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Effects of Using Dramatic Texts on Self-Confidence Development: An Experimental Study

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Abstract:
This study aims to find out the effects of using dramatic texts on self-confidence development of the 9th grade students attending speaking courses in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) context. In order to fulfill this aim, two groups -one experimental group and one control group- were randomly chosen from Ağrı Anatolian High School. In quantitative research procedure the both groups (total: 56 participants) were asked to complete self-confidence questionnaires as pre-test at the beginning of three-week period research process. Within this period, two plays were acted out by the experimental group meanwhile the other group continued their traditional speaking courses using the same dramatic texts as reading materials. After two weeks, totally 4 class hours, the same questionnaire was applied to both groups as post-test. The findings reveal that the self-confidence level of experimental group shows significant changes in comparison to control group. Acting drama helps students to raise their self-confidence level.

Keywords: *Dramatic Text, Drama, Self-Confidence, English as a Foreign Language, Speaking*

1. Introduction

Drama, contrary to all other literary genres, is written to be acted out so it makes readers to endeavor to think on it and obliges readers to imagine the play (Efe, 2006; Feng & Shen, 2001). This difficulty of imagination resulted in neglecting the use of drama as a teaching material in the context of English Language Teaching (ELT). However, drama, which can be seen as performance activity, requires active participation of language learners (Collie & Slater, 1984; Showalter, 2003). Supporting to previous sentence, Short (1998) also stated that drama can also be seen as series of communication cases, it is not only a part of phonological, syntactic, lexical arrangements. Varying from the traces of voice, mental representation, situation, language and also the non-verbal elements, there are also variety of features that drama has. Not only it becomes similar to a daily speaking situation but also it produces meaning in relation to pragmatic context (Serpieri, Elam, Publiatti, Kemeny & Rutelli, 1981). Besides, it provides reasons to use language; brings motivation, self-confidence and fun to the classroom or stage;

brings natural issues seen in daily life into the classroom or stage (Miccoli, 2003) and provides authentic situations (Brover, 2002).

Drama animates the facts that are in the imaginary world or happened in reality or supposed to be realized figuratively. What these different figurations have in common is the act of illusion. Dramatic text can be thought as a map of this kind of illusion. Any text that is not figured out is a literature product. It can be read as a story. Fictitious text, epic poem and dramaturgy come together at this point. What makes dramaturgy different from the other literature genres is its suitability to act out, and its being figurative (Efe, 2006).

Dramatic text is generally perceived as a literary genre which is written in order to be performed on the stage. Unlike other genres it is pluri-codified and multidimensional; Serpieri et al. (1981) stated that it is not completed on the written page, its realization is completed through staging. Dramatic texts have traces of a performance practice. There are difficulties for both readers and performers while reading and then imagining the different constraints of acting and performing which were shaped in writing process.

These texts have so exclusive characteristics that their values are elusive, difficult to measure and define. It is hard to measure the growth in self-confidence, dependence or autonomy, social understanding and emotional health. However, a creative drama leader can work on to achieve these abstract aims. No matter how such aims or outcomes are difficult to measure, they are one aspect of children's learning (Stewig, 1972)

McIntyre stated that self-confidence significantly contributes the learner's willingness to communicate in a foreign language (1998). So, it can be inferred that drama helps learners to gain self-confidence which is important in communication as it urges learners to speak loudly, pronounce correctly and act out fearlessly like in real life situations. Self-confidence enables learners to express their feelings, eases communication without the hindrance of such negative inner side emotions as shame, anxiety, dishonesty, deficiency, disgrace and so forth.

Self-confidence, on the other hand, may also be defined as a feeling as well as a result of deepening positive emotions (Şar, Avcu & Işıklar, 2010). The sense of confidence is of importance in the implicit world of an individual, so it has positive or negative relation with the success or fail. As a supporting idea, one can infer from the statements above that as a feeling it affects people negatively or positively. Judgments and evaluations about someone or something are involved in self-confidence then it can influence negatively when the language learner thinks of oneself as deficient and limited in the target language (Park & Lee, 2005). If someone tries to achieve success, it is important to feel comfort and noticing one's own self.

In order to have right pronunciation and good communication ability, self-confidence is one of the key elements. What constructs this key element is the dramatic text that enables learners to participate in a play and use the language accurately and effectively. There are two subcategories of self-confidence as intrinsic self-confidence and extrinsic self-confidence (Akagündüz, 2006; Şar, Avcu & Işıklar, 2010). In one hand, former represents self-knowledge, love of own, setting explicit goals and emotions; on the other hand, the latter represents the attitudes and behaviors towards others. Drama helps language learner to develop both of them. While reading dramatic text, an emotional and intrinsic self-confidence is affected but when drama is acted out, the behaviors towards others can be represented as extrinsic self-confidence.

