

The Impact of Applying Drama Classes on Improving Communication Skills of the English Language in Schools

Ni Na¹, Arshad Samad²

Abstract

This research work aimed to compare the effectiveness of two different approaches to educating sixth graders: one that used drama lessons centered on a particular unit in the English textbook, and another that used more traditional techniques of instruction. The study adopted a quasi-experimental approach, which comprised an oral pre-test and post-test with 13 items, as well as a 35-item student attitude questionnaire spanning four categories. The sample consisted of 70 students, evenly divided between experimental and control groups, with each group containing 35 individuals. Results revealed that using drama tactics increased English language speaking skills. Moreover, the utilization of drama exercises offered benefits over standard teaching techniques in boosting English language speaking abilities. Also, studies suggested a good student attitude towards drama workshops, which was connected with greater academic achievement. The study supports the use of drama activities in English language teaching to boost the development of speaking and other language abilities.

Keywords: *Drama class; English language; communication skills; Education system.*

1. Introduction

The English language is largely noted as one of the most highly influential languages worldwide, due to its widespread use. Due to that reason, English language teaching should be conducted in every school in China to train students on crucial language skills such as hearing, reading, speaking, and writing which will consequently help the students to progress with their academic development (Al-Jamal & Al-Jamal, 2014). However, the typical way of teaching speaking skills in Chinese schools remains, typified by teacher-centered instruction where learners have a passive role (Al-Jamal & Al-Jamal, 2014). Nevertheless, the enhancement of speaking proficiency goes beyond basic linguistic competence; it involves an awareness of contextual adequacy in language usage (Duman & Karagoz, 2016; Karagöz & Ruzgar, 2020). Educational drama, as stated by Ali (2008), provides an alternate but successful way of teaching, establishing an atmosphere that supports the development of speaking skills by integrating students in experiential learning. This is consistent with modern learning theories such as constructivism, which highlights learning through active involvement and experience-based knowledge creation. Constructivism emphasizes that individuals actively build their comprehension of knowledge rather than passively acquiring it, stressing experiential learning contexts. Educational drama, in line with these principles, offers a platform for students to actively participate in experimental learning scenarios, boosting knowledge acquisition and retention (Rabab'a, 2015). Educational drama is a current strategy in language learning,

¹ School of Education, Taylor's University, Selangor, Malaysia

² School of Education, Taylor's University, Selangor, Malaysia

involving student interaction and role-playing to generate successful learning experiences. Through drama, learners are inspired to engage all their senses and cognitive capacities, researching material independently or collectively, without direct teaching (Nassar, 2000). Furthermore, the immersive nature of drama provides a profound and diversified learning experience, enabling students to assimilate content via body movements and vocal emotions. In summary, the integration of educational drama allows building an interactive learning environment where students actively engage in different dramatic tactics such as role-playing and storytelling. From this assumption, this research aims to evaluate the benefits of incorporating theatrical exercises into the instruction of English as a Second Language (ESL) and its potential influence on enhancing learners' oral communication abilities. Therefore, the impact of drama on students' scholastic achievements and attitudes towards English learning is investigated utilizing a quasi-experimental approach.

This study is driven by observations within the education sector, particularly among English language instructors, who have noted a deficiency in students' speaking abilities, especially in the lower grades. Researchers such as Al-Sharary (2019), Attia (2015), and Ali (2012) have highlighted this issue, attributing it largely to the conventional teaching methods employed in English language education. To address this challenge, educators are compelled to explore alternative approaches, such as integrating drama into the curriculum as a teaching tool. Consequently, the primary aim of this study is to assess the effectiveness of incorporating drama activities to enhance oral communication skills among sixth-grade students attending schools under the Shanghai Educational Directorate's purview, as well as to examine students' attitudes toward learning English.

In the realm of English language education, drama-based methods are widely recognized as effective pedagogical tools that cater to diverse learning preferences, encompassing cognitive, affective, and psychological dimensions (Ashton-Hay, 2005). By infusing drama into language instruction, educators aim to create dynamic and engaging learning environments that encourage active participation and foster the development of oral communication skills.

The decision to focus specifically on sixth-grade students in Shanghai Educational Directorate-regulated schools stems from the recognition of the pivotal role that early language acquisition plays in shaping students' overall language proficiency and communication abilities. Furthermore, targeting this demographic allows for a comprehensive examination of the impact of drama-based interventions on oral communication skills development during a critical stage of language learning.

Through rigorous empirical investigation, this study seeks to provide valuable insights into the efficacy of drama activities as a means of enhancing oral communication skills among sixth-grade students. By assessing both academic performance on post-tests and students' attitudes toward learning English through detailed questionnaire responses, the study aims to offer a comprehensive understanding of the potential benefits of integrating drama into language education.

Moreover, by exploring the attitudes of sixth-grade students towards learning English within the context of drama-based instruction, this study aims to shed light on the motivational and affective aspects of language learning. Understanding students' perceptions and attitudes toward language learning is essential for designing effective instructional strategies that cater to their needs and preferences, ultimately contributing to enhanced learning outcomes.

This study represents a significant endeavor to evaluate the effectiveness of drama activities in enhancing oral communication skills and shaping students' attitudes toward learning English among sixth-grade students. By examining the multifaceted aspects of language learning within the context of drama-based instruction, this research aims to

contribute valuable insights to the field of English language education and inform the development of innovative and effective teaching practices.

Ashton-Hay (2005) says that drama pushes students to conceive concepts and convert them into tangible scenarios, providing a feeling of importance and participation. Moreover, drama approaches support instructors in generating dynamic classroom settings, enhancing student involvement and learning results (Hu, 2011). It has been noticed that youngsters enjoy language learning via drama activities, which also support the development of multiple intelligences (Hu, 2011). Additionally, drama exercises are regarded as excellent for English Second Language (ESL) classrooms, facilitating good language acquisition and pronunciation (Chauhan, 2004). Therefore, incorporating drama approaches into English language teaching is vital for increasing students' speaking skills, complementing the goals outlined in the curriculum.

