

“Applying Drama in Foreign Language Classroom”: Teachers and Student’s Attitudes towards Applying Drama in EFL Classes

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Abstract: Involving language learners in cooperative, process-oriented and at the same time contextualized and scaffolding activities, is one of the most challenging tasks for language teachers. As applying drama-based approaches has not often been included in most EFL classes so far, the current study was an attempt to investigate the role of drama as a technique in language teaching and its contribution to enhance language learning among Iranian learners. Furthermore, this study tried to examine teachers and learners' attitudes toward applying drama in English classrooms and also attempts to find out some challenges that learners and teachers have faced in using drama in their classes. To collect the required data, a two-part questionnaire based on the main points of using drama in language classroom, was distributed among a convenient sample of 100 EFL learners in university of Qazvin (72 female and 28 male), that among them 30 learners were selected randomly for semi-structured interview. Also 6 teachers who had applied drama in their classes were interviewed. Then the data were analyzed by SPSS software through Pearson Correlation as an inferential statistic. The analysis of the data demonstrated that 67% of the participants agreed, 14% disagreed and 19% had neutral opinion towards applying drama in their classes. Considering open-ended questions and interview parts, it revealed that drama could motivate learners and help them to speed up their learning process; it also improves their relationships with each other. On the one hand, it encourages learners to participate more actively in class and on the other hand, it has a considerable influence developing students' generic skills and enhances their confidence in learning and using a foreign language. Although both teachers and learners expressed different challenges in applying drama. Among them, class management, student's cooperation in class activity, using first language while rehearsing, assessment and selecting texts were the most significant ones.

Keywords: drama, literature, drama in education, attitude, perception, teaching methods, EFL learners.

Background

Learning English language is an absolute necessity in the world we live in. This language is becoming an inevitable part in every aspect of our life, including business, science, technology, diplomacy, tourism, and education. Knowing English as a foreign language provides many opportunities to young, non-native speakers of English in continuing their educations or finding jobs and more importantly, it helps them in being connected to the whole world whose language is English. This is the reason why language learners should not just consider it as a part of curricula but they should treat it as a vital part of their life. To be successful in this journey, learners should also take into account that comprehension of any language involves understanding the culture of those who speak that language which can only be gained through the literature of those people.

Literature is among many things that human being has ever enjoyed during life history. Hill (1986, p.9) notes that literature “acts as a stimulus that ignites interest and motivates the student by involving them on a personal, emotional level.” On that account, literature is considered as an authentic source and its role in language teaching has received increasing attention in recent years. According to Collie and Slater (1990, p.3), “there are four main reasons which lead a language teacher to use literature in the classroom. These are valuable authentic material, cultural enrichment, language enrichment and personal involvement.” In the same vein, Cruz (2010, p.1) affirms that “literature enhances ELT through elements such as authentic material, language in use, and aesthetic representation of the spoken language, as well as language and cultural enrichment.” Povey (1972, p.104) also states that “literature will increase all language skills because literature will extend linguistic knowledge by giving evidence of extensive and subtle vocabulary usage and complex and exact syntax.”

Among different genres of literature, drama has especial effect on learning and teaching foreign language (Brumfit, 1991; Maley and Duff, 2001; Philips, 2003). Drama is one of the influential languages teaching tools that engage all of learners interactively. In this regard, Verriour (1994, p. 7) asserts that watching students, “working in drama provides fascinating insights into the richness of their imaginations, the skill with which they negotiate with one another, their present level of critical thinking, and the sophistication of the language they use.” According to Maley and Duff (2001), drama can provide the means for connecting learners’ emotions and cognition as it enables learners to take risks and experience the language. They believe that through drama, a class will address, practice and integrate reading, writing, speaking and listening. Moreover, using drama in language class provides an atmosphere with entertainment and fosters students’ motivation which are significant factors in language learning.