There is another definition stated by Flippin and Paccagnella (2012) supporting the idea of that there is a close relationship between self-confidence and the inner side of an individual. So, they defined it as the beliefs which are held in someone's own ability and confidence. Otacıoğlu (2008) drew attention another perspective by defining it as "Self-confidence is

answering the question; how are the others seeing me?"(p. 916). No matter how this definition represents the opposite of the extrinsic self-confidence, in fact it has both definitions of intrinsic and extrinsic self-confidence. In the process of the thinking intrinsic aspect is felt and while thinking about the ideas of others, extrinsic dimension can be seen.

Studies show that there is a close and positive correlation between self-confidence and success (Beilock & Gray, 2007; Covington, 1984; Laird, 2005; Otacıoğlu, 2008; Owens, 2001; Woodman and Hardy, 2001; Woodman, Akehurst, Hardy and Beattie, 2010). It is seen in these studies as a necessity for both learning and teaching environment and it reduces the negative hindrance of social view and the feel of invaluable. These studies reflect how performance even in some different sports is effected by self-confidence and they try to find the answer if there is a positive correlation between the self-confidence and success. Although the vast majority of the previous findings reports positive relation, Woodman et. al.(2010) stated that it is not always positive or linear. They also state that "most research on self-confidence and performance have been conducted at the between people level, which has likely limited our understanding of the self-confidence and performance relationship." (p. 468).

Considering the relevant literature reviewed above it can be said that there is a close relationship between drama, self-confidence and success. In this experimental study, in order to see the effects of using dramatic texts on self-confidence levels of the participants the quarries below are tried to be answered.

1. What is the general self-confidence level of control group before and after the dramatic texts implementation?

2. What is the general self-confidence level of experimental group before and after the dramatic texts implementation?

3. Is there a difference between control and experimental groups' general, intrinsic and extrinsic self-confidence levels before and after the dramatic texts implementation?

2. Methodology

In this study, 28 students took part in this implementation as experimental group. For the implementation process, Four Seasons by Arnold Wesker was acted out by 14 pairs; and for the second implementation, Bloody Marry by Greg Vovos was acted out by 4 groups which were consisted of 7 students. The same dramatic texts were just read –not acted out- by the control group. For this study, only two hours per week were dedicated to complete the tasks within the two weeks successively. Participants, instruments, research design and research procedure are the other titles of this chapter which are expanded as follows.

Participants

The participants in this study are totally 56 students who are attending speaking lessons in 9th grade at Ağrı Anatolian High School. Two classes which are the comprised of an experimental group and a control group are the participants of this study.

There are five 9th grade classes at that high school, each has nearly 30 students, and they were applied placement test at the beginning of the first semester. It was seen that nearly all the students were the same level, A1-Elementary. So, all the students were placed their classes randomly. The experimental and control group also were randomly selected considering their levels and their demographic information.

Table 1. Participants' features

	Experimental Group	Control Group	Total
Male	17	17	34
Female	11	11	22
N	28	28	56

Instruments

In order to collect quantitative data, a self-confidence questionnaire (SCQ) which was developed by Akın (2007) was used. The SCQ was also used in some studies (Gürler, 2013; Gürler, 2015; Sarıçam & Güven, 2012; Sarıçam, Akın, & Çardak, 2013; Uçar & Duy, 2013). SCQ is a five point-likert scale having 33 items and is used to determine self-confidence level of the participants. The highest point that could be got from this scale is 165, and the lowest point is 33. Without having any negative items the highest point shows the high level of self-confidence. Of the 33 items, 17 items are related to intrinsic self-confidence, and 16 items are related to extrinsic self-confidence. According to Akın (2007) internal consistency coefficient for the whole questionnaire is .83 and the Cronbach alpha is .94.

For acting out, two small pieces of dramatic texts from the plays named as "Four Seasons" by Arnold Wesker and "Bloody Marry" by Greg Vovos were used. These texts were given a week before the act out in order to study and understand their meanings. The selected dramatic text (Four Seasons) had dialogues that is suitable for pairs. For encouraging and developing the students' self- confidence two masks were prepared. The texts they are expected to say were written behind the masks in case of forgetting. The second text (Bloody Marry) were suitable for seven players and four groups were determined. This time no masks were used but nearly all the students were willing to take part in this play. Such supporting materials as hat, walking stick, traffic signs, chairs and writing pads were used in the second play. For both plays the classroom was designed in "U shape" that enables students to act out plays.

