



Linguistics

# Drama in Fostering Students' Speaking Skills: A Systematic Review on Benefits and Problems

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## A B S T R A C T

Drama is pedagogy with a fairly complete component that involves the body, mind, emotions, and senses in order to build individual relationships with true-life situations so that being active in language learning is needed by students. This paper will closely explore the benefits and problems of implementing drama during the process of teaching and learning a language. In language teaching, drama has been proposed as an effective way to encourage the students' speaking skills. Essentially, drama provides more benefits, not only in students' speaking skills but also in other aspects. However, some problems may arise in the process of drama-based language teaching. By cross-checking and reviewing eclectically from different sources, this paper presents a critical analysis of several empirical works on drama techniques used in the context of language learning. To generalize the notion, drama is indeed precious in language learning. Nevertheless, several problems in its implementation need to be considered to achieve learning objectives properly. The review results showed that some problems that may appear during the implementation of drama were undisciplined in time management, chaotic atmosphere, the usage of the first language (L1), and status at school. Hence, several suggestions are provided as solutions to the drama problems confronted by teachers.

## I. INTRODUCTION

In several studies, the drama has been acknowledged for its educational contributions, particularly for enhancing the students' speaking skills. There are Tseng (2018), Supriya (2018), Sirisrimangkorn (2018), Sukendro (2018), Ananto and Rusmiati (2018a), Nanda (2016), Effendi (2015a), to mention a few. They have proved that drama brings enormous benefits to students' speaking skills in the English learning process. To them, drama is a useful technique that can actively include students in the teaching and learning process. Therefore, they provided insight into how drama can positively contribute to students' speaking skills during the English learning process. Most of them proposed that besides having positive effects on students' speaking skills, drama also brings affective benefits to students.

Tseng (2018) has accomplished their findings, which revealed that the students' positive comments are not only a part of their enhanced language skills, yet about increasing their consciousness, comprehending the use of appropriate target language, and boosting their confidence gained from collaborative learning. Simultaneously, Tseng (2018) has presented some statistics tables that consist of students' perspectives concerning their progress in linguistic skills as a whole, contextualized learning, and effects on affective aspects. The statistical table results are obtained by conducting questionnaires and semi-structured interviews. Moreover, Effendi (Effendi, 2015b), centralized on drama technique used with the intention to foster the skill of speaking, attested that drama is proven to be effective to assist students in enhancing their speaking ability to vocalize notions rather than without drama. He gained a prominent distinction of the students' scores by employing a

randomized controlled experimental design with an unequal control cohort.

Sirisrimangkorn (2018) also revealed that students gain more chances to use a foreign language for communication when utilizing the drama project-based learning in the teaching and learning process. However, by using drama, students can develop their affective aspects such as self-esteem and motivation. Apart from those benefits, Sirisrimangkorn (2018), applied two designs (pre-test design and post-test design) to obtain the data, also discovered that drama could reflect students' collaborative working skills worthwhile for them in the long term. Sirisrimangkorn's findings are not much diverse from what has been revealed by Ananto and Rusmiati (2018a), who have asserted the role and impact of implementing drama in the language teaching and learning process. Ananto and Rusmiati (2018a) have found out that drama certainly helps teachers design classroom learning to avoid boredom or monotony and encourage them to talk more. They applied a pre-experimental method to reveal the efficacy of other techniques in the process of teaching and learning the language. In such a case, speaking skills as students' biggest problem can be overcome by making real situations using English through implementing drama.

Other researchers such as Supriya (2018) and Sukendro (2018), who employed classroom action research, have roughly the same notions, that drama in the language teaching and learning process will positively contribute to the students' speaking skills. Their notions have led to a perception that applying drama in the language class is approved as valuable and effective in developing the students' speaking skills. However, the main point that those researchers did not pay considerable attention to is the problems of using drama. Those researchers focused merely on the inherent positive impacts of drama without in the least discussing the problems that might arise when applying drama. This paper will solicit to disclose problems that might appear when using drama. It brings an overview of the roles and implications that teachers usually consider when deciding drama as one of the class techniques to foster the students' speaking skills. Therefore, in the first, it examines the educational benefits of implementing drama. Secondly, it reveals the problems that might arise during the use of drama, and the proposed solutions are also

recommended as well.

