



Teaching English Using AnActivity Based EFL Drama Course

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Abstrak

This paper aims at emphasizing the use of an activity-based EFL drama course as a popular technique for teaching both basic language skills (i.e. reading, writing, listening and speaking) and language areas (i.e. vocabulary, grammar and pronunciation) in our times by creating a suitable context. Drama is a powerful language teaching tool that involves all of the students interactively all of the class period. Drama can also provide the means for connecting students' emotions and cognition as it enables students to take risks with language and experience the connection between thought and action. Teaching English as a foreign language inevitably involves a balance between receptive and productive skills; here drama can effectively deal with this requirement. Through drama, a class will address, practice and integrate reading, writing, speaking and listening. Drama also fosters and maintains students' motivation, by providing an atmosphere which is full of fun and entertainment. In so doing, it engages feelings and attention and enriches the learners' experience of the language.

Kata Kunci: EFL drama class, Dramatic activities, Teaching language skills

INTRODUCTION

The primary goal of English courses in an EFL context is the development of communicative skills in English and teachers should do their best to teach students in meaningful, effective and fun ways. In order to achieve this, communicative and authentic language use has been emphasized (Royka, 2002). However, conventional English classes in English Study Program, FKIP, Universitas Bengkulu hardly give students an opportunity to use language and develop fluency in it. This is because students lack the adequate exposure to native speakers who can converse with the students on authentic matters as well as lack of pedagogically-designed appropriate materials that can be used by language teachers in a classroom context. An alternative is teaching English through drama because there

are many reasons in using drama activities and techniques in the language classroom. First of all it is entertaining and fun and can provide motivation to learn. It can provide varied opportunities for different uses of language and because it engages feelings it can provide rich experience of language for the participants.

Blanch (1974) also points out "the two elements of drama are action and dialogue, and both have a place in the foreign-language learning experience. They may be introduced into the classroom by means of a "drama lab," a learning activity that permits students to act out foreign language materials such as tableaux, poetry, ballads, folklore, and plays. Drama allows the student to express his individuality, and the material, if it is culture-related, brings to life the cultural context of the foreign

language." Campbell (2008) study proved the effectiveness of using drama on students' achievement whereas the effect of drama in foreign language teaching and learning has been the aim of many researches. Therefore, "for more than 30 years drama has been promoted as a valuable teaching tool for language learning. Recent research results have reinforced this position." (Dunn & Stinson, 2011).

Fleming (2006) stated that drama is inevitably learner-centered because it can only operate through active cooperation. It is therefore a social activity and thus embodies much of the theory that has emphasized the social and communal, as opposed to the purely individual, aspects of learning. The use of drama techniques and activities in the classroom provides exciting opportunities for foreign language learners to use the language in concrete "situations". Besides, some research studies, (Maley and Duff 2001, Phillips, 2003) suggest that drama activities can promote interesting ways of motivating language learners and teachers. With drama we can play, move, act and learn at the same time. (Phillips, 2003). Also the use of drama activities has clear advantages for language learning regarding motivation, the use of language in context, teaching and learning cross curricular content, etc (Phillips, 2003).

In other words, the use of drama seems to be an effective technique in today's communication-based, student-centered foreign language teaching. Since it is an authentic material, it helps students to promote their comprehension of the verbal / nonverbal aspects of the target

language they are trying to master. Particularly, teachers, who wish to make language learning more colorful, motivating and interesting, can make use of drama in their language classes. Since drama is the reenactments of social events, students improve their personality and code of behavior. Thus, they can achieve more meaningful and realistic teaching from which students can benefit to a great extent.

Using Drama Course: why and what
Needless to say, dramatic activities are valuable for ESL / EFL. They facilitate and accelerate development of the oral skills since they motivate students to achieve a clearer comprehension of a work's plot and a deeper comprehension and awareness of its characters. Though drama in the classroom can assume many forms, there are three main types, which are *dramatization*, *role-playing*, and *improvization*.

Dramatization requires classroom performance of scripted materials. Students can make up their own scripts for short stories or sections of novels, adapting them as closely as possible to the real text. Based on the story, they must guess what the characters would say and how they would say it. Scripts written by students are also probable with plays. Poems comprising one or more personae may also be scripted by students. Students should attentively read assigned sections of dialog in advance and be able to answer questions about characters and plot. They should indicate vocabulary, idioms, or dialog they don't understand and words they cannot pronounce. Students next rehearse the scene with their partners. Although they don't memorize it, they learn it well enough to make eye

contact and say their lines with meaning and feeling. Moreover, they discuss semiotic aspects of staging the scene (i.e. facial expressions, gestures, and the physical aspects). At last, the dramatization is presented before the class.