In China, the importance of English proficiency in the workplace is undeniable. This has led to a growth in enrollment in English classes at community colleges, and in Taiwan, there has been a considerable focus on English as a global language. Unlike in the past, where English exams mainly tested listening, reading, and writing skills, recent exams like the General English Proficiency Test (GEPT) now include oral sections, indicating an increased focus on English as a Foreign Language (EFL) oral proficiency. Consequently, there is a rising interest in enhancing EFL speaking abilities among students. Based on the fundamental question driving the study's backdrop and issue description, several sub-questions were established. These include exploring whether there are statistically significant differences, with a significance level of $\alpha \leq 0.05$, in the improvement of speaking skills among sixth-grade students attributed to the teaching approach (drama vs. traditional), gender (male vs. female), and the change of attitudes towards learning English.

This study is noteworthy for numerous reasons. First, it highlights the necessity to alter teaching approaches, such as employing drama, to fit the age group of students. Second, it asks English language instructors to concentrate on strengthening the speaking abilities of sixth-grade students using varied teaching methodologies. Moreover, it calls attention to the crucial role of stakeholders in the educational process, underlining the significant relationship between speaking abilities and English language ability. Finally, it underlines the need to cultivate a positive attitude toward language acquisition, which is related to improved motivation and higher academic performance. This study relates to the topic of applied linguistics, and it deals with English language teaching. The study comprises three dramatic topics: "Jaka Tarub and Nawangwulan," "Baso and Basse," and "Commander to Dilating." The speaking abilities examined via drama include the expression of emotions such as grief, humiliation, irritation, and love. The study approach typically includes scripted performances, with the researcher producing scripts for students to perform in front of their peers. The study does, however, have several shortcomings. First, it is limited to evaluating the impact of educational drama on sixth-grade students' attitudes toward learning English and the development of their speaking skills. Secondly, it was conducted in the academic year 2019–2020 during the second semester. Third, the study was conducted at a girl's Secondary School, Lingang and Pudong Boys Secondary School, two institutions within the Shanghai Directorate of Education. Finally, only sixth-grade students from the Shanghai Directorate of Education make up the study's sample.

2. Literature Review

The foundational source of the term "drama" is a verb, from the ancient Greek "Daro" or "Dromenon" which notes the circumstances in which characters either embody their real or staged roles. Researchers can define drama as imitating human activities based on that curiosity for observation, simulation, and role-play which is embedded in humans from

infancy. Educational drama, as stated by Kalogirou et al. (2019), comprises learners pretending to be different characters in various circumstances and communicating certain roles utilizing their body or language skills to communicate successfully within a creative learning environment (Kauts, 2016). Participating in drama promotes learners' self-esteem, inspires their creativity, and enhances their capacity to engage and communicate successfully within their society (Kalogirou et al., 2019).

In addition, educational drama assumes two roles at once being a source of information for learning and taking the place of practical action aimed at making the learning whole (Maiullo, 2018). Using educational theatre as a multifunctional tool different teachers can achieve diverse educational purposes as they make students showcase and boost their skills and talents by doing role-playing and acting a scene (Maiullo, 2018). Being active in dramatic situations through drama techniques makes students develop several skills – analysis and criticism as well as language proficiency, emotional intelligence, and awareness of language. Furthermore, integrating drama into the educational setting develops learners by shaping their personalities of creativity, imagination, and dexterity through drawing, singing, and acting through role play and mimicry respectively (Revathy & Ravindran, 2016). Drama enables students to comprehend ideas, define values, and succeed in educational objectives in aspects such as physical health, cognitive skills, value systems, and community initiatives (Ali, 2012). Accordingly, practitioners advocate the incorporation of drama arts into curricula because of its educational germane in the acquisition of knowledge and development of skills for the students as well as equipping them with the ability to play leadership roles in the learning process (Ali, 2012). The drama tactics cover the ways that art teachers use when studying topics, texts, or some ideas as well as when engaging students in a creative process (Revathy & Ravindran, 2016). The utilization of these strategies empowers students to enhance their inquiry skills and use their creative potential for better learning (Kauts, 2016). Drama techniques enable students to improve their collaboration, character development, storytelling, and performance abilities, hence being fully involved in the learning process in many curricular areas (Kalogirou et al., 2019).

Drama techniques are key practices and strategies, teachers employ in performing arts education. The strategies serve to probe student understanding of a character, literature, or subject, and at the same time, encourage them to be creative (Moore, 2004). The application of drama methods fosters students to develop inquiry competence by bringing in their fantasy factor. Additionally, these techniques facilitate collaboration and the development of personality, narration, and presentation skills, which must be practiced by the active involvement of the learner in his/her learning process (Moore, 2004). The use of drama as an educational strategy enhances and improves the learning experience, owing to its relationship with direct experiential learning and learner efficacy. This strategy facilitates the attainment of various educational goals that may be challenging when utilizing standard teaching approaches. Educational drama encompasses different categories, with a prominent one comprising the adaptation of textbook information into dramatic activities. Students are urged to physically portray their parts, enabling professors to offer proper criticism before and after performances. Additionally, educational drama assists in arranging subject matter into realistic situations, stressing crucial features and ideas for efficient communication, with students accepting parts under instructor instruction (Kauts, 2016). Dramatic activities done inside or outside the classroom employ numerous creative forms and media to portray certain educational ideas and goals. This is a process of role-playing when people take on dramatic personalities to make topics more attractive and intelligible (Kauts, 2016). Educational drama functions as a learning approach that conveys educational knowledge to students via symbolic performances, mixing physical gestures with verbal communication to promote comprehension (Kauts, 2016).

To summarize, drama plays a pivotal and dynamic role in education, especially in fostering speaking skills. Various dramatic activities like acting, role-playing, and improvisation serve to achieve educational goals such as enriching vocabulary, mastering new grammar and language structures, minimizing errors, and enhancing language acquisition through active engagement in real-life scenarios. Researchers extensively investigated how drama influences the teaching of English language proficiency.

For instance, Stinson (2004) conducted a study on the efficacy of drama as a teaching tool to enhance tenth-grade students' communication skills. The intervention involved conducting 10 drama classes, creating and rehearsing plays, and training facilitators. Following the intervention, 140 randomly selected students were evaluated, with 70 students assigned to the intervention and control groups. Various data collection methods were employed, including facilitator diaries, pre-and post-tests for students, facilitator interviews, and feedback from regular English teachers. The study revealed that students who underwent process drama therapy demonstrated improved performance in oral communication assessments. Moreover, both teachers and students noted enhanced intergroup connections, motivation, self-assurance, and communication among students from diverse backgrounds (Stinson, 2004).