## II. METHOD

The paper summarized the benefits of using drama and overviewed the problems that might arise when applying drama as a classroom technique. Besides, this paper also concurrently attempted to provide solutions to teachers' drama problems. In this case, a problem-solving discussion was applied as a method to deal with the issue. It was done by cross-checking and reviewing eclectically from dissimilar sources. Finally, the discussion results were affirmed and evaluated by utilizing the relevant previous studies and research.

## III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### *Benefits of Implementing Drama: Speaking Skills, Imagination, Affective Aspects*

When examining applying drama in the process of teaching and learning language, it is inseparable from the positive contributions to the students. There are some benefits gained by using drama in the classroom as follows: fostering speaking skills, developing imagination, and enhancing affective aspects. However, the teachers can re-evaluate those matters so that the language teaching and learning process can run more effectively.

#### *Fostering Speaking Skills*

Speaking holds a significant role in the language learning process (i.e., mastering English) even though speaking is sometimes overlooked since it is rarely tested during the entrance test. In speaking case, communication's effectiveness becomes the primary purpose of achieving. Students are expected to quickly comprehend and avoid the mistake in comprehending the message due to improper grammar, pronunciation, and vocabulary. Thus, to enhance students' speaking skills, the teachers use drama as the next substitute strategy. By implementing drama, the students' activeness towards structural improvement will increase since they are independent (Ananto & Rusmiati, 2018a). This occurrence can be called an approach 'learner-centered' that focuses on students' self-reliance and students' autonomy. According to Stoller (2006), students' autonomy can be obtained through project-based learning (i.e., drama), which encourages students to share their responsibilities with the group. While working in a group, they

certainly have to communicate with their group members to discuss work duties. In such a case, they can practice their English to fellow friends so that when they find mispronouncing or difficulties of vocabulary, they can do a mutual correction. By doing so, students are able to speak English fluently in their daily life.

In addition, drama can be implemented in the language classroom to teach speaking since people can gain dialogue and conversation in drama (Sukendro, 2018). Besides practicing daily talk when making drama preparations, students can gradually practice dialogue and conversation to present the drama. In this case, students can practice the dialogue and conversation both individually and collaboratively. By keeping practice, students can memorize the dialogue well so that they can minimize the error in pronunciation, grammar, or vocabulary when on the stage. In line with Miccoli (2003) [9], repeated oral practice is beneficial for students since it includes the growth of characters, personalities, and motives, leading to a more natural way of communication. Thus, the implementation of drama can assist students to foster their speaking skills.

#### *Developing Imagination*

Drama occurs when the students create ideas and place them in a scene with characters and situations of their own so that the scene is precious to them and others (Gaudart, 1990). In this case, creating ideas have a similar meaning as generating imagination. A drama with complete elements such as theme, characters, setting, and plot structure requires students to convey their imagination in true-life language usage. Students are able to speak English just like in a real situation. Students begin to show their imagination and creativity on a manuscript during the rehearsal process and present it just like in realness (Ananto & Rusmiati, 2018b). Without the existence of imagination and creativity, the presented drama will be plain since the performer cannot integrate well with the characters or communicative situations in the drama. Hence, teachers involve drama as one of the class techniques to develop students' imagination.

#### *Enhancing Affective Aspects*

Affective aspects are the concept that connects mental and physical processes; in this matter, affective is closely related to emotional factors.

According to Tseng (2018), drama provides three affective benefits, namely: enhanced motivation, boosted confidence, and lowered anxiety. Motivation means something that moves or has efficacy or virtue of moving; in this sense, it is the motor of human behavior (Quispe, 2019). During language teaching and learning, motivation is considered the most significant affective aspect since the greater the students' motivation, the easier it is to acquire the target language. By implementing drama, students can reduce their stress in learning a foreign language since drama integrates fun, entertaining, and relaxing activities. They can practice speaking with their peers in a collaborative learning atmosphere. The environment at the time when doing the project is exciting so that students' can increase their interest, curiosity, and desire which leads to learning motivation. It is in line with Perez (2006) which stated that those three components (interest, curiosity, and desire) are part of the motivation.