On the other hand, both improvisation and role-playing may be developed around the characters, plot, and themes of a literary work. Improvisation is a more systematic activity, i.e., a dramatization without a script. There is an identifiable plot with a beginning, middle, and end in improvisation. However, in role playing, students picture characters from the work being read and join in a speaking activity other than a dramatization, such as an interview or panel discussion. The use of drama as a technique for teaching both basic language skills (i.e. reading, writing, listening and speaking) and language areas (i.e. vocabulary, grammar and pronunciation) is very popular within the field of foreign language learning and teaching nowadays. Moreover, in translation courses, many language teachers make their students translate literary texts like drama, poetry and short stories into the mother tongue. Since translation gives students the chance to practice the lexical, syntactic, semantic, pragmatic and stylistic knowledge they have acquired in other courses, translation both as an application area covering four basic skills and as the fifth skill is emphasized in language teaching. In the following section, why language teachers use literary texts in the foreign language classroom and main criteria for selecting suitable literary texts in foreign language

classes are stressed so as to make the reader familiar with the underlying reasons and criteria for language teachers' using and selecting literary texts.

Benefits of Using Drama

Using drama in a language classroom is a good resource for language teaching. It is through the use of drama that learners become familiar with grammatical structures in contexts and also learn about how to use the language to express, control and inform. The use of drama raises the students' awareness towards the target language and culture. In this context, the use of drama as a tool rather than an end gains importance in teaching a foreign language. Yet, there is one obvious danger: cultural imposition should be severely avoided since it results in the loss of language ego and native language identity in many cases. To put it differently, language learning should be culture-free but entirely not culture-biased. For this reason, the new language and the context of the drama should fuse into a language learning process with high interest, relevance and enjoyment. Learners should make use of drama to promote their comprehension of life experiences, reflect on particular circumstances and make sense of their extralinguistic world in a deeper way (Sarıçoban 2004:15).

Culham (2003) observed benefits from using simple drama activities with students and in teacher in service workshops as follows:

1. Students are able to express themselves in ways other than through words.

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2. Drama activities offer community-building opportunities in a classroom where there are students of varying levels of language proficiency
 3. Teachers are also able to use non-verbal cues to demonstrate caring and concern for students in a way that more formal language instruction does not allow, bound as it is by the physical constraints and the pressure to understand.
 4. Non-verbal drama activities provide an excellent means of releasing the stress of language learning.
 5. Students, often hesitant to speak out, can become confident when the language expectation is removed entirely.
 6. "Total Physical Response is enhanced through drama activities.
 7. In all drama work, power dynamics shift as the teacher becomes a participant alongside the students.
 8. Non-verbal drama activities transfer directly to verbal ones, and subsequent verbal interchanges are triggered by these non-verbal activities.
 - b. promotes language development, heightens effective listening skills,
 - c. strengthens comprehension and learning retention by involving the senses as an integral part of the learning process,
 - d. increases empathy and awareness of others, fosters peer respect and group cooperation, reinforces positive self-concept,
 - e. provides teachers with a fresh perspective on teaching.

Some other educational benefits of using drama in a foreign language class can be listed as follows (Mengü 2002:1-4):

 - a. bringing authenticity into the classroom,
 - b. exposing the learners to the target culture as well as the social problems a society may be undergoing,
 - c. increasing creativity, originality, sensitivity, fluency, flexibility, emotional stability, cooperation, and examination of moral attitudes, while developing communication skills and appreciation of literature,
 - d. helping learners improve their level of competence with respect to their receptive and productive skills,
 - e. providing a solid basis for the learners to bridge the gap between their receptive and productive skills,
- The educational benefits of drama, according to (Lenore 1993), are as follows:
- a. stimulates the imagination and promotes creative thinking, develops critical thinking skills,

- f. offering students the space and time to develop new ideas and insights in a range of contexts,
- g. enabling students to develop new understandings and forms of knowing not accessible in other more traditional ways of learning.

