

The use of Drama in foreign Language Teaching and Learning in India

Avinash Kumar*

University of Delhi

Abstract – We are living in a global world in which knowledge of a foreign language is important to decode and understand the most interesting and diverse cultural knowledge's and languages. These days, Spanish is the second most spoken language and has become an important part of day to day life. This language is in use via mass of the major society, media, advertising, shopping, travelling etc. The situation becomes unavoidable when it comes of traveling and making oneself comfortable in the countries where the target language is being practiced. It gives a justifiable benefit to the young and dynamic learners considering the usage and benefit of the knowledge of target language. The knowledge of a foreign language helps in total personality improvement and primarily people learn it from the job prospective.

The drama is a mean through which students shall be able to learn pronunciation, punctuation, expressions, reactions, gesture, body language, speaking, reading and many more. This is the one of the best method which works on communicative method as it focuses on use of the language in planned and unplanned situation. The ultimate goal of acquiring any language is to practice it in day to day life hence there can't be any other method in which student is practicing all aspects of communication skills. Language acquisition at the University age can be compared from kids, they don't learn the language however they acquire it and they speak the language perfectly. The use of drama as an innovative educational tool in foreign language learning & teaching is decade's old approach which was started in the 19th century. Drama works on communicative approach and the Communicative Approach came into existence in 1970's and since then the approach has been an important part of foreign language teaching. The fact is, tin India there are not many publications focused at study material creation based on drama based teaching.

The drama is a process not a product and its ultimate goal is to convey the message to the targeted group in their own language. Undoubtedly, this tool satisfies fully all aspects of communication skills. This helps students in taking out their thoughts to the real world and it provides an opportunity to work on productive activity and enhances class participation. My strong belief is, drama plays a vital role in foreign language learning and teaching process. According to Via "Few would disagree that drama has at last established itself as a means of helping people learn another language. A great deal of our everyday learning is acquired through experience, and in the language, classroom drama fulfils that experiential need" (1987, pp110).

Key Word: Drama, Foreign language, Young learners, Culture.

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INTRODUCTION

Answering the very basic question of mass "why is drama-based teaching and learning is important today"?

It's an old saying "What we learn with pleasure we never forget" and when we talk about drama based teaching we basically verify the same old saying. While learning the language via drama the students are not bothered about learning it in fact they learn it while they play. This is verified that "you always perform better without pressure" and language is something which should be acquired not learnt. Well,

Before I come to my answer I a quoting my findings which I found while I was reading Kumaravadivelu's writings on "post method" theory, and It impressed me. As per Kumaravadivelu (1994), second/foreign language pedagogy has made a shift from the conventional methods of classroom policy to a new world where "post method" is the norm.

Teachers are no longer looking for an alternative method but rather an alternative to methods. This shift, as Kumaravadivelu puts it, "motivates a search for an open-ended, coherent framework based on current theoretical, empirical, and

pedagogical insights" (p. 27) and he puts forth 10 macro strategies for teachers to effect targeted learning outcomes: 1) maximize learning opportunities, 2) facilitate negotiated interaction, 3) minimize perceptual mismatches, 4) activate intuitive heuristics, 5) foster language awareness, 6) contextualize linguistic input, 7) integrate language skills, 8) promote learner autonomy, 9) raise cultural consciousness, and 10) ensure social relevance. While I have chosen not to organize my literature review along with this framework, I will refer to most of these macro strategies in an attempt to show how closely aligned drama as pedagogy in L2 learning fits Kumaravadivelu's "post method" theory. I also studied Nina Spada's definitive work on the communicative approach in L2 teaching, which according to her has also reached a turning point (2007). According to Spada, communicative language teaching is "a meaning-based, learner-centered approach to L2 teaching where fluency is given priority over accuracy and the emphasis is on the comprehension and production of messages, not the teaching or correction of language form" (p. 272). The learner is now seen as an active participant in the process of language learning and teachers are expected to develop activities to promote self-learning, group interaction in real situations and peer-teaching (Sam, Wan Yee, 1990). Spada's work says "language proficiency is not a unitary concept but consists of several different components" (Spada, 2007, p. 273), including linguistic competence, pragmatic knowledge, information on the socio-linguistic appropriateness of language, and strategic competence or compensatory strategies with the recommendation that L2 pedagogy should include all components in its curriculum.

The drama gives an opportunity to use the personality and creativity of students in creating the material in student's language. The activity is very much interesting and students can imitate, mimic and express his/her feelings via drama. This is one of the most effective tools which can be used as a substitute for available traditional educative material. The traditional materials are so common and boring for students and teachers. The less presence of authentic exercises and almost nil activity drive the students towards demotivation and after this they stop participating in the class and later on they quit. The goal of any class should be entertain the students maintain best of students interest and providing quality education via different interesting activity and science and technology. To use these tools, teachers require to understand the class and prepare the class beforehand. The fact which is very important to understand that each student is carrier of a different language, culture, interest, thought process and lifestyle to the classroom. In a normal classroom usually, students are made to learn by hart the vocabulary and grammar but this is not like other subject, in this the more they practice more will acquire. Many times this practice of learning by heart causes demotivation and depression. In the era of

technology, Students are still untouched of alternative resources though all alternative resources are only a click. Now here the role of teacher becomes very important as they are the one who understand the value of these resources. , Letting go the negative part of these useful resources teacher should promote it in the class and should act as a passive participant in the whole activity. If teacher becomes passive naturally all students will become active and they will participate and learn.

While using drama students are learning the language and culture of the day to day life following communication method as per the common European framework. The most interesting part is, they enjoy the performance and learn the language and culture unconsciously without having pressure of learning it by heart or realising the rules and regulations of the grammar. At the back of their mind they are playing , but they are learning the language and this is the best way to promote the language. It is proven that if you learn something without having stress and pressure you perform better. If I mention the advantages of learning a language via drama it is many and I am mentioning a few of them.