Exploring the impact of integrating drama and questioning techniques on communication skills, Janudom and Wasanasomsithi (2009) conducted a seven-week study with fifteen university students (three male and twelve female) participating in the "English via Drama Summer Course." The study utilized pre- and post-speaking achievement evaluations, teacher diaries, student journals, and attitude questionnaires to assess students' perceptions of learning through drama and questioning strategies. The results revealed significant improvement in students' speech when employing these methods. Furthermore, students expressed positive reactions toward English lessons delivered through the combination of drama and questioning approaches (Janudom and Wasanasomsithi, 2009).

Rabab'a (2015) delved into the effects of drama education on speech development within the context of Adults Speaking Other Languages (ASOL) education at the Language Center of China University. The study encompassed a total of 47 students, with the experimental group undergoing drama-based training while the control group received traditional teaching methods (Rabab'a, 2015). Notably, there was a significant disparity in mean scores between the two groups, with the experimental group demonstrating superior performance. However, the study did not unveil a discernible quantitative difference in ASOL proficiency among the students. Helwa (2015) investigated the impact of puppet-based learning on speaking and listening enhancement among primary school pupils. The study enlisted 30 male and female students from Al-Hessa Primary School for Girls and Boys in Qalyubia, Egypt (Helwa, 2015). Employing an experimental design with quasi-analysis, the research indicated that students in the puppet-based learning group outshone those in the control group, showcasing notable improvements in their speaking and listening abilities. Sarmiento and Messac (2017) delved into the influence of drama on the speaking proficiency of second-grade students at Tekniku Vocational School in October 2017. Their study showcased a remarkable surge in students' speaking skills through drama instruction classes (Sarmiento and Messac, 2017). A majority of the students expressed that the drama program significantly enriched the teaching and learning experience, emphasizing its enjoyable and integral role in fostering cognitive skills development.

Masoumi-Moghaddam (2018) explored the contexts in which drama techniques are employed in English language teaching to facilitate conversational learning. The research enlisted thirty undergraduate students from public secondary schools in Ardabil, Iran, who were divided into experimental and control groups (Masoumi-Moghaddam, 2018). Both groups underwent pre- and post-test evaluations using a measure of conversational English skills. The findings revealed a significant enhancement in conversational abilities

among students in the experimental group, while no prominent improvement was observed in the control group. These studies collectively underscore the potential of drama-based approaches in enhancing speech development and language acquisition among students across different educational settings. By incorporating drama into language instruction, educators can create dynamic and engaging learning environments that cater to diverse learning preferences and foster the development of oral communication skills. Additionally, the findings highlight the importance of innovative teaching methods in promoting active engagement and fostering positive attitudes toward language learning among students. Overall, these research endeavors contribute valuable insights to the field of language education and underscore the significance of integrating creative and experiential learning approaches into pedagogical practices.

Susanti's (2019) study delved into the efficacy of integrating drama methods into the delivery of challenging topics within the English as a Foreign Language (EFL) curriculum, aiming to enhance language proficiency and alleviate anxiety among middle school students. Utilizing a quasi-experimental design, the research involved two distinct groups: the control group and the experimental group, comprising a total of 48 first-year intermediate school students (Susanti, 2019). The control group, consisting of 25 students, underwent conventional teaching methods, while the experimental group, comprising 23 students, received instruction on the challenging units through drama techniques (Susanti, 2019).

The findings of the study unveiled a significant impact of incorporating drama elements on language proficiency and anxiety reduction among first-year intermediate school learners (Susanti, 2019). Consequently, the research concluded that the adoption of drama techniques is crucial for enriching the less engaging components of the EFL curriculum. Moreover, it advocated for language practitioners and educators to embrace innovative strategies to actively engage their students and foster the development of cognitive skills (Susanti, 2019). The incorporation of drama into teaching was found to captivate students' interest, leading to heightened engagement in lessons and facilitating accelerated learning processes.

Furthermore, the study emphasized the transformative potential of drama-based approaches in revitalizing the learning experience and instilling a sense of enthusiasm among students. By infusing drama into the curriculum, educators can effectively address the challenges posed by complex topics in language learning, making the learning process more interactive and enjoyable for students. This not only enhances their language proficiency but also cultivates a positive learning environment conducive to reducing anxiety and promoting overall academic success.

Moreover, the findings underscored the importance of educators embracing creative and innovative pedagogical approaches to meet the diverse needs of students in the classroom. By integrating drama techniques into teaching practices, educators can create dynamic and stimulating learning environments that cater to various learning styles and preferences, thereby fostering holistic development and cognitive growth among students.

Susanti's (2019) research highlights the transformative potential of drama methods in enhancing language proficiency and reducing anxiety among middle school students within the EFL curriculum. The study advocates for the widespread adoption of drama techniques in language education to revitalize the learning experience, engage students actively, and promote the development of essential cognitive skills. By embracing innovative teaching strategies, educators can create inclusive and dynamic learning environments that empower students to thrive academically and personally.

Previous studies, including those by Masoumi-Moghaddam (2018) and Susanti (2019), predominantly employed an experimental and control group design. Across these studies, the experimental group consistently outpaced the control group in terms of academic performance. However, these studies did not assess students' attitudes toward English

teaching. This current study holds significance as it marks the first of its kind conducted in schools under the Shanghai Directorate of Education, focusing on evaluating the impact of drama methods on language learning and student attitudes.

3. Method and data

In this section, the study instruments, sample characteristics, data collection techniques, and methodology are all addressed. It additionally makes the plan for research more explicit, for example, the field study, pilot study, validity and reliability of the instruments, and techniques of data processing. The same control and experimental groups were used in this quasi-experimental study in which the researcher compared pretests and posttests before and after introducing drama courses into sixth-grade English language teaching at public schools administered by the Shanghai Education Directorate. Whereas the control group was just teaching the same content with traditional methods, the experimental group was trained through the use of educational drama. Random decisions were made for every group. To establish each group's baseline in terms of English language skills, a pretest was given before to trial. To evaluate any differences between the groups, the exam was given to both groups as a posttest both before and after the theatrical training. In addition, attitudes of the students toward English Language were also evaluated using a self-administered questionnaire. According to the study design diagram, the questionnaire was administered to both groups before and after the experiment.