Furthermore, Sariçoban (2004, p.15) states, “drama raises the students’ awareness of the target language and culture. Learners should make use of drama to improve their comprehension of life experiences, reflect on particular circumstances and make sense of their extra linguistic world in a deeper way.” Bteatty (2015, p. 30) writes, “drama provides an authentic arena for natural language use in real situations with an emphasis on reciprocal, synchronized, unpredictable audience interactions.” Dawson and Lee (2018, p.17) add that drama “uses active and dramatic approaches to engage, students in academic, affective and aesthetic learning through dialogic meaning making in all areas of the curriculum.” Unfortunately, Iranian EFL teachers are not familiar enough with literary schools and genres including; short stories, poems, novels and especially drama. They are not completely aware of the fact that literature as manifestation of genuine language and culture can be an effective tool in teaching different aspects of language. This area which is under study, makes EFL teachers and learners investigate the usefulness and effectiveness of literary works especially drama on teaching and learning skills.

Language Teaching in Iran

In addition to English, Iranian students are interested in learning other foreign languages such as Arabic, German, French, Spanish and Chinese. Nevertheless, English continues to be the most desired language for learning in Iran. English language is a compulsory subject in Iranian curriculum. Students start to study English in junior high school and spend four hours a week in learning English during four years of high school. In addition, University students who study non-English majors have to study English in maximum of six credit-hours, three credit-hours of general English instruction and three credit-hours of English for Specific Propose (ESP) in which the focus is on their field, with related texts and terminology. In these years, the text books are focusing on grammar, vocabulary and reading comprehension and the main methodology used are; grammar-translation method and audio lingual method. Razmjoo (2007) compared textbooks taught in high schools and private institutes in terms of the extent they fulfill the communicative principles in the Iranian context and concluded that private institutes are more successful. As Jahangard (2007) mentions, university entrance exam determines the norm of foreign language teaching and most of class time are spend in teaching how to answer the tests. Apparently in university nothing changes a lot in teaching methodology except text book topics which change to more scientific and academic one.

According to Namaghi (2010), Iranian class room activities are text-centered and teacher’s main concern is book coverage rather than responsive teaching. In this situation student’s main concern is passing the course. Therefore, scoring is more important for them than learning English. Grammar translation method on one hand is the best method for teachers to cover the material and on the other hand, it’s a useful method for students to get scores. Oral skills are totally ignored in this sense and most students even cannot take part in simple conversations. In Naghami’s point of view, since final exams cover reading comprehension, vocabulary and grammar, teachers’ main tasks are: providing Persian equivalents for new words, translating the text, making the students translate, explaining grammar, and making students do written exercises at home, and finally giving feedback on the accuracy of their answers. In this sense, the majority of Iranian EFL learners have a good knowledge of English grammar and vocabulary but they have serious problem with applying it in real situations. For this reason, they are not highly motivated to learn English at school or university.

Statement of the problem

According to researches that were established among Iranian language learners (Mahmoodabadi; 1993, Bakhshi; 1994, Homaie; 2000, Toosi; 2004, Sajad; 2004, Mohseni Moghadam; 2004), learners do not have enough confidence of using a language in and out of class. They consider language as grammar and vocabulary with dull class time and untranslatable texts. Besides, they fear to use language freely because of the mistakes that might occur. Language is a tool for communication and as the meaning of real communication implies it contains; emotions, ideas, appropriateness, adaptability and feeling. But most current Iranian English classes (especially in schools) hardly give the learners the opportunity to use language communicatively. Thus the main goal of language teaching which is enhancing language learning to develop language skills in communication is somehow neglected. Using various techniques is one way that helps to get this goal. In this study, drama is considered as a technique that could enhance language learning and develop skills in communication.

