

Imperative of Using Drama as a Teaching Tools for Integration of Language Skill

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Abstract

Language classroom instruction is, mostly focused on writing and reading skills overlooking the other skills such as speaking and listening. The teachers of English perhaps do not employ language skills in the classroom due to large class size, heterogeneous Students and the duration of the period. By this, the language instruction demand various methods to be included while teaching language that makes learning more interesting. This paper try to offer the imperative use of drama in the teaching of language skills at senior secondary school level. Additionally, the paper exhibits how dramatic techniques can be used in teaching of language skills. In the aspect of teaching, drama involves and stimulates the feelings and visualization of the learners, providing the students various stimuli and elevating their knowledge on the subterranean level. Scrivener's (2014) identified that method of drama are adopted in language teaching to examine the effectiveness of the learners' language development. This paper are categorized into two part's namely: the theoretical feature of drama and practical methods used in the context of English as a second language (ESL) teaching. It also presents a general picture of language teaching and learning process to integrate language by using the method of drama. Finally, it is recommended that all language teachers should explore the variety of teaching methods in the classroom in order to integrate language teaching and enhance all the language skills among learners.

Keywords: *Drama, integrated language learning, Method of drama, Teaching through drama.*

Introduction

The teaching of any language is incredibly perplexing to the learners especially if they have inadequate exposure to the second language which is the target language and this made them to be unable to practice language in a reliable context or environment. The teachers encounter major difficulties in the classroom such as

students' lack of confidence thereby made them unable to communicate in the target language which is English because of stage fright. However, most of the language classroom instruction is focused more on productive skill such as writing and reading skills ignoring receptive skills such as speaking and listening. The teachers of English as a language faced challenges in integrating the language skills in the classroom due to large class size, mother tongue and the duration of the short period of forty five minutes. Hence, language classroom instruction requires various teaching method such as drama techniques for integration of language teaching, to make learning more interesting and fun-filled.

Culham (2000) asserts that the process of using drama to teach languages has only increased with the popularity of communicative approach, where students use language for a purpose to convey real meaning and solve problems. The dramatic methods are used in the classroom in order to build self-confidence in the learners and to formulate learning more entertaining and fun filling so that which may provide motivation among the students. The method of drama provides a variety of opportunities for learners in language learning in practical circumstances. Drama is also considered to be one of the best methods to be practiced for development of language skills.

The method of drama can be assisted to avoid boredom/ tiredness in the classroom. In this rise, students find it more fascinating and motivating to learn language skills through drama in a day to day communication that involves opinions, ideas, values, suitability and compliance. This method also provides a wider preference of learner-Centred activities for teachers to select the best activity for the efficient classroom instruction. Again, the purpose of the drama is to involve and stimulate the feelings and visualization of the learner's, giving them various stimuli and elevating their learning knowledge on the subterranean level. However, this method enhances the students' Language Skills such as listening, speaking and writing. It also create interest towards subject and consequently to improve their language skills. Fleming (2016) explained that drama is a learner-centred that is done through active cooperation among learners. It is a social activity and thereby embodies much of the theory that has accentuated the social and communal, as opposed to the purely individual aspects of learning.

Features of Drama

The recent professional development is based on the cognitive learning theory (Eggen, 1992). Hence, it concentrates on the internal and mental process that the learners use to make sense of their surroundings. In language teaching and learning classroom, the drama does not refer to a classical or theatre performance, but it entails the elements of a play with a number of other aspects that make learning more interesting and motivating in the classroom. Baldwin & Fleming (2018),

explains that drama performs as a medium for developing personal, social and emotional development, communication and language development.

As part of the strategies of drama, improvisation and mime provide a lot of language practice to the learners in a real life context. Drama helps to develop the language in different traits such as for building self-confidence, creativity, spontaneity, Improvisation and involving feelings of the learners. In addition to that it motivates the natural use of Language according to its situation.

Inadequate time for preparation of speaking in real life situations, when the learners get enough time to practice in the class, they would find speaking more comfortable. They would adapt and react very quickly according to the roles assigned to them. However, mime and body language can play a major role in stimulating and enriching the learning experience thereby using drama in the context of classroom would contribute a solid foundation to become competent and confident learners of the language.

Drama as a Teaching Tool in the Language Teaching

According Scrivener (2014) the drama activities commonly found in the English language teaching classroom are:

Role play: This is a situation whereby the students are given role to act or play in the classroom instruction. Role play enables students to step outside themselves to accept and modify into a different character. The can students improvise or create their own role or they are assigned role cards. In both the-cases, it has a stimulating effect and students found it easy to engage themselves in the learning.

Simulation: In the initial stages of learning, students are familiar with different roles from simple to complex ones such as day to day incidents to problem solving and plays etc.

Drama Games: These games make students to involve in action, exercise the imagination which engage both learning and acquisition and allow various emotional expressions such as ice-breakers, warm-ups, fillers, and concentration games so on so forth.