Study's Design Diagram

| | | | |
|--------------------|--|------------------------------|---|
| Group | | Drama Teaching Method | |
| Experimental Group | Pre-test and Pre- attitude Scale | | Post-test and Post-attitude scale |
| Control Group | | Conventional Teaching Method | |

The unit "At the Book Fair" from Action Pack (6) was chosen to align with the study's objectives. Asks and Answers 1, 2, and 3 were covered in Lessons 1-3, deliberately selected for their inclusion of drama exercises set in ideal scenarios. Practical classes with drama activities were conducted in the experimental group. These lessons, along with the drama exercises, underwent examination by a team of teaching specialists. The final version of the drama courses was refined based on the findings of the pilot study, addressing any identified issues. During the second semester of the 2019–2020 academic year, the study focused on sixth-grade students attending schools affiliated with the Shanghai Education Directorate. The study population consisted of 140 6th graders, evenly distributed across four groups. Each group included 68 male and 72 female students from various selected schools. Out of this population, seventy students were randomly chosen and divided into two groups: thirty-five were allocated to the experimental group, while thirty-five to the control group. Two data collection techniques were employed: The first method involved the Achievement Test of English Language Speaking Skills, consisting of 13 items in both the pre-test and post-test, with a maximum score of 25 per participant. This test aimed to assess students' speaking skills before and after their drama sessions. Additionally, students privately completed the Attitude Questionnaire to gauge their attitudes toward learning English. Table 1 presents the 35 questionnaire items categorized into four main groups.

Table (1): Attitude Questionnaire: Domains and Items.

| Number | Domain | Items |
|--------|--|---------|
| 1 | Overall attitudes towards learning the English language. | (1-10) |
| 2 | Attitudes to English language teachers. | (11-18) |

| | | |
|---|---|---------|
| 3 | Attitudes to the employed English teaching methods. | (19-25) |
| 4 | Attitudes to the textbook. | (26-35) |

The questions were on a five-point Likert scale, with 1 denoting "strongly disagree" and 5 denoting "strongly agree." The survey included the four components listed in Table 1 and was translated into Arabic, the primary language spoken by the students (see Appendix B). To guarantee content validity, a group of academic and instructional specialists in EFL education assessed the study instruments. Their comments led to a few small adjustments, which confirmed the examinations were suitable for sixth-grade elementary students. The test-retest approach was used to examine consistency across time and evaluate the reliability of the designed test. The same exam was given many times, with a two-week interval between each administration. A robust correlation was found when the pre-and post-test results were compared using Pearson Correlation tests, as depicted in Table 2.

Table (2). Pearson correlations among the study's instruments

| Pearson Correlation | | Pearson Correlation | |
|---------------------|--------------------|---------------------|-----------------|
| Achievement Test | Achievement Retest | Attitude Test | Attitude Retest |
| 0.88** | | 0.87** | |

Both the Attitudes Assessment Scale and the Achievement Test reveal a high level of internal consistency, as observed in Table 2, suggesting that the study's instruments are highly reliable. A panel of academic staff, instructional specialists, and English as a foreign language teaching experts conducted the content validity of the student attitude questionnaire on learning English. Their remarks gave rise to amendments, additions, and deletions concerning some other elements. All of their proposals were taken into account in the last version of the tools. In addition to the test-retest findings presented in Table 3, reliability assessment requires consistency across several trials, with an acceptable margin of error of no more than 5% even when the trial is as high as 100. A Cronbach's alpha reliability test was done on a sample of thirty respondents to replicate the target population's pilot sample. The table provides further information about the coefficient values of the Cronbach alpha to ascertain the reliability of the instruments.

Table (3) Reliability Test for Attitude instrument

| Attitude | Cronbach's α |
|--|---------------------|
| Overall attitudes to learning the English language. | 0.81 |
| Attitudes to English language teachers. | 0.87 |
| Attitudes in the direction of the employed English teaching methods. | 0.90 |
| Attitudes in the direction of the textbook. | 0.88 |

The Cronbach's alpha values for all instruments on attitudes about English teaching varied from the value of 0.81 to the value of 0.90, showing an adequate degree of dependability, as recommended by Sekaran (2016).

4. Results

This first study question, "Do the sixth-grade students' speaking skill development differ statistically with ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) due to the teaching method (drama, conventional)?" was conducted through 70 cases for both descriptive and inferential analysis. Student respondents were also split equally between the experimental and control group; each of

them containing 35 people. The experimental group learned through drama while the control group learnt with the use of the traditional teaching methods. Because the drama teaching approach was expected to lead to good outcomes, grades six took a pre-test and post-test after the drama courses were given. Table 4 contains completely specified pre- and post-test data.

Pre-test & Post-Test Results of Control and Experimental Groups, Table (4)

| Group | Students' Mean score out of (25) | |
|--------------|----------------------------------|-----------------|
| | Pre-Test Means | Post-Test Means |
| Control | 14.22 | 14.59 |
| Experimental | 14.39 | 17.77 |

The table presented above, Table 4, indicates that there were only minor differences between the two groups before the theater class intervention. This slight variance suggests that the initial performance of both groups in the EFL sessions was comparable, underscoring the necessity of the designed intervention. Conversely, following the drama class intervention, the results indicate a notable disparity between the two groups. The significant disparity in EFL session success rates between the two teams highlights the anticipated impact of the educational theatrical intervention. To assess this difference, the researcher utilized the two-sample t-test, as illustrated in Table 5.

Table (6): Independent Samples T-Test for Pre-Test and Post-Test Results

| | | Mean Difference | Std. Difference | Error95% Confidence Interval of the Difference | | F | T | DF | Sig.(2-tailed) |
|--|-----------|-----------------|-----------------|--|-----------|------|------|----|----------------|
| | | | | Lower | Upper | | | | |
| | | | | Equal variances assumed | Pre- Test | | | | |
| | Post-Test | 3.1914 | 1.53352 | -6.25 | -.131 | 4.55 | 2.08 | | .041* |

*Significant at level ($\alpha \leq 0.05$).