Limitations of the Study

During the process of conducting this study, some limitations were recognized which are outlined as below:

- 1) The study was applied on a limited sample, because this method was not running in many teaching situations. Therefore, it was difficult to find the participants.
- 2) Lack of time, facilities and equipment to conduct a longitudinal research. The first idea was to apply drama in different classes but due to the lack of time and professional obligations this idea was not feasible.
- 3) Because there are a few teachers who have applied drama in their classes, the researcher encountered some troubles for collecting data. One of the teachers had left the country and another one lived in other city, the written interview questions were sending to the first and one interview happened on phone.
- 4) Most of students were reluctant to answer the open ended questions so the researcher had to limit herself just to those questionnaires which were filled in both parts.
- 5) Some students did not let to record their voices because they thought their teachers may hear their ideas.

Research question

To elucidate the problem and to create the necessary consciousness on this issue the following questions are posed:

- 1-What are the effects of applying drama in foreign language classroom?
- 2-What are teachers and student's attitudes towards applying drama in EFL classes?
- 3-What challenges and difficulties do students and teachers face in applying drama as a technique in in EFL classes?

Purpose of the study

The main purpose of this study is to determine whether using drama is an effective method for learners and to explore learners and teachers' attitude towards applying drama in their classes. In other words, the focus of this study is to formulate the clear picture of applying this method in language teaching and to demonstrate its value through teachers and students' attitudes. With the aim of doing that, this study attempts to encourage EFL teachers and learners to employ literature genres as an authentic material and specifically focuses one drama approach. It should be noted that, this study will not attempt to advocate drama as the only approach of teaching, but rather as a supplement to other alternative methods. Besides, this study aims at encouraging both learners and teachers to apply drama approach in order to reach positive, efficient and professional change in their teaching performance. The study highlights the importance of taking up a developmental perspective on teaching to encourage EFL teachers and learners to go through professional growth in teaching and learning.

Literature Review: Alternative Methods and the Drama-Based Approach of Teaching

Discussion on FL teaching methods began in the 1970s. These methods include Community Language Learning (CLL), Silent Way, Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), Total Physical Response (TPR), and Suggestopedia. These methods do not fall under the category of linguistics or language teaching, but instead they are based on some movements in the field of psycho-therapy. None of these methods aim at replacing the other teaching methods or views of learning; rather, they suggest new tools that improve language learning so that the "information learning and formation of the person go hand in hand and can co-exist" (Arnold, 1999, p.5). The effect of alternative language learning theories and teaching methods in the FL classroom, created a heightened interest in the drama method for FL teaching.

Community Language Learning (CLL) which focuses on group-interest learning, came out as a reaction to previous structural approaches. Such a method failed to involve 'affective' aspects of learning and did not succeed in teaching learners to communicate in the foreign language. "Community language teaching appealed to those who looked for a more humanistic approach to teaching, one in which the interactive process of communication receives priority" (Richards and Rodgers, 1986, p. 83). The basis of this method is the belief that "the human

individual needs to be understood and aided in the process of fulfilling personal values and goals” (Omaggio Hadley 1993, p.112). Techniques that are used in this method wish to reduce anxiety and create a learning environment of rapport and free expression of thoughts and feelings. The teacher’s role is rather passive, s/he only counsels the students on the language skills, they need to “express themselves freely to say whatever it is they want to say” (Omaggio Hadley, 1993, p.112). As a matter of fact, students discuss a self-choosing topic in a group and the teacher does not actively participate in the discussion; rather, it is his/her role to listen and be available to give help when needed.

Another alternative method is Silent Way which introduced by Gattegno (1976) in which the teacher plays a subordinate role. This approach is based on the belief that the teacher should “teach, test, and then get out of the way” (Stevick, 1980, p. 56). In this method the responsibility for learning lies solely with the student, whose mind draws from “his/her own inner resources to absorb learning from the environment” (Omaggio Hadley, 1993, p.114). Students must interact with the other group members and pay close attention to their own utterances as well as those of their classmates. ‘Cuisenaire rods’—colored sticks of different length—are used to teach and practice basic structures in open-ended sentence manipulation exercises. The teacher uses the rods to explain the exercise silently; the students use them as a device to elicit speech. A low-anxiety, cooperative atmosphere is absolutely necessary if students are to meet their own proficiency goals and achieve the three main objectives of “independence, autonomy, and responsibility” (Omaggio Hadley, p.114).