Guided Improvisation: In the beginning stages of an activity, the students are guided by the teacher. Once, the students start participating then they become part of the activity, and use their imagination and improvisation, till then, the teacher role is significant.

Acting play scripts: This is a situation whereby acting play scripts provide every student a space to utilise their talents and bring personal aspects into the learning context. Scripts are given to students to perform language activities in the class. All

the stages of preparation, practice, performance, analysis and evaluation act as effective tools in learning and reinforcing the use of language.

Prepared improvised drama: The real life situations and enacting a story are performed by the students in a number of times in the classroom. The students take responsibility and perform given roles effectively. The students' obligation towards their work motivates in order to be successful in their activities. The complete class take part in smaller groups to performing in more complex drama effectively.

Intelligence	Means by which it might be used and developed
Linguistic intelligence	Use of text, teacher in role, role play, thought-tracking, improvisation
Logical/mathematical intelligence	Structuring movement activities and presenting logical image sequences
Bodily and kinesthetic intelligence	Movement, dance -drama, improvisation, enactment,, mime
Musical intelligence	Using and linking music and emotion within the drama context, creating soundtracks, sound collages
Interpersonal intelligence	Teacher in role, improvisation, group playmaking, tableau, performance
Intrapersonal intelligence	Empathizing and reflecting whilst working in role

The table above explains using and developing different intelligences through drama (adopted from Baldwin, P. & Fleming, K., 2018).

Baldwin, P. & Fleming, K. (2018) state that the drama acts as a teaching and learning tool that is used for- developing wide range of intelligences.

Benefits of Drama Techniques in English as a Second Language

There are assortments of advantages by using drama in the teaching of an ESL classroom. It acts as an accelerator in the learning process. Drama is a commanding tool in the connection of students with learning and content (Kaaland-Wells 2004). Katz (2010) also asserts that a student by involving and practicing in assorted drama activities, will exercise copious thinking skills such as invention, generation, speculation, assimilation, clarification, inducing, deducing, analysing, accommodating, selecting, refining, sequencing and judging.

The following features provide valuable insights that exhibit the potential use of drama.

- **Meaningful situations:** language should be used and introduced in a meaningful situation or context. It provides an opportunity for students to practice language in a mutual co-operating atmosphere and it also stimulates them to discharge their creative prospective and their artistic talents among the individuals. Students are motivated with their achievement and it reinforces their learning.
- **Reinforcement of the language:** with the practice of drama, the teacher gets many opportunities in language classroom that become a powerful means of reinforcement in the use of language.
- **Enjoyable learning:** learning and teaching can be more pleasurable, stimulating and fun filling with the blend of drama techniques. It helps students to overcome the stage fear and to build up self-confidence.
- **Mixed level classes:** with the help of drama activities the problem of heterogeneous capability is condensed. It assists to overcome difficulties in conducting class room activities effectively. Learners can choose roles depending on their interest and can perform actively in learning situation and all would benefit from the same context.
- **Deeper experience of learning:** the use of methods of drama kindles students to take a dynamic part in the learning context. It also stimulates learners to involve in taking an active role in the learning situation. The context involves the active role of their intuition which is part of the personality.

The Role of the Teacher

The teacher should be active and confident enough to pioneer drama strategies in the language classroom so that it brings expected benefits among the students. This may slow-down or may have a negative effect on students. If the teacher does not discharge his/her responsibility properly, it may result to failure of the complete learning process.

The teacher should encourage and explain the purpose of using drama techniques in the classroom to the students so that they may participate actively in various tasks and feel more comfortable.

Generally, teachers may come across certain challenges while using drama in the classroom. Due to certain reasons such as their involvement in the play, students may switch into their mother tongue whenever they do not obtain thoughts that may affect the primary purpose of achieving command over the target language.

Teachers may find overwhelmed and unprepared to connect themselves in between the content areas and the performing arts. Some of the teachers lack confidence and expertise to plan and implement drama activities in the classroom, due to the lack of professional training and restricted opportunities in innovative approaches.

Integrated Teaching of Language Skills

The drama methods can be focussed to master the language skills successfully such as listening, speaking, reading, writing, vocabulary (lexis), grammar (rules), and phonology (phonetics) (Scrivener, 2014). According to Dwyer (2020) the method of drama brightens the language learning pleasurable and academically beneficial experiences to the students and the teachers.

Moreover, the drama methods provide framework to integrate four language skills. While participating in different activities the students express their thoughts, listen to others' views, read the texts, and write projects on the given topics. Assuming various roles in different situations students are motivated to speak/write and listen/read. These can facilitate students' cognitive development such as creative thinking, problem solving, questioning, and negotiating (Vygotsky, 1978).

Teaching Listening

Scrivener (2014) stress that listening skills are divided into the following two areas

1. Extensive listening (listening for gist): it is focussed on entire information to get an overall understanding of the given topic.
2. Intensive listening (listening for details): it concentrates on a small portion of given information in a great detail.

Listening skills entail a lot of patience. If the students find understanding a topic difficult, the teacher-must provide the authentic listening-material- that reflects real life experience. By participating in drama activities, the learners are required to pay attention to the listening so that they can react according to the situation.

