: 20-25minutes final drama performance

Step 3: Structure the project

(1) Students should collaborate in groups to do the following for their midterm presentation:

- A.) Talk about the movie's choice and pay particular attention to it
- B.) Examine the reviews of the film based on real content (such as rotten tomatoes).

D.) Get ready for the oral presentation for the chosen movie, including reporting on the actors, storylines, reviews, and comments, and choose the best storylines for their final drama play adaptation.

(2) Students were told and counseled to do the following for their final performance:

- A.) Select the plots and turn the original script into the modified version.
- B.) Select the actors and revise the modified script.

C.) Improve their verbal expressions' correctness, fluency, and intonation.

D.) Focus on the play's nonverbal elements, such as facial expressions and gestures.

E.) Get the background music, costumes, and props ready, among other things.

F.) Practice and perform the last show

(3) Step 4: Prepare students for the language demands on the process of the project

(4) Step 5: Prepare students for the language demands on the final product of the project

Educate the class on formal oral presenting techniques, such as creating an outline, making slides, and using both verbal and nonverbal cues.

Organize and record practices, allow students to view their own performances, and

Think about the trouble spots.

Step 6: Assess the project

(1). The teacher and their peers used assessment forms to evaluate both the midterm and final project.

(2) Through semi-structured interviews and a questionnaire, students and the



teacher assessed their learning process and efficacy.

According to certain research, speaking a foreign language causes pupils to feel the most anxious (Price, 1991; Hewitt & Stepheson, 2012). Sağlamel and Kayaoğlu (2013) discovered benefits when using creative drama to reduce anxiety related to learning a foreign language from students on how they are becoming more self-assured, conquering stage anxiety, and speaking English. As a result, the project's drama performance enabled students to engage in "a total physical, mental, and emotional activity" (Banerjee, 2014, p. 82), which assisted them in overcoming their fear, overcoming their inhibition, and increase their self-assurance when studying a foreign language.

Results And Discussion

Students are encouraged to make imaginative decisions and solve problems through drama. Students' problem-solving abilities are guided and supported by deep experiences through drama, which also works to promote a growing knowledge of how to address current problems. Drama fosters both spoken and unspoken communication. Students practice and develop a variety of communication skills through the use of body language, facial expressions, and different voices. Drama can improve students' psychological well-being by giving them the chance to expand their problem-solving abilities both vocally and nonverbally, allowing for a sense of creativity. Students can express their genuine emotions or sense of personality under various personalities without worrying about criticism or judgment. They can just improve their general well-being by working on or resolving personal issues while in character. In essence, this enables pupils to let go of their thoughts, further reducing tension and anxiety and enabling them to be authentic. Drama fosters empathy and fresh viewpoints. Students can use all of their senses and traits to comprehend the character and the situation or narrative at hand by assuming different roles in the character. Drama fosters collaboration and other social abilities. Collaborating as a team fosters, supports, and inspires teamwork. In order to establish and develop a secure learning atmosphere for all of our students, it is imperative that they all feel welcomed and collaborate well. Drama does this by expanding on this significance. Simply put, drama unites kids by giving them the opportunity to discover various personas that best fit them, various roles to express who they are, and various approaches to strengthen and cultivate social awareness. Through engagement, drama improves focus and comprehension. When students are actively involved, engaged, and interested, they always learn the most. Students' general comprehension just grows when they are really focused and paying attention. Students are more likely to understand the concept or draw a tangible connection when we incorporate them in our demonstrations throughout class. Drama fosters moral reflection



and values in students. Drama merely aids students in growing and forming new values while also assisting them in understanding the significance of values they already know. As educators, it is crucial that we give kids the room and chance to explore and connect with moral and ethical issues while they are involved in theater, rather than forcing them upon them. Drama is another method of observation-based evaluation. We usually rely on past expertise when instructing new lessons. We begin with what the kids already know, which helps us determine the next course of action in our instruction. Drama just fits in because some of our pupils struggle to understand certain concepts. Teachers can evaluate what students already know or have discovered by using drama to preview or review a lesson. Drama is enjoyable. Learning is enjoyable, and learning is enjoyable. Our pupils will undoubtedly enjoy the learning process if we keep this in mind and make an effort to include fun in our instruction. Students like solving puzzles, doing intriguing things, and doing things in novel ways. They also enjoy discussing and dealing with real-life difficulties and challenges. Aesthetic growth is supported by drama. Students can further develop their sensory awareness by learning about a variety of topics through drama, including characters and conflict. Children also learn how to express themselves through a variety of teaching and learning techniques, including improvisation and debate. Drama provides an educational opportunity that complements other subject areas. As a teaching and learning tool, drama can assist kids in understanding a variety of abilities necessary to be a well-rounded person. Through various personas and roles, it further enables kids to experience and investigate the world around them, strengthening their bonds with people and objects. In addition to letting students reflect on their own learning process and results, the questionnaire and semi-structured interviews were used to help the researcher determine how well drama-based projects assist students with their overall communication skills. It specifically seeks to determine whether the project work enhances students' linguistic and communication abilities, gives them relevant context for real-world language usage, reduces their anxiety, and boosts their confidence as language learners and users.

Conclusion

In conclusion, because it allows students to express their individuality, drama in the English language classroom is ultimately essential. It makes use of students' innate capacity for self-expression and imitation, and when done correctly, it should spark curiosity and creativity. Drama fosters flexibility, fluency, and effective communication. It contextualizes language, and by providing students with real-world success experiences, it should give them the courage to face the world outside of the classroom. This fosters collaborative



learning (Crandall, 1999) and increases learner autonomy (Benson, 2001). In creating a creative and comfortable space where students can freely express their emotions and bodies that theater exercises, students showed improved confidence and self-worth as well as decreased anxiety and inhibition when learning a language.

Every coin has two sides, and theater and drama have drawbacks as well as difficulties teachers encounter when using them in the classroom. When a teacher is unfamiliar with using theatrical exercises in the classroom, a number of issues can arise. Teachers that operate in a traditional atmosphere and follow a fairly regulated syllabus are frequently scared to experiment with more student-centered activities. These anxieties are frequently founded around the apprehension that the class will become boisterous, unfocused and the teacher would lose control. In actuality, the opposite is true: a learner-centered class where students are working cooperatively in groups can be readily managed provided it is properly set up and organized, and the instructor is free to do anything other than supervise the groups. This contrasts with the teacher-centered class when the teacher has to watch a motivate 20–30 individuals continuously without a minute's relaxation. There are difficulties that develop with drama-based schools.

Questionnaire

1. My English listening ability has improved because of watching films.

-strongly disagree

-disagree

-natural

-agree

-strongly agree

2. My English speaking ability has improved because of oral presentation and acting on the drama play

-strongly disagree

-disagree

-natural

-agree

-strongly agree

3. My English reading ability has improved because of reading the movie reviews from related sources.

-strongly disagree

-disagree

-natural

-agree

-strongly agree



4. My English writing ability has improved as I need to write feedback for midterm presentation, adapt and edit the scripts for the final play.

- strongly disagree
- disagree
- natural
- agree
- strongly agree

5. Overall, I think I have improved in all four skills of English from doing this group project.

- strongly disagree
- disagree
- natural
- agree
- strongly agree

6. Evaluating other group's presentation and performance helps me think of my own advantages and weaknesses.

- strongly disagree
- disagree
- natural
- agree
- strongly agree

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