The next alternative method is Total Physical Response (TPR) that developed by James J. Asher in the early 1970s. The major belief underlying this method is that learners must develop an understanding of the language before beginning to speak, just as children learn their native language. A learner is asked to speak only when s/he is ready to do so. The desired level of understanding is achieved most quickly and efficiently through body movements. The goal of the TPR method is to break down language barriers by shifting the main focus away from language and concentrating on physical actions. Learners hear commands and respond with pantomimes to show their understanding. Schewe states: At the core of this theory [TPR method] is the learning-psychological view that greater feats of memory can be achieved in foreign language learning the more frequently and/or intensively that (short-term) stored knowledge is tapped: e.g., by repetition and rote learning. Particularly high memory retention is achieved when this tapping not only occurs verbally, but is associated with motor activity 29.

The last of this category is Suggestopedia. This method, which was developed in Bulgaria, is also known as Suggestive-Accelerative Learning and Teaching (SALT), or the Lozanov Method. Lozanov who was a psychotherapist and physician, believed that a teaching method should uncover learners’ subconscious resources and help them to retain a broad range of vocabulary. As learning targets both the left and right hemisphere of the brain, he suggests using relaxation, concentration, and techniques in an atmosphere of soft lighting, baroque music, and comfortable seating for the presentation of ‘natural’ language can be great help to learning a language. Such an environment has to create an anxiety-free, non-threatening atmosphere “that is liberated from the restrictive influences that students experience in more traditional classroom settings” (Omaggio Hadley 1993, p.117). Lozanov’s teaching method is based on two principles: ‘infantilization,’ which aims to bring students back to the kind of learning capacity that they had in their childhood, and ‘pseudo passivity,’ which refers to “a relaxed physical state of heightened mental activity and concentration” (Chastain, 1988, p.104).

Although the alternative methodologies described above are different in style but many elements of these methods can be corresponding to the main ideas of the drama-based approach. The most important common view is that the FL learner in this methods is considering as a ‘whole’ person, including not just his or her intellect but also his/her emotions, body, and energies—the ‘affective’ elements of his/her personality. Moreover, all of these methods, including the drama, try to consider both sides of the brain and activate not just the left hemisphere, which is responsible for logical-abstract thinking, but also the right one, which processes the affective elements (as used in music, movement, and sound). This aids students understand and internalize the foreign language with lasting effect.

Central part of both the drama and the alternative approaches is the goal of creating a positive, low-pressure, cooperative learning atmosphere where language learning is experienced as a fun, relaxing, and satisfying activity without much mental effort, although they are different in creating this kind of environment. For instance, Suggestopedia attempts to create it through ‘infantilization’ and ‘pseudo passivity’ (baroque music, soft lightening, comfortable seating, etc.). TPR reduces anxiety by initially taking the pressure off students to speak and by introducing fun, active exercises. CLL accomplish a similar effect by relying on the counseling skills of the teacher and encouraging the free expression of thoughts and feelings of the learners. In Silent Way, the pressure on individual learner is reduced by making them responsible for their own learning and their own corrections, while the drama method relies on role simulation, the expression of mind and body, and a high degree of learner-learner interaction and cooperation. All of these methods use different types of verbal or nonverbal relaxation exercises. The nonthreatening learning atmosphere is also improved through the ‘new’ role of the teacher—in most cases a more passive one than the traditional role—and the greater learner-learner interaction.

Overview

The aim of this section is to present the methodology of the current study. So comprehensive description of the participants, instruments, design, procedures, and data collection will be issued.