Using drama and drama activities has clear advantages for language learning. It encourages students to speak, it gives them the chance to communicate, even with limited language, using non-verbal communication, such as body movements and facial expression. There are also a number of other factors which makes drama a very powerful tool in the language classroom. Desiatova (2009) outlined some of the areas where drama is very useful to language learners and teachers, and they are listed below:

1. To give learners an experience (dry-run) of using the language for genuine communication and real life purposes; and by generating a need to speak. Drama is an ideal way to encourage learners to guess the meaning of unknown language in a context. Learners will need to use a mixture of language structures and functions ("chunks") if they want to communicate successfully.
 - a. To make language learning an active, motivating experience
 - b. To help learners gain the confidence and self-esteem needed to use

the language spontaneously

2. By taking a role, students can escape from their everyday identity and "hide behind" another character. When you give students special roles, it encourages them to be that character and abandon their shyness.
3. To bring the real world into the classroom (problem solving, research, consulting dictionaries, real time and space, cross-curricular content) When using drama the aim can be more than linguistic, teachers can use topics from other subjects: the students can act out scenes from history, they can work on ideas and issues that run through the curriculum. Drama can also be used to introduce the culture of the new language, through stories and customs, and with a context for working on different kinds of behavior.
4. To emulate the way students naturally acquire language through play, make-believe and meaningful interaction.
5. To make what is learned memorable through direct experience and affect (emotions) for learners with different learning styles.
6. When students dramatize, they use all the channels (sight, hearing, and physical bodies) and each student will draw to the one that suits them best. This means they will all be actively

involved in the activity and the language will "enter" through the channel most appropriate for them.

7. To stimulate learners' intellect and imagination
8. To develop students' ability to empathize with others and thus become better communicators
Helps learners acquire language by focusing on the message they are conveying, not the form of their utterance

There are several more studies that support the benefits of drama in foreign language learning, such as Maley and Duff (2001), Brumfit (1991) and Philips (2003). Dramatic activities according to Maley and Duff (1979) "Are activities which give the students an opportunity to use his own personality in creating the material in which part of the language class is to be based". Drama activities can provide students with an opportunity to use language to express various emotions, to solve problems, to make decisions, to socialize. Drama activities are also useful in the development of oral communication skills, and reading and writing as well. Drama activities help students to communicate in the foreign language including those with limited vocabulary. (Aldavero, 2008).

Other researchers directly support that ESL/EFL (English as a second language / English as a foreign language) teachers should use drama techniques in their English classes. According to Boudreault (2010), "ESL/EFL professionals need to use this medium more because the artificial world of the classroom can be

transformed into a quasi-real language situation and provides an endless amount of opportunities for student's personal growth." Boudreault (2010) also asserts "Drama for second language learners can provide an opportunity to develop the imagination of the students. The students can go beyond the here and now and even 'walk in the shoes' of another. In this way, drama has a wider reach than simply making us more fluent in a second language."

Helden brand (2003) also argues for the benefits of drama techniques in English language learning. He asserts "drama enables the teacher to break free from the textbook and focus on real, meaningful language" (p. 36). Moghaddas and Ghafariniae who applied drama techniques in teaching English in Iran also support the benefits of using drama in class. Moghaddas and Ghafariniae (2012) maintain that "some benefits of using drama in language learning are enhancing learner's autonomy and responsibility over their own learning, providing a stress free atmosphere to learn the language, putting new vocabularies and expressions in context, helping to get acceptable pronunciation and intonation, proper understanding of foreign language culture and building up learners' confidence to speak in public" (p.24). Rothwell (2012) argues that "enrollment in the drama by students and teacher encouraged risk taking and participation so many students became more confident to experiment with limited language in order to communicate spontaneously. Actually 'doing' drama allowed them to engage with both spoken and written

language while also using their bodies as an expressive, communicative medium" (p. 66). Based on these reasons, drama techniques should be used in English classes. Therefore, teachers have chances to learn to use drama techniques in their classes.

Criteria for Selecting Suitable Literary Drama - Texts in Foreign Language Classes

When selecting the literary drama - texts to be used in language classes, the language teacher should take into account needs, motivation, interests, cultural background and language level of the students. However, one major factor to take into account is whether a particular work is able to reveal the kind of personal involvement by arousing the learners' interest and eliciting strong, positive reactions from them. Reading a literary drama - text is more likely to have a long-term and valuable effect upon the learners' linguistic and extralinguistic knowledge when it is meaningful and amusing. Choosing books relevant to the real-life experiences, emotions, or dreams of the learner is of great importance. Language difficulty has to be considered as well. If the language of the literary work is simple, this may facilitate the comprehensibility of the literary text but is not in itself the most crucial criterion. Interest, appeal, and relevance are also prominent. Enjoyment; a fresh insight into issues felt to be related to the heart of people's concerns; the pleasure of encountering one's own thoughts or situations exemplified clearly in a work of art; the other, equal pleasure of noticing those same thoughts, feelings,

emotions, or situations presented by a completely new perspective: all these are motives helping learners to cope with the linguistic obstacles that might be considered too great in less involving material (Collie and Slater 1990:6-7).