Table 5 shows that there was no statistically significant difference ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) between the experimental and control groups in the Pre-Test, indicating the effectiveness of the approaches and suggesting the potential for implementing drama training as an intervention in the future. However, the post-test results reveal a statistically significant difference ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) between the experimental and control groups, confirming that drama education can enhance students' academic performance.

Furthermore, it was investigated whether students' gender (male or female) had any impact on their speaking development using a significance level of 0.05 (results of the study's second question). This analysis utilized an independent t-test, in table 6 and 7, the detailed outcomes were presented

Table (6) Student Gender Group Statistics

| | Gender | N | Mean | Std. Deviation | Std. Error Mean |
|----------|--------|----|-------|----------------|-----------------|
| Posttest | M | 35 | 15.32 | 1.30 | 0.06 |
| | F | 35 | 17.77 | 1.80 | 0.15 |

Table 6 displays data revealing significant differences in mean scores among students based on gender, with females achieving higher scores. To ascertain the statistical significance of these differences, a second experiment was conducted. Table 7

demonstrates that there were no statistically significant variations in the development of English speaking skills at the $\alpha \leq 0.05$ level based on gender. This lack of significant difference could be attributed to the systematic approach to teaching English, where students utilize the same textbook and operate within the same classroom environment.

Table 7 highlights the consistent gap in language acquisition irrespective of gender.

| F | T | df | Sig. (2-tailed) | Mean Difference | Std. Error Difference | |
|-------------------------|-------|------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------------|-------|
| Equal variances assumed | 0.926 | 1.08 | 68 | 0.281 | 1.71 | 1.568 |

The third study inquiry's results sought to determine if the variable of teaching technique (drama, conventional) had a statistically significant impact on sixth graders' attitudes toward learning English, with differences detected at the ($=0.05$) level. This section is a summary of the replies to the poll on students' attitudes toward learning the English language. Their attitudes were classified as High, Moderate, and Low based on how they responded to the weight descriptors on the five-point Likert scale. Table 8 offers a thorough explanation of the attitudes of students in each area.

Table (8) Students' Attitudes toward English learning

| N | Domain | Mean | Std.D | Degree |
|---|--|------|-------|--------|
| 1 | Overall attitudes in the direction of learning the English language. | 3.70 | 0.69 | High |
| 2 | Attitudes in the direction of English language teachers. | 3.87 | 0.56 | High |
| 3 | Attitudes in the direction the employed English Teaching methods. | 4.02 | 0.89 | High |
| 4 | Attitudes in the direction of the English language Textbook. | 3.86 | .089 | High |
| | Overall Mean | 3.86 | | High |

The overall mean score of 3.86 in Table 8, shows that sixth-grade students in general have positive attitudes toward learning English as a foreign language. Statistics also show that teaching methods have a substantial effect on students' positive attitudes toward learning English based on the mean score of 4.02. Textbook and instructor-related components came in second and third, respectively, with mean scores of 3.87 and 3.86. Students' general feelings about learning the English language were one of the factors that received the lowest score. Mean scores and independent t-tests were used for the third study question, which assesses statistically significant differences ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) in affecting sixth-graders attitudes regarding learning English via drama vs. conventional techniques. Tables 9 and 10 provide the results, respectively.

Table (9). Mean scores of students' attitudes toward English learning categorized by gender and teaching methods.

| Variables | | N | Mean | Std. Deviation | Std. Error Mean |
|------------------------------|--------------|----|--------|----------------|-----------------|
| Variable of Students' Gender | Male | 35 | 3.8568 | .55217 | .09333 |
| | Female | 35 | 3.8660 | .48399 | .08181 |
| Variable of Teaching | Conventional | 35 | 3.4501 | .42690 | .07216 |

| | | | | | |
|--------|-------|----|--------|--------|--------|
| Method | Drama | 35 | 4.2727 | .09312 | .01574 |
|--------|-------|----|--------|--------|--------|

As represented in Table 9, modest differences are noticed between the two groups concerning students' gender; nevertheless, these variances, as demonstrated in Table 10, did not achieve statistical significance. Conversely, for the teaching technique variable, considerable discrepancies are observed, with Table 10 further illustrating this

Table (10) Analyzed through Independent T-Test, differences in attitudes toward learning English are attributed to the variable of teaching method.

| | | Mean | Std. Error | F | T | DF | Sig.(2-tailed) |
|-------------------------|------------------------------|------------|------------|-------|-------|----|----------------|
| | | Difference | Difference | | | | |
| Equal variances assumed | Variable of Teaching Methods | 0.82259 | 0.07386 | 40.68 | 11.13 | | 0.000* |
| | Variable of Gender | -0.00927 | 0.12411 | 0.035 | 0.075 | 68 | 0.941 |

*Significant at level ($\alpha \leq 0.05$).

The experimental group, with statistically significant differences favoring them (F value of 40.684 and a significance value of 0.000), showed more positive attitudes towards learning the English language when taught using the drama teaching method.

5. Discussion

The findings of this study demonstrate that including drama activities provides a significant possibility to enhance English speaking skills when compared to standard techniques. The effects of the Drama teaching method on sixth graders' attitudes about learning English and their speaking skills are examined. After completing the trial, sixth graders demonstrated enhanced English speaking abilities as well as a stronger motivation to keep learning and developing these skills. Additionally, post-test scores and students' attitudes about speaking English demonstrate that using drama exercises in place of standard teaching techniques helps students build good attitudes about speaking the language.

According to the study, adding drama classes improves students' attitudes about learning English and their academic achievement. The results show what makes drama courses one of the most promising modalities for teaching English speaking skills and helping students have a good attitude toward learning the language.

The findings of the study indicate that students can significantly improve their English speaking skills through engaging activities like role-playing, which facilitate a seamless and dynamic learning experience through the use of drama. This aligns with previous research conducted by Kauts (2016), Masoumi-Moghaddam (2018), and Susanti (2019), which highlights the positive impact of interactive and engaging learning environments on the enhancement of speaking skills. The incorporation of drama techniques not only enhances students' language proficiency but also instills a positive perception of the importance of learning English among them. Questionnaire responses further validate this, revealing that participating in drama activities motivates students to actively practice speaking the language, thereby contributing to their overall language proficiency and fluency.