Furthermore, Krashen (1982) suggested that students' self-confidence in a second language is one of the selfhood factors closely concerned with the learning effect. When a person has sufficient self-confidence and a positive personal image, they are more successful in acquiring the target language than those who are less confident. In such a case, boosting students' self-confidence has a relation to the students' motivation. According to Sirisrimangkorn (2018), communication activities in a delightful atmosphere could raise their motivation and develop their confidence while speaking. In order to make it clear, it can be said that when the students practice a lot in speaking, they will be more pleased and confident in speaking. Moreover, drama can also increase learner confidence by encouraging students to speak clearer, louder, and in various tones (Supriya, 2018). Thus, it can be concluded that the pleasant atmosphere of drama can lead to students' motivation to learn a language to boost their self-confidence.

The last affective benefit gained from drama is lowered anxiety. One type of anxiety that greatly affects the learning process is social anxiety, namely fear, emotional discomfort, sadness, fear, tension, and concernment in various social situations (Quispe, 2019). Since drama is performed on the stage (i.e., in front of the classroom) where there

must be a large number audience, students will sometimes feel anxiety. They are afraid that they will make mistakes in both words and actions while on stage. By using drama in the language class, students can learn more about how to deal with their anxiety so that they can perform confidently and minimize errors. Effendi (Effendi, 2015b)[7] stated that drama projects could give students a chance to express language in several emotions, socialize, solve problems, and make decisions.

### ***Problems of Implementing Drama***

Apart from the positive impact of drama on language teaching and learning, it should be noted that there are pedagogical issues that arise with the implementation of drama. These issues are discussed further in several studies by Nanda (2016), Samantaray (2014), Islam & Islam (2012), and Noor, Rahayu, & Rosnija (2012). These studies address the issues that will be taken into account when applying drama (e.g., undisciplined in time management, chaotic atmosphere, the usage of the first language (L1), and status at school). According to Samantaray (2014) and Noor, Rahayu, & Rosnija (2012), drama required quite a lot of time to be done so that it sometimes exceeded the lesson time limit. As a result, this can change the time on an existing schedule, which affects time management.

Moreover, when the students were in the process of drama preparation, the class momentarily turned into chaotic as they are bothered with the noise of conversation rehearsals. Another problem is that students' occasionally forgot the conversation in target language so that they used their mother tongue to create a complete dialogue. The common problem that arises on implementing drama is that some students may react negatively to participate in a situation due to the status (Samantaray, 2014). If the group has people of different status, they may be unwilling to become involved in dramatization.

## **IV. CONCLUSIONS**

Drama is a literary genre that is considered authentic material due to its real-life language use. Drama indeed provides more benefits in the process of language teaching and learning. One of the most prominent benefits of drama is the increase in students' speaking skills. By using drama, students can freely express their ideas, but they still need to adapt to the script. Apart from getting their speaking skills improved, students also gain other benefits in the drama preparation process, namely

developing imagination and enhancing affective aspects. Suitable education programs can develop the creative imagination; one of which is drama. In drama, students are asked to portray characters as naturally as possible where the played characters can be different from their everyday personalities. This is where they can express their creative imaginations that may not be unexpected before customizing the character. Besides, affective aspects such as enhancing motivation, boosting confidence, and lowering anxiety become the benefit of implementing drama. Due to the enjoyment that comes with drama, students are motivated to learn the target language. With this motivation, students can increase their confidence to perform their best on stage and this can reduce their anxiety little by little.

In addition, several problems may appear during the implementation of drama, namely undisciplined in time management, chaotic atmosphere, the usage of the first language (L1), and status at school. Those problems can be considered formidable enough to implement the drama, but they are not insurmountable. Nor are these issues so widespread that they should forbid the teacher from experimenting with role-playing. In this case, the problems must be considered and appropriately handled to achieve learning objectives perfectly. The teachers are suggested to plan the timeframe well and convey it to students to be more disciplined in the teaching and learning process using drama; it could start and finish on time. For the chaotic atmosphere, teachers are suggested to ask students to prepare the drama well in advance so that they do not need to make noise in the class to memorize the dialogue at the last second they will perform on the stage. In the case of using mother tongue (L1), students are advised to often practice the English conversation with their groups before doing drama to avoid the use of mother tongue (L1) or keep practicing even after doing drama in order to make them speak English more fluently. For the last problem related to status in the classroom, this problem can be resolved with the help of little advice from the teachers. Teachers may give students an overview that fellow friends have to respect each other and not discriminate based on social status. By doing so, those problems can be adequately resolved, and the learning goals can be achieved.

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