The activities of drama that are used in the classroom are listening to music, news, TV programmes, movies, telephone calls, small talks, announcements etc. All these are easily linked with drama activities. If the students are provided with more listening practice in a meaningful context, they are equipped to become better, competent and confident in listening to variety of real life situations.

Teaching Speaking

To become a competent speaker of a language one may require for development of speaking skills in a number of contexts such as to send or receive messages and be

able to employ in a consequential communication. The methods of drama are an ultimate tool to arouse and keep on various speaking tasks such as fluency, pronunciation, stress, intonation etc. Hence, it provides adequate rehearsal to the students in acquiring this skill. The learners who practice language in meaningful context which is similar to the practical contexts find it easy in the real life context.

As Harmer (2019) states that in one to one interaction the speaker could use a variety of facial expressions, gestures and common body language to communicate the message. These traits are part and parcel of drama and they should be incorporated in the learning process. The students articulate their feelings through facial expressions which is as a result of provided commands and recommendations which stimulate reactions and remarks.

As part of role play students practise telephone conversation in different roles in many number of ways. During these activities the students not only speak, but also dictate or write down an important dialogues or a piece of information.

Drama activity performs as a tool also for the development of students' pronunciation, rhythm and intonation. In addition to that, the other things such as tongue twisters, poems and songs can be practiced with body movements and emotions in a natural context.

Teaching Reading

Reading can be taught effectively with the help of drama in teaching and learning context. Teacher can adopt texts from a large pool of literary texts such as newspapers, magazines, cartoons, pamphlets and advertisements for the development of reading skill. Students are encouraged to read the script aloud as if an actor reads; it is a method to practice reading skill. According to Cox (2015) there is a natural relation between reading and drama. Drama and reading would encourage students to learn language skills actively and also motivates them to read.

According to Scrivener (2014) there are two approaches to reading a text in order to develop one's reading skill.

1. Extensive/fluent/gist reading: in order to * obtain overall comprehension of a longer text.
2. Intensive/accurate reading: it used with short sentences, sections when one needs to comprehend the information and language use in detail.

Where the drama method can be implemented such a way that it assists to inculcate both the approaches. But drama encourages the development of intensive reading skill extracting a grammar structure, function, vocabulary use etc.

Teaching Writing

Drama can be used to improve writing activities such as writing poetry, a story, a narrative, a play, a scene, a song, an advertisement, types of letters and postcards and so on and so forth which involving the use of imagination and creativity.

Especially, writing activity as part of drama often involves wider and more complex activity. Through drama, students grow deeper comprehension of writing as a skill and a variety of situations where writing is essential and inevitable. The range of writing activities comprises writing instructions, cooking, giving directions, script writing can be produced and dramatized.

Creative guided writing activity: in this task, more advanced students draft a script that will be used for dramatization in the later stage. It is a choice for the less advanced students in rewriting and performing dialogues or situations.

Teaching Vocabulary

With the help of dramatization one would enhance vocabulary in an average classroom. It can become a stimulation to develop vocabulary such as a bus station, an airport, a train station, a restaurant, a police station etc. Each of these topics may provide the situation with a wide range of vocabulary to practice in various real life situations in the language learning. Transforming language classroom into a real life simulation provides a wide choice of opportunities to practice a stock of diction in a variety of situations.

Teaching Grammar

By using the methods of drama in teaching grammar rules will make language learning more effective and interesting. According to Scrivener (2014/2019) that effective way of learning grammar required to be exposed to a lot of language, focussing their attention on specific items to understand what they mean, how they are formed and when and where they are used. The students will engage in the situation and produce more grammatically correct sentences in their speaking and/or writing.

The methods of drama provide a wide variety of opportunities to the learners for practicing grammar in an encouraging atmosphere. By practicing other drama tasks/activities such as role plays, dialogues, and imaginary situations can be used to elicit and practice grammar.

Conclusion

There are some common limitations which may affect the teaching and learning in different ways. The learners are not motivated to participate in activities due to stage fright and other aspects which play major role in learning a language. The large class size also mitigates the learning. It is also important that inappropriate

resources, space where they learn. Lack of trained teachers is also a constraint to teach language skills through play. This paper discusses the imperative of using drama as a teaching tool in the integrated language teaching context and also exhibits how drama can be contributed to the development of all the language skills. Drama in the context of language learning focused 'more on the learners by providing with deeper experience of learning the language. And also it provides a choice to develop their second language in a natural and motivating way by assisting them to enhance language skills to become competent users of the language.

Recommendations

There is need for the teacher of English language to plays a major role in the implementation of using drama as a tool for teaching language skill in the classroom instruction. Again, the teacher are to act as a facilitator among the students to overcome their stage fear and to building their confidence level.

Finally, the purpose of drama activities is to stimulate and support the implementation of language skills in an effective and innovative way among the learners without any inhibition. Language teaching and learning should be realized through drama in a natural way among the students and the students are interested in participation of various activities enthusiastically.

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