Furthermore, the results obtained from post-tests measuring students' academic achievements and their responses to attitude questionnaires underscore the beneficial impact of the drama approach. By encouraging students to actively engage in English-

speaking activities both within and outside the classroom, educators can effectively enhance their cognitive abilities, a benefit directly associated with drama activities. These findings highlight the significance of educators creating stimulating and enjoyable English learning experiences to foster students' enjoyment and reduce boredom in the learning process.

Moreover, the study underscores the transformative potential of drama-based approaches in promoting active participation and fostering a positive attitude toward language learning among students. By integrating drama techniques into language instruction, educators can create dynamic and interactive learning environments that cater to diverse learning preferences and stimulate students' interest and engagement in the subject matter. This not only enhances their language skills but also nurtures a deeper understanding and appreciation of the English language.

In conclusion, the findings of the study highlight the invaluable role of drama methods in enhancing English speaking skills and fostering a positive attitude towards language learning among students. By incorporating drama into language instruction, educators can create dynamic and engaging learning experiences that empower students to actively participate in their language learning journey and achieve greater academic success.

Expanding upon these findings, it is evident that incorporating drama into English language teaching not only improves students' language proficiency but also instills a positive attitude toward language learning. By engaging in drama activities, students are provided with opportunities to practice speaking English realistically and interactively, leading to greater confidence and fluency. Furthermore, the interactive nature of drama encourages collaboration and communication among students, fostering a supportive learning environment where language acquisition is enhanced.

Moreover, the positive impact of drama on students' attitudes towards learning English extends beyond the classroom. Students' motivation to practice speaking English outside of formal instruction is significantly increased when drama techniques are utilized. This highlights the potential of drama as a versatile tool for language acquisition, promoting active engagement and real-world application of language skills.

Additionally, the findings underscore the importance of incorporating varied and engaging learning activities to maintain students' interest and enthusiasm for learning English. By incorporating drama into the curriculum, educators can create dynamic and immersive learning experiences that cater to diverse learning styles and preferences. This approach not only enhances students' language proficiency but also fosters a positive learning environment conducive to language acquisition and personal growth.

The integration of drama into English language teaching offers numerous benefits for students, including improved language proficiency, increased motivation to practice English, and a positive attitude toward language learning. Through interactive and engaging drama activities, students are provided with opportunities to develop their language skills in a supportive and stimulating learning environment. Therefore, educators should consider incorporating drama into their teaching practices to enhance the overall learning experience and promote language acquisition among students.

The findings align with prior research demonstrating the benefits of drama-based learning and lend support to constructivist theory, particularly regarding the utilization of theater in educational settings (Al-Sharary, 2019; Sarmiento & Messac, 2017).

Statistical data regarding the impact of gender on sixth-grade students' speaking abilities and attitudes toward English learning indicate minimal differences between male and female students. The development of attitudes and speaking skills among sixth-grade students did not significantly differ based on gender, suggesting that all students received instruction in the same method and learning environment.

In the context of drama-based learning, both male and female students had equal opportunities to engage in drama activities with equal enjoyment as either performers or audience members. Their favorable reactions to drama-related activities, when incorporated into lesson plans, indicate their comfort and satisfaction. Moreover, the instructor interacted with both male and female students closely throughout the trial, enhancing their learning experiences and English speaking skills regardless of gender.

It is noteworthy that educational specialists carefully considered textbook selection to mitigate any negative effects related to gender or other sociodemographic variables. Scholars Rahman (2010) and Kauts (2016) have also reported similar findings.

Furthermore, a secondary study conducted by the researcher focused on the use of social drama to enhance students' motivation and performance in English speaking. The sample population consisted of 70 students from two eighth-grade classrooms at SMP Kasih Ibu Patumbak. The students' speaking skills greatly improved when three drama lessons were added to SMPS Plus Kasih Ibu Patumbak, according to the study. Students' English speaking proficiency increased when they interacted with real-world scenarios rather than virtual ones because they were more likely to retain and comprehend. Winkel (1993) defined sociodrama as the acting out of societal problems and disputes that occur in interpersonal relationships. According to the available data, social drama may be useful in enhancing students' speaking skills and inspiring them to study English. The findings emphasize the importance of sociodramatic teaching techniques in developing students' speaking skills.

6. Conclusion and implications

According to the study's findings, teaching foreign languages via drama requires using it as a tool rather than as a means to a goal. The results also show that using drama exercises in conjunction with traditional teaching methods is a successful strategy for improving English language speaking skills. Additionally, students develop a positive attitude about taking drama classes, which results in improvements in their overall academic performance in English, particularly in speaking skills, regardless of gender.

The researchers' observations demonstrate that one of the main benefits of utilizing drama in the classroom is that it helps students become more confident users of the language via real-world application (learning by practice). Additionally, the student-centered nature of dramatic activities increases attitudes and enthusiasm for learning a foreign language. This is especially true when students actively participate in the drama and learn the language via action, which facilitates a successful learning process. Therefore, including drama in the teaching strategy for English language teachers seems to be advantageous.

In conclusion, including drama in an eclectic approach to teaching English language skills may be very beneficial for developing speaking skills as well as adaptability, fluency, and communicative proficiency. The researcher discovered that the drama approach enhances the development of speaking skills while addressing the study problem. However, during the study, many issues arose, including group dynamics, students' discomfort with presenting drama, and the influence of the mother tongue. The mean score increased from 48.32 in the pre-test to 68.18 in the post-test, indicating a significant development aided by the use of the drama technique. Nonetheless, after six sessions of treatment, students showed improvement in their speaking skills.

Our findings, despite their limitations, have important policy and practical ramifications. The results demonstrate that live interactive theater productions may effectively fulfill learning objectives related to history. State curriculum standards sought to provide students in the control group with historical content through conventional means; however, after seeing live theater productions, the treatment group outperformed the control group in terms of content knowledge and grew more interested in both history and

theater. Considering the nascent stage of arts integration research, these findings provide intriguing perspectives. They provide teachers with additional resources for integrated learning and enable them to make better use of financial provisions under the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA).