Improvement of communication skills: - It's proven that using drama as a tool many students have improved their communication skills, and they have opened a totally new world and for them, it's not less than fun. One of the students commented during my study" Using drama helped me to improve my communication skills and provided me the opportunity to work as a team.

Improvement of the language and subject matter: - Drama is interdisciplinary, and it helps in the improvement of the knowledge of the subject. Language proficiency: - The drama helps in learning a great vocabulary and enhanced reading skills. It also facilitates to practice in different scenario and situations practicing a different type of written and oral forms. It is a fact that it helps students in learning via the usage of reading and vocabulary.

Teamwork: - The drama is a result of teamwork. It involves cooperation, teamwork, result oriented task and improvement of all communication skills. Soft skills and right language at the right time: -

This also improves in acquiring soft skills, certain gesture, expressions, feelings, emotions and very importantly the use of right language and expressions at right situations. Student engagement: - This helps in maintain students interest as everyone is participating and engaging in the drama and consider themselves as a crucial participant.

Active learning: - It's another important step as in this they create, experiment, write dialogue, sketch,

revise, question, rehearse and perform. This much participation hasn't been seen in traditional method and material. Drama builds confidence and concentration. Imagination: - According to Einstein "Imagination is more important than knowledge" It helps in thinking of new ideas.

Memory: - It improves overall memory. Performing lines and repeating the same helps in memorization. Memory requires an exercise as muscle.

Linguistic Intelligence:- It helps in improving the linguistic knowledge as it plays vital role in any language.

Usage of verbal and non-verbal skills:- It promotes verbal and non-verbal skills considering the fact that this is the tool which needs script, rehearsal and perform in front of an audience.

DISADVANTAGES OF THE USE OF DRAMA

The use of drama in teaching foreign language might fail in a few circumstances.

Activities are not authentic and real:- Many times the situations are irrelevant to individual learner's requirement.

Activities are not easy to monitor:- Teachers are not very comfortable as they sense it as an activity which may lose control at any part of the time. It may cause embarrassment and awkwardness, especially in university students.

The use of incorrect grammar:- This doesn't follow the grammar rules always and because of these teachers are not very happy using this as an educational tool.

The usage of politically wrong language:- This promotes incorrect forms of language, and it may discourage students and promote wrong language learning.

Activities and Interest:- The practiced activities may not be suitable for all, and it may fail for a certain class or a certain group and it may cause demotivation for them.

Level of language used in Drama:- Using the drama might face less participation as it might not suit to all. Maintain interest is very difficult as the language used in the drama is not as per their level and sometimes teachers are not ready to invest much effort to modify and ease the language. As the society and burning issues are different and everyone interest can be different, hence it may fire back and create problems for the teachers. Students make the innumerable number of errors.

The use L1 persistently and less participation:- Many times they are shy and get confused. Too

much noise and chaos in the class which impacts another classroom.

Type of activities :- The use of drama in teaching foreign language can involve a few of the below-mentioned activities:-

Simulations:- Simulations are usually a structured set of circumstances. In these students discuss an issue within defines set of rules. This is a problem-solving tool.

Mirror mimicking:- In this activity students talk in front of the mirror and practice the language.

Mimes:- This helps in developing the power of observation and imagination. It's a source of huge Joyce.

Role Play:- In this, the participant work on given responsibilities, and it helps in maintaining the flow of language.

CONCLUSION

To conclude this article, I must say that the use of drama in the classroom is undoubtedly a great educational tool. It promotes meaningful and active learning for students as it involves mental, emotional and physical part. The Drama promotes reflection in students which is a powerful tool for students to develop a more mature and emotionally responsible and stable person. As stated by Various ((1994), "*drama helps students to employ all their experiences and imagination in an attempt to create a real-life situation which aims at self-discovery*". The drama facilitates a tool full of fun, active participation, creativity, and language acquisition. The drama also helps in exploring issues involved of the day to day life or real life and situations. The best part of the drama is, it can be used to teach other subjects as well apart from language.

I recommend all the ELE teachers to use drama as a tool in the classroom and engage students to extend them maximum benefits. I also request them to lose the fear of going away the control of the classroom and be in touch with the teachers who use this tool in the classroom. The students only need mentorship of the concerned teacher and teacher should also try to avoid active participation. Exposing students to drama will result in gaining more confidence and knowledge. Should be exposed to drama and plays. This will help students to gain more confidence and the know-how of staging a drama. At the same point of time, it's very much probable that the schools or Universities are in the need for different methods to take care of exceptions of the classrooms. This type of activity is very much open activity hence the institution would need sufficient space to perform the activity and only space they will also need a well-equipped classroom. The best advantage of

this tool is that the students become much more confident in using the aimed language. As I mentioned above it gives fluency, adaptability, and communicative skills maintaining interest to the learner. I doubt if anyone really disagrees to use this innovative tool to acquire the mentioned language. It is also important that the teacher should be well qualified and trained to use this type of innovative tool and modify the drama as per students need and re-script the whole drama as per the interest of the students. However, the few aforesaid problems could be treated if the teacher is able to plan the class beforehand carefully. A very basic requirement of this tool is that the teacher should be convinced of the usefulness of the activities. If teachers are not convinced how will they promote students to use the tool? Always it's important to share a positive attitude towards language learning with these types of innovative tools.

"All the world is a stage, and all the men and women merely players; they have their exits and their entrances, and one man in his time plays many parts, His acts being seven ages.

William Shakespeare".

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Corresponding Author

Avinash Kumar*

University of Delhi

avinashkr2@gmail.com