Participants

Since teachers and students are the inevitable part of any education system, the present participant of this study are teachers and students who have applied drama as a technique in their classroom. The population here is the group for which the researcher would like to generalize the result of the study and for sampling, due to the purpose of this study, the researcher took the following two factors into consideration; first EFL course involving drama and second researcher's familiarity with EFL University or institute. So this research has two kinds of participations: EFL students (in university) and professors or teachers. For purposeful sampling, the researcher had to select those who had drama experiences in their class. There were more than 400 university students who had passed even one course with using drama (related to their 'literature' course which was mostly taken by teaching students or other courses such as 'Conversation' which applied drama as a method in both teaching and Translation field) in their classes. From 150 questionnaires that had been distributed among university students, only 100 questionnaires were responded. Among them, 72 were females and 28 were males around 21 to 25-year-old in different educational term from fresh students to senior ones.

Instruments

Two kinds of instruments were applied in different phases of this study: 1) questioner: 2) interview. Questionnaire as one of the main data collection phases in this research is a valuable tool in determining and identifying student's perceptions which was based on the main objectives of applying drama curriculum in language classrooms. Validity evidence (i.e., content validity and construct validity) as well as reliability evidence (i.e., internal consistency and stability) has been collected on the questionnaire. In order to increase the reliability of the questionnaires, both types of closed and open ended questions were utilized. The major advantage of closed-ended questions is that their coding is straightforward and leaves no room for subjectivity. On the other hand, open-ended questions may lead to identify issues which were not previously anticipated. The close ended part contains 20 Likert-type-scale questions, and the open ended part has five open-ended questions.

Interview is another important instrument that was used in this research. In this phase of the study, the researcher started to design the interview schedule, which involves transferring objective of the study into the questions. The questions had to be put in proper and adequate way to reflect the straight answer that the researcher tried to find out. Thus the researcher started to regard research questions and research variables which were supposed to be considered in this investigation. The interview also has to contain the third question of the research on challenges that both students and teachers would face in language class. The researcher tried to provide the interview with both students and teachers who have applied drama as a technique in their EFL classes.

Design

The mix method is utilized in the present study because firstly, it is necessary to use quantitative method to distinguish participant's relatives to the investigate processes, avoid objectivity and increasing validity, reliability and generalizability of the research; secondly, the use of qualitative method is also significant because quantitative research is too short to capture the essences of human in their cultural values, beliefs and society. Moreover, applying qualitative method is crucial in order to answer research questions and practicality of the process. In this study the result of questionnaire is analyzed quantitatively and qualitative analyzing is applied for interviews sections. The dependent variables of this study are; a) using drama, b) student's attitudes and c) teacher's attitudes. The independent variables which are considered in the study are; age, the field of study (English teaching or translation) and gender.

Procedures

In order to get valid and reliable data, there had to be 100 participants and also 150 questionnaires which were supposed to be distributed among teaching and translation students in university of Qazvin in order to at least receive 100. One of the main constrain was that, some university students were afraid to fill the questionnaire because they thought it would hurt their professors so the researcher had to put lots of time to tell about the researcher's oath, that all the documents will be anonymous. There were two professors in University of Qazvin that were famous in applying drama in their classes, so most students had passed one or two courses with them and it was not difficult to find participants. They have had drama mostly in their literature, teaching methodology and conversation classes, thus both teaching and translation students had one or two experiences in using drama in their classes. Most of them had the experience of acting in 'Waiting for Godo', 'Jon of Arck', 'Anne of Green

Gables' and 'Match Seller Girl' which had held in different classes in various years. By distributing 150 questionnaires among university students, the researcher got back 100 questionnaires, which 72 of them were females and 28 were males around 21 to 25-year-old in different educational term from fresh students to senior ones.