With the knowledge that standards-based learning is feasible and, in some cases, even more effective than traditional classroom settings, educators may now embrace arts-integrated learning environments with confidence. Building ties with cultural groups is advised for educational administrators as a useful tool for promoting cross-disciplinary learning among students.

The researcher identified several recommendations aimed at improving the effectiveness of teaching approaches, particularly in the field of language education, based on the findings of our study. As a method to improve students' speaking skills, the researcher first advises the adoption of drama activities. Students get the chance to practice speaking in authentic situations via drama exercises, which provide a dynamic and engaging approach to language learning. Students' fluency, pronunciation, and general communication skills may be improved by participating in theatrical situations.

Second, the researcher supports including theater exercises in English language textbooks. Textbooks that include dramatized scenarios and exercises may provide structured chances for students to interact creatively and cooperatively with language. Teachers may easily include speaking practice into language classes and reinforce language learning in a meaningful way by incorporating drama into their textbooks.

It also stressed the significance of giving English as a Foreign Language (EFL) instructors training so they may acquire the skills they need to use drama teaching tactics successfully. Training programs should focus on increasing student engagement, assessing learning outcomes, and giving instructors advice on how to incorporate drama into their class plans. By giving instructors the skills and resources they need to incorporate drama into their teaching methods, schools can foster a more dynamic and engaging language learning environment.

Further studies on the impact of drama as a teaching approach outside of the English language are also highly recommended. Our study concentrated on the field of education, but drama also can enhance learning results in other academic fields. Research in this field may help us better understand the larger benefits of integrating drama into educational practices and how it influences student learning and engagement.

The researcher also urges China's Ministry of Education to continue its training programs for teachers who want to use drama in their teaching. By putting a lot of focus on teacher training programs, the ministry can make sure that educators have the knowledge and skills needed to teach drama in the classroom. In the end, better educational standards and the adoption of innovative teaching techniques in Chinese classrooms could come from this investment in professional development for educators.

References

1. Aldavero, V. A. (2008). Drama in the Development of Oral Spontaneous Communication. <https://doi.org/Encuentro,17,40-43>
2. Ali, N. (2008). Drama and mathematical thinking skills of kindergarten children. The World of Books. Cairo.
3. Ali, S. (2012). The effect of using drama on developing English-speaking skill among primary school learners. *Educational and social studies, Egypt*, 10, (4): 61-73.
4. Al-Jamal, Dina and Al-Jamal, Ghadeer (2014) An Investigation of the difficulties faced by EFL undergraduates in speaking skills. *English Language Teaching* 7 (1), 19-27.

5. Alsagoff, L. (2012). principles and practices for teaching english as an international language.
6. Al-Sharary, F. (2019) The impact of using the educational drama strategy in developing speaking skills on English Language among the first year intermediate students. Umm Al-Qura University Journal for Educational and Psychological Sciences – (11) - (1).
7. Ashton-Hay, S. (2005). Drama: Engaging all learning styles. Proceeding 9th International INGED. <http://eprints.qut.edu>
8. Asmarawati, P.A., et al (2014). CONSILIUM: Journal of the Guidance and Counseling Study Program, 2 (2), 37-41 <http://jurnal.fkip.uns.ac.id/index.php/cousilium> 38
9. Attia, T. (2015). The effectiveness of the dialogue drama strategy in developing some oral communication skills among students of the Arabic language who are not speaking it. Educational Journal, Egypt, 41, 1-35.
10. Blanch, E. (1974). Dramatics in the ForeignLanguage Classroom. ERIC Focus Reports on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (No. 23. ER). NY. MLA Publication centre.
11. Bogdan, R. (2007). Qualitative research for education. Pearson Education, Inc.
12. Brown, H. (2021). Teaching by principles. an interactive approach to language pedagogy. Longman Inc.
13. Bunkart, G. (2004). Training packet material. A Descriptive Study of Content-ESL Practice, III. <http://www.ncela.gwu.edu/pubs/cal/contentesl/index.htm>
14. Cameron, L. (2021). Teaching language to young learners. Cambridge university press.
15. Chaney, A. & Burk, T. (1998). Teaching oral communication in grades K-8. Boston: Allyn & Bacon.
16. Chaney, D. (2004). Lifestyles: Sebuah Pengantar Komprehensif. Jelasutra.
17. Chauhan, V. (2004). Drama techniques for teaching English. The Internet TSL Journal, 8(October), 1. <http://iteslj.org/Techniques/Chauhan-Drama.html>
18. Clark, H. H. (1977). Psychology and language introduction to psycholinguistics. Brace Jovanovich.
19. Creswell, J. W. (2012). Educational Research. Boston: Pearson Education.
20. Depdiknas. (2006). Kurikulum tingkat satuan pendidikan.
21. Desiatova, L. (2009). Humanising Language Teaching Magazine. <http://www.hltmag.co.uk/aug09/sart09/sart07.htm>
22. Dougill, J. (1987). Drama activities for language learning. Macmillan.
23. Duman, T. & Karagöz, S. (2016). An evaluation of Turkish teacher education system compared to other models in different countries. International Journal of Educational Research Review, 1(1), 1-13.
24. Ericsson, E., Sofkova Hashemi, S., & Lundin, J. (2023). Fun and frustrating: Students' perspectives on practising speaking English with virtual humans. Cogent Education, 10(1), 2170088.
25. Fauzi, I. (2016). The application of Multimedia -based presentation in improving students' speaking skills. Journal of ELT Research, 104–105.
26. Harmer. (2017). The practice of english language teaching. England Pearson Education.
27. Hasibuan, A. L., Lubis, N., & Febianingrum, A. (2021). STUDENTS' PERCEPTION TOWARD ROLE PLAY TECHNIQUE IN IMPROVING SPEAKING SKILL.
28. Hayes, D. (2016). The value of learning English in Thailand and its impact on Thai Perspectives from university students. Asia Pacific Journal of Education, 36(1), 73-91
29. Helwa, H. S. (2015). Using puppets based learning for promoting primary stage pupils EFL listening and speaking skills. Unpublished Master Thesis, Banha University, Egypt.