Students Communication

Using drama to teach English results in real communication, involving ideas, emotions, feelings, appropriateness and adaptability. (Barbu, 2007). Teaching English may not fulfill its goals. Even after years of English teaching, the students do not gain the confidence of using the language in and outside the class. The conventional English class hardly gives the students an opportunity to use language in this manner and develop fluency in it, and this is because students lack the adequate exposure to spoken English outside the class as well as the lack of exposure to native speakers who can communicate with the students on authentic matters. So an alternative to this is teaching English through drama because it gives a context for listening and meaningful language production, leading the students or forcing them to use their own language resources, and thus, enhancing their linguistic abilities.

Using drama in teaching English also provides situations for reading and writing. By using drama techniques to teach English, the monotony of a conventional English class can be broken and the syllabus can be transformed into one which prepares students to face their immediate world better as competent users of the English language because they get an opportunity to use the language in operation. Drama

improves oral communication, as a form of communication methodology, drama provides the opportunity for the students to use language meaningfully and appropriately. Maley and Duff (1979) state that drama puts back some of the forgotten emotional content into language. Appropriacy and meaning are more important than form or structure of the language.

Drama can help to restore the totality of the situation by reversing the learning process, beginning with meaning and moving towards language form. This makes language learning more meaningful and attempts to prepare the students for real-life situations. Earl Stevick (1980) states that language learning must appeal to the creative intuitive aspect of personality as well as the conscious and rational part.

Drama activities can be used to provide opportunities for the students to be involved actively. The activities involve the student's whole personality and not only his mental process. Effective learning can be achieved when the student involves himself in the tasks and is motivated to use the target language.

Morrow (1981 cited in Sam 1990) stated that communicative activities should conform to some principles: students should know what they are doing and its purpose. In communication, it is necessary to work in the context as a unit. Communication cannot be divided into its various components. Drama can be considered a communicative activity since it fosters communication among learners and provides different opportunities to use

the target language in "make believe" situations.

Vernon (n d) supports the view that this conversational use of language also promotes fluency. He states that while learning a play, students are encouraged to listen to, potentially read and then repeat their lines over a period of time. By repeating the words and phrases they become familiar with them and are able to say them with increasing fluency by encouraging self-expression, drama motivates students to use language confidently and creatively.

Speaking is the most common and important means of providing communication among human beings. The key to successful communication is speaking nicely, efficiently and articulately, as well as using effective voice projection, speaking is linked to success in life, as it occupies an important position both individually and socially (Ulas, 2008)

Several scientific investigation have demonstrated that creative, instructional and educational drama activities have positive contribution to the general education process and that these activities improve speaking skills. According to Makita (1995) dramatic and role-playing activities are valuable classroom techniques that encourage students to participate actively in the learning process. These dramatic activities can take different forms and that the teacher can provide students with a variety of learning experience by developing different methodologies according to the needs of his students. These role-playing activities enable the teacher to create a

supportive, enjoyable classroom environment in which students are encouraged and motivated to effectively learn the target language. Drama has a significant function especially in specifically improving acquired/improved speaking skills among the basic language skills.

Smith (1984) noted , although drama has existed as a potential language teaching tool for hundreds of years, it has only been in the last thirty years or so that its applicability as a language learning technique to improve oral skills has come to the forefront. Regarding the point that drama has an important impact on language teaching, Goodwin (2001) states, drama is a particularly effective tool for pronunciation teaching because various components of communicative competence (discourse, intonation, pragmatic awareness, non verbal communication) can be practiced in an integrated way.

There are some other elements involved in acquiring oral communication skills: adding efficiency to communication and drama activities facilitates the improvement of these elements. Whitear (1998) approach in this regard is, speaking is not only about words, structure and pronunciation , but also feelings, motivations and meanings that are valuable benefits for bringing drama to the language learner. Drama techniques and activities to develop communication skills through fluency, pronunciation, cooperative learning, confidence building and intercultural awareness may be added also to the above mentioned elements.