In the interview part, after designing interview questions and structuralizing them in to open structured interview for students and teachers, 6 teachers and 30 university students who also checked the questionnaire, had been interviewed. The student's interview was open structured and they spoke (mostly they prefer to speak in their native language) about different things in relation to their drama activities in their class. All the interviewed were recorded but the researcher brought up the relevant parts to get the result. In this way, the researcher could get more perception through their speaking. It is worth to mention that depending on how much information the interviewees would like to give, interviews were conducted individually and each interview was about 15 to 35 minutes. To interview teachers, the researcher had to send structured interview questions due to their lack of time. For all teachers the interviews were conducted in English and they were also audio recorded.

Data collection analysis

For this study, the collected data were analyzed through SPSS software and qualitative analysis were used to reveal the results. The process of analysis are composed of two parts; first; analyzing questionnaires and second analyzing and interpreting interviews. Concerning the collected questionnaires, the researcher categorized the five point-scale in to 3 categories: agree, neutral and disagree response so the result could be seen more clearly. The questions were based on the objective of using drama as a technique in EFL classes. Thus, they can be categorized in the few areas such as: affective factor of language learning, opportunities for language learning, opportunities for self and peer evaluation, knowledge or skills of drama, assessment methods, development of generic skills, teacher's instruction and future plan.

To analyze the first part in questionnaire the descriptive and inferential analytical statistics were used. To address the first question of the research, descriptive statistics (mean) and percentage were used. Then to explore the relation of participants and their answers to seven categories of questionnaires, Pearson Product Correlation was also used. The open-end part of the questionnaire elicited more information from the students on different area and student's relevant feedback were also recorded, which were summarized and reported to get the whole perception toward research questions. For analyzing interviews, the first that had to be done was transcribing the interviews, having done that the researcher had to translate some of them in to English since they were in Persian. Then these transcriptions need organization and coding, these means that the researcher had to categorize and clarify the received data in order to get research answers out of them. Such a procedure requires extensive, reading, rereading, checking to construct relationships between the organized transcription and research questions.

Result

Question No.1:

The first question asked about student's likes and dislikes in drama course and also asked them to bring some reasons for their reply;

1- "What do you like/ dislike in the drama course most? Why?" The answers to these questions are both positive and negative. Those who answered positively had various reasons. One of the common answers is 'group work' through which they can discuss and analyze the text more, although 10 students mentioned that working in group was difficult for them because there weren't any rules and disciplines among their peers. Most of them found applying drama interesting and expressed that they didn't get bored in drama class. 7 learners revealed their interested in art of drama and acting. Therefore, they definitely liked it and stated: "it is too practical" for them especially for their speaking skills. One mentioned that cooperating with classmate made her more sociable, and she had the chance to test her ability in acting. Most of them liked their professor because her class was "full of joy, comfort and color" so it brought great motivation to them. Among them some answered to this question negatively. They mentioned that they felt embarrassed in class and they don't like it at all and think it is useless and waste their time. One mentioned their professor expected very professional play. Almost 16 university learners stated that because of limitations such as lacking equipment, they have got disappointed.

Question No. 2:

The second question asked about student's learning:

2. "What have you learned most through the drama course? Please specify." In this question, even those students who answered to the first question negatively, stated that in drama class, they had learned more vocabulary, mostly English expression and slangs which are difficult to learn and remember. 4 learners put their emphasis on accent and said because they listened to some audio for practicing their lines, they could work more

on their accent. Among the answers, 31 of them, especially girls mentioned that they can express themselves better and felt quite confident in front of class. They also became more conscious in reading dramas. They learned how to express themselves by using body language and use English in more useful ways. Finally, some pointed to cultural matters and said it was really interesting for them to find about other countries culture by reading and playing it. Some of them expressed that they got nothing because the course was very stressful. 19 learners wrote the word stress and stressful in their answers.