30. Holden, S. (1981). *Drama Language Teaching. Handbook for language teachers.* Longman Group. London, 1981.
31. Hu, Y. (2011). *Using Drama for ESL Teaching. A Seminar Research Paper.*
32. Ihsan, M. D. (2016). Students' Motivation in Speaking English. *JEES (Journal of English Educators Society)*, 1(1), jees.v1i1.147. <https://doi.org/10.21070/jees.v1i1.147>.
33. In *PROSIDING SEMINAR NASIONAL HASIL PENELITIAN* (Vol. 2, No. 2, pp. 1179-1183).
34. Indonesian EFL Classroom. In *3rd Asian Education Symposium (AES 2018)* (pp. 477-480). Atlantis Press. Lubis, N., & Lubis, A. (2020). *PENGARUH MEDIA DIGITAL TERHADAP KEMAMPUAN KOMUNIKASI.*
35. Janudom, R. & Wasanasomsithi, P. (2009). Drama and questioning techniques: powerful tools for the enhancement of students' speaking abilities and positive attitudes towards EFL Learning. *ESP World Issue*, 5 (26), 8.
36. Kalogirou, K., Beauchamp, G., & Whyte, S. (2019). Vocabulary acquisition via drama: Welsh as a second language in the primary school setting. *The Language Learning Journal*, 47(3), 332-343.
37. Karagöz, S. & Rüzgar, M.E. (2020). The observations of student teachers in regard to professional qualifications of advisor teachers during teaching practicum. *International Journal of Educational Research Review*, 5(2), 141-150.
38. Kauts, A. (2016), Effect of dramatization on speaking skills and academic achievement in English among primary students. *MIER Journal of Educational Studies, Trends and Practices*, 3(2).
39. Kayi, H. (2006). Teaching speaking: Activities to promote speaking in a second language. *The Internet TESL Journal*, XII(11 November 2006), 1. <https://doi.org/Nevada>
40. Kirkpatrick, R. (2012). English education in Thailand: 2012. *Asian EFL Journal*, 61, 24-40.
41. Lado, R. (2003). *Language teaching. A scientific approach.* Tata McGraw-Hill Publishing Co.LTD.
42. *Language Annal.*
43. Loizou, E., Michaelides, A., & Georgiou, A. (2019). Early childhood teacher involvement in children's socio-dramatic play: creative drama as a scaffolding tool. *Early Child Development and Care*, 189(4), 600-612.
44. Lubis, N. (2019, September). *INVESTIGASI SELF-CONCEPT NEGATIF DAN KEMAMPUAN KOMUNIKASI INTERPERSONAL MELALUI HIGHER ORDER THINKING SKILL (HOTS).*
45. Lubis, N., & Lubis, A. (2019, April). *Enhancing 21st Century Skill through Teaching Model Collaboration in*
46. *MAHASISWA EFL; KONTEKS DI INDONESIA.* In *PROSIDING SEMINAR NASIONAL HASIL PENELITIAN* (Vol. 3, No. 1, pp. 630-633).
47. Maiullo, J. (2018). Radio drama for speaking practice. *English. Teaching Forum*, 56, (2). 16-25.
48. Manuel Peter, 2. T. (2011). *Teaching matters.* 2(2).
49. Masoumi-Moghaddam, S. (2018). Using drama and drama techniques to teach English conversations to English as foreign language learners. *International Journal of Applied Linguistics and English Literature*, 7(6), 63-68.
50. Moore, Mandie M. (2004) *Using Drama as an Effective Method to Teach Elementary Students.* Senior Honors Theses, Honors College, Eastern Michigan University, USA.
51. Nassar, M. (2000). *Educational drama theory and application.* Amman: National Center for Publishing and Distribution.
52. Philips, S. (2003). *Drama with Children.* Oxford University Press.

37 *The Impact of Applying Drama Classes on Improving Communication Skills of the English Language in Schools*

53. Rabab'a, I. (2015). The impact of using educational drama for learning the speaking skill (oral expression) and improving achievement to students of (ASOL). Unpublished M.A. Thesis, University of Jordan, Amman, Jordan.
54. Rahman, M. M. (2010). Teaching oral communication skills: A task-based approach. *ESP world*, 9(1), 1-11.
55. Repina, Y. S. (2019). Improving students' speaking skill through drama technique. Seminar Nasional Pendidikan STKIP Kusuma Negara.
56. Revathy, M., & Ravindran, K. (2016). Enhancing effective speaking skills through role-play and tongue twisters. *Language in India*, 16(9). Routledge.
57. Santri E.P. Djahimo, D. I. (2018). Student Anxiety and Their Speaking Performance: Teaching. *International Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities*, 2(3), 187-195.
58. Sarmiento, J. A., & Messac, S. (2017). Using dram to develop students' speaking skills to the second-grade students of Escola Tecnico Profissional OE-CUSSE. ISCE. *Journal of Innovative Studies on Character and Education*, 1(1), 46-67.
59. Shameem, Ahmed (2015) Attitudes towards English Language Learning among EFL Learners at UMSKAL. *Journal of Education and Practice*, 6, (18), 6-16.
60. Spratt, M. a. (2005). *The TKT course*. Cambridge. Cambridge university press.
61. Stevia, M. I. 2017. The Use of Socio drama Method in Speaking Skill. *Journal of education* (online). Retrieved on: June 26, 2019 from <https://jurnal-mahasiswa.unisri.ac.id>
62. Susanti, S. (2019). Drama performance to increase students' practical English for daily conversation. in *SNPMas: Seminar Nasional Pengabdian pada Masyarakat*, (pp. 184-191).
63. Takkaç Tulgar, A. (2018). Speaking Anxiety of Foreign Learners of Turkish in Target Context. *International Online Journal of Education and Teaching (IOJET)*,5(2),313-332. <http://iojet.org/index.php/IOJET/article/view/362/237>
64. Tsou, W. (2005). improving speaking skills through instruction in oral classroom participation.
65. Utami, A. A. (2018). Teaching speaking using drama to improve students' speaking skills at smk negeri 2 karawang. *The Professional Journal of Education*, 472-478
66. Yang, Y. T. C., Chen, Y. C., & Hung, H. T. (2022). Digital storytelling as an interdisciplinary project to improve students' English speaking and creative thinking. *Computer Assisted Language Learning*, 35(4), 840-862