One of the major characteristics of the social aspect of oral communication skills is the ability to deliver a speech comfortably and with self confidence. Drama appears to be the ideal method for students to develop self confidence. In this regard, Pietro (1987) says, students who are not naturally talkative often appear more willing to join in the discourse when they realize that they are not dominated by a teacher figure. Sam (1990) agrees by stating, drama activities can be used to provide opportunities for the students to be involved actively, the activities involve the students, whole personality and not merely his mental process. Peregoy and Boyle (2008) stated "Drama activities provide students with a variety of contextualized and scaffold activities that gradually involve more participation and more oral language proficiency, they are also non-threatening and a lot of fun. Desiatova (2009) stated that using drama and drama activities has clear advantages for language learning. It encourages students to speak, it gives them the chance to communicate, even with limited language, using non verbal communication, such as body movements and facial expressions.

Students' involvement in the negotiation and construction of meaning during participation in a drama allows them insights into the relationship between context and language, and lets them link the language they are learning to the world around them (Maley and Duff, 1978). Drama has been credited with the ability to empower students and allow them some ownership and control over

their own learning (Wilburn, 1992). Working in drama allows students to test out various situations, registers and vocabulary in a real way without having to suffer any real consequences, (Neelands, 1992). Kao and O, Neill (1998) propose that confidence levels increase when students have something to talk about and , most importantly, when they know how to express their ideas.

How can drama or dramatic activities be used in Teaching English

Mime

John Dougill (1987) defines mime as "a non-verbal representation of an idea or story through gesture, bodily movement and expression". Mime emphasizes the paralinguistic features of communication. It builds up the confidence of learners by encouraging them to get up and do things in front of one another. Mime helps develop students' power of imagination and observation and can also be quite simply " a source of great enjoyment" with students tending "to be very enthusiastic about this aspect of drama", (Hayes, 1984). To the language teacher, one could generally say that mime is acting out an idea or story through gesture, bodily movement and expression, without using words .Savignon (1983) says that the mime helps learners become comfortable with the idea of performing in front of peers without concern for language and that although no language is used during a mime it can be a spur to use language. John Dougill (1987) supports this when he says that not only is mime one of the most useful activities for language practice, it is also one of the

most potent and relatively undemanding. Its strength lies in that although no language is used during the mime, the mime itself can act as a catalyst to generate and elicit language before, during and after the activity.

Mime is a great way of reinforcing memory by means of visual association, and recall of language items is assisted whenever an associated image is presented (Rose, 1985). Mime can help to fix language in the minds of the students, and the following activity demonstrates how vocabulary items can be revised and reinforced (Dougill, 1987). Placing a box in front of the class, the teacher mimes taking something out of it and asks students to take a guess at what it could be. The teacher then invites a student to approach the box and whispers the name of the object to the student, who in turn mimes taking the object out of the box while the rest of the class guesses.

Mime can generate language use where explanation is required-teacher's instructions and the discussion of the students-if the mime involves pair work or group work, learners normally find it easier and more motivating to produce language when they have to accomplish a task (Ur,1981). If the mime is then performed before the rest of the class, the target language can be usefully employed for evaluating and interpreting what has been seen, as in the following example which aims at practicing fluency (Dougill,1987). Working in pairs or small groups, students are given topics to work on which are to form the basis of a three minute mime (a burglary that goes

wrong, an incident at a bus stop, an argument at the cinema, for example), five minutes are allowed for preparing and rehearsing. Students perform their mime in turn, and after each performance the teacher asks the class to interpret what it has been.

Role Play

According to Blatner (2002) role play is a method for exploring the issues involved in complex social situations. McCaslin (1990) concurs with this viewpoint by contending that the focus is on the value that the assumption of the role has for the participant rather than for the development of an art. In role play the participants are assigned roles which they act out in a given scenario. The purpose of role play is educative rather than therapeutic and the situations examined are common to all. Family scenes, school situations and playground incidents provide opportunities for interaction and group discussion. Role play enables participants to deepen prior experience and to translate it into characters for the plot. In this way according to Wrentschur and Altman (2002), the participants are able to adopt roles hitherto alien to them, and to try what it feels like to be on the other side for once. The main benefit of role play from the point of view of language teaching is that it enables a flow of language to be produced that might be otherwise difficult or impossible to create. Role play can also help recreate the language students used in different situations, the sort of language students are likely to need outside the classroom. (Livingstone, 1983). By

simulating reality, role play allows students to prepare and practice for possible future situations.