Question No.3:

Third question is about their need in improvement of learning through drama;

3. “What do you want to learn more through the drama course? Please specify.” In this question, the researcher tried to investigate student’s future plans and explore if they will have more classes with drama or not. There are different answers but most of them stated that they are going to learn more vocabulary and expression by drama and they will work on their speaking skill since they have the chance to practice their fluency and also apply English in more real life situation. Most of the students mentioned that drama improved their self confidence in speaking and they like to have more drama in their classes in future. One said that analyzing characters was his favorite part so he liked to read more and get more of them. Of course among the answers 23 learners stated: “Nothing.” (One wrote in capitals “NOTHING”).

Question No.4:

The fourth question asked them about their self–assessment in learning through drama in comparison with normal language classes in learning English.

4. “Do normal English lessons or drama lessons help you more in English learning? Why?” Most learners answered to this question positively. One stated that “in practice, drama class is more effective.” They agreed that the learned subject in drama class work better and they can remember that subject easily. 17 students mentioned the word ‘joy’ and ‘enjoy’ in their answers that showed they did like their drama class more than normal classes. 18 students mentioned that they speak more fluently in drama class after presenting their first or second performance in the class. Six students pointed to their improvement in pronunciation and enrichment of their vocabulary in classes with drama. Three mentioned their positive attitude towards these classes by regarding their group work and group cooperation, and one students stated that “drama class is learning through pleasure.” The critical answer here was mentioned by a female participant who stated that “it would be more helpful if we had had more homogenous classes.” Similar to other questions, 26 students prefer normal classes than drama classes, and one just expressed “none of them.”

Question No.5:

The fifth and last question asked students about any comment on using drama in their classes;

5. “Do you have any other comments about the drama course? Please specify.” This question brought lots of ideas; about 22 students wrote if it were optional it would be better. About 13 stated their opinions on texts that could be more modern, creative and understandable. Some of them stated, ‘Waiting for Godo’ that most university students had worked on it, was not their favorite and they were forced to play it. One of them expressed, “we should opt a play that its plot is easier and also does not fill with too many difficult vocabularies. One of the learners mentioned “it should be more challenging; it should make students speak more and express themselves.” Four students wrote that the class needs to be more homogeneous. 25 students didn’t answer to this question and 12 wrote ‘no’ and ‘no thanks’ but among all these one answer is worth to mention: “We’ve got a missile launch! We’ve got a missile launch.”

Table 1. Participant’s attitude toward applying dram in EFL classes

Agree	Disagree	Neutral
67%	14%	19%

Discussion

This section provides a specific discussion based on the results of the study and makes an attempt to link each finding to the existing literature and interpret them. This study deals with applying literature specifically drama texts in language classes. In addition, learners and teacher’s conception of using this method were considered to generalize this method to language teaching and learning areas. Regarding the first and second research questions; the results of the study indicate that EFL learners in university who had applied drama in their classes have positive attitudes towards applying drama in their language classes. As the results indicate, applying drama in language classes lead to more language usage which means that the findings are in line with Widson’s study (1978) which highlighted the importance and effectiveness of language use in effective communication. Almost all students believed that using drama affect their learning within different aspects like: speaking, listening and reading skills. Meanwhile, teachers indicated their positive attitude toward drama by expressing their ideas

about its application and effectiveness in language classes by bringing new, innovative method that helps them to change the class atmosphere and make learners more active in their learning.

Considering Mally's pointed list (2002), the results of the present study demonstrate:

1. Drama integrated verbal and nonverbal aspects of communication, thus bringing together both mind and body. Both students and teachers believed that drama integrated both verbal (text, dialogues) and nonverbal (body language gestures) aspect of learning and help learners to improve their language more preferable.

2. Drama draws upon both cognitive and affective domains, thus restoring the importance of feeling as well as thinking. The findings represent that participants attended higher level of cognition while playing a role. Learners stated that when they are playing, they think about the characters and their dialogues, they try to declare the right pronunciation or intonation and try to find the meaning beyond that.

3. Drama fosters self-awareness (and awareness of others), self-esteem and confidence. Findings of this research demonstrate that nearly all learners and teachers are of this viewpoint. For instance, in the interview, even those who were shy or didn't have enough confidence, referred to their friends.

4. Drama also develops motivation. It can be said that motivation is likewise fostered and sustained through the variety and sense of expectancy generated by the activities. Almost all students found this approach as a motivator and useful one. Most of them believed that drama prevents boring and monotonous class atmosphere and also it inspires learner's creativity and imagination in learning.

5. There is a transfer of responsibility for learning from teacher to learners which is where it belongs. The findings are in line with this point that while learners are involved in drama activities they feel more responsible, especially while working with their peers in group, and the classes are more students-based than teacher-based .

Furthermore, this study recognized that drama can contextualize the language in imagined or real situation and as Scharengnive (1970) and Tarligton (1982) stated, it can help learners to practice the language in meaningful situation. In other words, drama can make language learning more meaningful and encourage learners to prepare themselves for real-life situation. Furthermore, Mordecai (1985) mentioned that drama can make learning language more enjoyable and stimulating. Concerning effective learning, it is clear that drama activities can provide opportunities for learners to be involved actively in class and in their group work. Thus, when learner's personality and their mental process is involved, they considered themselves involved in the task and get motivated to use the target language. This study reveals that applying drama can gain the principles of Communicative Approach which leads learners to achieve communicative confidence because learners become more imaginative, creative and sensitive as they become more confident in the process of learning language.

Regarding the third research question, the study shows that there are significant challenges for both teachers and learners while they applied this method in their classes. First of all, some teachers found that applying drama might not be too effective in helping learners to consolidate their English grammar knowledge. They suggested that teachers should try to incorporate more grammar items by using drama so that learners could benefit more. Second, in teacher's opinions, the goals and aims should be made clear to both teachers and students. It seems that both teachers and students did not get enough clarification about the goal of applying drama and some of them carried different expectations. Learners mostly complained that the teacher's expectations were more over their ability. They believed that their teachers wanted more artistic theater that they couldn't afford it because they are not theater learners.

Third, in order to help students to learn more, teachers need to pay more attention to language that their learner use, but due to the condition of classes with drama method, they would easily lose control and interact in their mother tongue and handling this situation might be difficult for teachers. In order to overcome this difficulty, teacher may need to monitor their learners more closely and encourage learners to use more English for communication. Forth, the study indicated that many students couldn't find any connection with some sort of plays which were considered as a masterpiece in literature, they believed that the plays were far from their life experience or even the real life experience. Some students expressed that some texts were above their level of language ability, therefore they had to put lots of time on the manuscript, and sometimes it killed the joy. The last but not least is the challenges that mostly university learners have got faced; depends on the roles of the understudied university, female and male interaction were not that acceptable and learners had to do lots of challenges with security guards of university.

Conclusion

The result of the study indicated that both learners and teachers have quite positive feedback towards applying drama in their classes and it can be considered as an effective innovative method in language teaching. Applying drama-based approaches in language emphasizes the Communicative Approach principles in language teaching and provides a meaningful context for both learning and teaching. Regarding the findings of this study, applying drama in language classes make students participate more in class activity and change the atmosphere of the classroom atmosphere from boring and monotonous to stimulating and intrigued site. The result also reflected that

using drama can improve language skills of students, motivate them and enhances their confidence in learning and using a foreign language. However, it is worth to mention that, it should not be used in isolation. A drama-based approach in language classes need to be integrated with other methods of language teaching. It should be a part and parcel of the communicative methodology in teaching English as a foreign language. Although both teachers and learners had different sort of challenges in applying this approach that among them, class management, Iranian cooperation in class activity, using first language while rehearsing and evaluation and selecting texts were the most significant ones. Finally, teachers should set clear goals and learning objectives for their drama course, try to design their language class for applying drama more carefully and finally attempt to determine the learning goals based on the needs and ability of their students.

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