Ideas for role play could be obtained from situations that teachers and learners experience in their own lives, from books, television programmes and movies or from their daily interactions with other people at school/ university or in the work place. After choosing a context for a role play, the next step to follow is to provide ideas on how this situation may develop. It is important to take into consideration the learners' level of language proficiency when using and implementing role play activities in the FL classroom. Assuming a role is an essential element in drama, Heathcote (1984) concurs that role taking is so flexible that when applied in education, it will suit all personalities and teaching circumstances.

Broadly speaking role-play involves being an imaginary person usually in a hypothetical situation and sometimes in a real one (Venugopal, 1986). Livingstone (1983) sees role play as a class activity which gives the students the opportunities to practice the language aspects of role-behaviour, the actual role they may need outside the classroom. According to Richards (1985) role-play involves a situation in which a setting, participants and a goal problem are described. Participants are to accomplish the task given, drawing on whatever language resources they can. From the above definitions we can come up with the conclusion that role-play is thus an activity which requires a person to take on a role that is real or imaginary. It

involves spontaneous interaction of participants as they attempt to complete a task.

There are many types of role play. Dramatic plays, story dramatization and sociodrama, seminar style presentation, debates and interview. They range from beginners, role play for weaker students to advanced role play for the more proficient students. Different types of role play demand different approaches, the way the role play is introduced, the description of the roles, the facilitation and debriefing sessions vary accordingly. Role play can fit into a course we teach at QOU called language use, this course has a practical part that require students to talk in the classroom performing different role and tasks.

Simulation:

Jones (1980) calls a simulation as case study where learners become participants in an event and shape the course of the event. The learners have roles, functions, duties, and responsibilities within a structured situation involving problem solving. Simulations are generally held to be a structured set of circumstances' that mirror real life and in which participants act as instructed. Jones (1982) defined simulations as "a reality of functions in a simulated and structures environment".

A simulation activity is one where the learners discuss a problem within a defined setting, In simulation activities, the students are either playing themselves or someone else. Simulation activities are also interaction activities with various categories of

dialogues. One category would be social formulas and dialogues such as greeting, parting, introductions, compliments, and complaints. Simulation exercises can teach students how to function in a social situation with the appropriate social niceties: for example, students could practice how to turn down a request for a date or a party. Another category of simulated interaction activity is community oriented tasks, where students learn how to cope with shopping, buying a ticket at a bus stop etc. This sort of simulation helps students' communicative participation in the community and at the very least help them in the task of collecting important information.

A clear line cannot be drawn between role play and simulation. These two drama activities overlap. Role play is frequently used within simulation in role-simulation, the participant remains the same individual while reacting to a task that has been simulated on the basis of his own personal or professional experience. In language teaching the differences between role play and simulation are not that important. As Livingston (1983) pointed out "the main concern for the language teacher is the opportunities role play and simulation provide.

The function of a simulation is to give participants the opportunity to practice taking on specific roles and improvising within specific situations on the assumption that with practice the participants will play their roles more effectively when situations involving similar skills occur in real life. A simulation activity provides a specific situation within which students can

practice various communication skills like asserting oneself, expressing opinions, convincing others, arguing eliciting opinions, group-problems-solving, analyzing situations and so on (Smith, 1984). Using given details of the relevant aspects of situation, participants have to make decisions or come to some agreement or resolve a problem, thus meeting a challenge posed by the simulated situation.

Behaviour is not controlled in a simulation and the participants bring to the situation their own skills, experience and knowledge. Simulation can be effectively applied to a course we teach at QOU called English for Specific Purposes, because in ESP classes, simulations are particularly useful in practicing and evaluating the use of procedures and language (vocabulary, and structures) specific to particular skills.

A typical simulation used in business English would be that of a board meeting discussing a company crisis, rules would be allotted, an agenda drawn up and the procedures and conventions of a board-meeting adhered to.

Improvisation

Landy (1982) defines improvisation as an unscripted, unrehearsed, spontaneous set of actions in response to minimal directions from a teacher, usually including statements of whom one is, where one is and what one is doing there. The focus is thus on identifying with characters, enacting roles and entering into their inner experience of imagination and fantasy. And according

to McCashin (1990) the focus of improvisation is on helping learners to discover their own resources from which their most imaginative ideas and strongest feelings flow, participants gain freedom as self-discipline and the ability to work with others develops. Hodgson and Richards (1974) in their book improvisation, define the term as "spontaneous response to the unfolding of unexpected situation.

Improvisation is an excellent technique to use in the FL/L2 classroom as it motivates the learners to be active participants in authentic situations thereby reducing their self-consciousness. At the beginning students will be hesitant and shy to participate in the activities, but after a few sessions they will become more enthusiastic and there will be a phenomenal improvement in their confidence level. According to McCashin (1990) dialogue in improvisation is apt to be brief and scanty at first, but with practice words begin to come and the players discover the possibilities of character development when oral language is added.

The implementation of techniques that aim to improve the FL learners' confidence level will invariably lead to improvement in the use of the target language. Improvisation provides learners with opportunities to not only improve their language communication skills, but also to improve their confidence which will ultimately lead to the development of positive concepts.

Before beginning the improvisation session the teacher or

the facilitator has to involve the establishment of a context which serves to inform the participants where they are and what they are expected to portray in their inter-relationships with other characters. Since this is an unscripted, unrehearsed drama exercise, the participants are at liberty to make their own spontaneous contribution as the play unfolds. This entails that they have the freedom to add their own words and develop their characters in the ways which they would like to. Thus one of the advantages of improvisation is the level of freedom that the participants are able to exercise during the execution of the creative session.

Improvisation exercises could involve an entire class of learners or smaller groups. Once the context has been provided the learners will participate spontaneously in the exercise. A whole class improvisation exercise could involve the participants at a market where some are the buyers and others the sellers. The teacher's role is to provide the context and the participants act out their roles spontaneously without any planning.

It is important to keep in mind that much of the content for the improvisation activities could come from the participants' own background and experiences. Spontaneous improvisation gives learners practice in language and communication skills, and they have the opportunity to develop their emotional range by playing roles unfamiliar to them and outside their own experience.

Here are some examples of improvisation, keeping in mind that the

backgrounds of the players will determine the appropriateness of these examples.

- a. You are a group of people at a party having a good time. Decide who you are and what you are doing.
- b. You are a group of teachers on strike for higher pay.
- c. You are a group of parents attending a parent meeting who are complaining about the poor facilities and teaching.

These activities and others can be used by the teacher in his class. Also these activities and their varieties depend on the creativity of the teacher who can think of useful situations where he can generate students' communication skills.

Role of the Teacher

In using Drama in the classroom, the teacher becomes a facilitator rather than an authority or the source of knowledge. Hoetker (1969) warns that "the teacher who too often imposes his authority or who conceives of drama as a kind of inductive method for arriving at preordained correct answers, will certainly vitiate the developmental values of drama and possibly its educational value as well."

Classroom drama is most useful in exploring topics when there are no single, correct answer or interpretation, and when divergence is more interesting than conformity and truth is interpretable. As Douglas Barnes (1968) puts it "Education should strive not for the acceptance of one voice, but for an active exploration of many voices"

Using drama activities and techniques inside the classroom has changed the role of the teacher. The class becomes more of a learner-centered rather than a teacher-centered one. The teacher is merely the facilitator.

CONCLUSION

Drama is an appealing teaching strategy which promotes cooperation, collaboration, self-control, goal-oriented learning as well as emotional intelligenceskills. Drama bridges the gap between course-book dialogues and natural usage, and can also help to bridge a similar gap between the classroom and real life situations by providing insights into how to handle tricky situations. Drama strengthens the bond between thought and expression in language, provides practice of supra-segmental and Para-language, and offers good listening practice. If drama is considered as a teaching method in the sense of being part of the eclectic approach to language teaching, then it can become a main aid in the acquisition of communicative competence. Drama activities facilitate the type of language behaviour that should lead to fluency, and if it is accepted that the learners want to learn a language in order to make themselves understood in the target language, then drama does indeed further this end. One of the greatest advantages to be gained from the use of drama is that students become more confident in their use of English by experiencing the language in operation. Drama in the English language classroom is ultimately indispensable because it gives learners

the chance to use their own personalities. It draws upon students' natural abilities to imitate and express themselves, and if well-handled should arouse interest and imagination. Drama encourages adaptability, fluency, and communicative competence. It puts language into context, and by giving learners experience of success in real-life situations it should arm them with confidence for tackling the world outside the classroom.

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