Research Procedure

There are three stages of the study within the whole process. First, the data collection is the first part of process to see the general, intrinsic and extrinsic self-confidence levels of both control and experimental group before and after the implementation of dramatic texts. Second, the dramatic text implementation that took two weeks period. The last stage of the study is the data analysis part in which Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) was used.

Data Collection

After getting the implementation permission from National Education Directorate, this study was conducted within three weeks period in the spring semester to 9th grade students. Two classes were chosen randomly as control and experimental groups. In first week, the self-confidence questionnaire were applied both groups as pre-test to see the first level of their self-confidence. Voluntarily, both groups were also told about the research process and dramatic texts

then asked to fill the questionnaire. After the implementation of dramatic texts which took two weeks the same questionnaire was applied as post-test.

Implementation Process

Two dramatic texts named as "Four Seasons" by Arnold Wesker and "Bloody Marry" by Greg Vovos were used in the implementation process of the study. A suitable fragment for participants from Four Seasons and Bloody Marry plays were extracted and prepared as a worksheet for both control and experimental groups.

For the first act, Four Seasons, the researcher prepared two masks suitable for the dialogues extracted from the play and the experimental group was asked to act out the dramatic text in pairs. The text was written behind the masks as a reminder. All the participants took part in the act out process of the play voluntarily. The control group was also asked to read the text as reading passage and informed to understand the meaning of the unknown words or sentences as classic reading passage individually.

For the second act, Bloody Marry, supporting materials as hat, walking stick, traffic signs, chairs and writing pads were prepared by the researcher and used in the play. There are also written notes on those materials to remind the forgotten texts. These notes encouraged the participants to take part in the play. The control group was again asked to read the dramatic text as a reading passage individually.

The classroom was designed as U-shape in order to act out the both plays. U-shape stage which is also called as thrust stage or an arena type stage was expressed to be mostly effective in previous study (Arıkan, 2014).

Data Analysis

The quantitative data obtained from self-confidence questionnaire were collected before and after the dramatic text implementation as pre-test and post-test. The SPSS program was used to analyze the qualitative data. In general, paired samples t-test is used in order to compare the means of a variable in two different situations. These two situations include before and after the implementation process. So, in this study with the help of SPSS program, paired samples t-test was used to determine if there is a statistically significant change in self-confidence levels of both control and experimental groups before and after the implementation of dramatic texts.

The evaluation criteria of the results were determined on a five point likert scale as: (1) Never, (2) Seldom, (3) Sometimes, (4) Very often, (5) Always. Totally 165 points (highest point) from 33 items reveals highest self-confidence level and 33 points show the lowest level of self-confidence level.

3. Results and Discussion

General Self-confidence Level of Control Group before and after the Dramatic Texts Implementation

The paired samples t-test results that show if there is a statistically significant change between pre-test and post-test results of the control group that continued their speaking courses in the traditional way are presented in table 2. below.

Table 2. General Self-Confidence Level, Paired Samples t-Test Results of Control Group (CG)

Pair 1	*N*	*Mean*	*Standard deviation*	*t*	*p*
CG Pre-test	*28*	*4,03*	*,527*	*,57*	*,57*
CG Post-test	*28*	*3,96*	*,442*		

p < ,05

As it can be seen clearly from the table above the control group's which continued their speaking lessons in their traditional way self confidence levels diminish from 4,03 to 3,96; but, there is not a statistically significant change in their self-confidence levels (t = ,57; p > , 05). The difference between the pre-test and post-test results could be thought to be resulted from the students moods in the different times of their filling the self-confidence questionnaire. Moreover, the fall of self-confidence levels also reflect that reading the text itself was not enjoying for the participants and it also bored them, affected negatively according to the means of their general self-confidence levels.

General Self-confidence Level of Experimental Group before and after the Dramatic Texts Implementation

In this part, detailed information about Experimental Group's (EG) general self-confidence levels, findings and interpretations are given. The table below (Table 3.) helps to see the changes observed in participants' general self-confidence level.

Table 3. General Self-Confidence Levels, Paired Samples t-Test Results of Experimental Group (EG)

Pair 1	N	Mean	Standard deviation	t	p
EG Pre-test	*28*	*3,62*	*,540*	*3,07*	*,005*
EG Post-test	*28*	*4,06*	*,642*		

p <, 05

It is clearly seen that EG's general self-confidence level accelerated after the implementations. This difference is thought to be resulted from the EG's being afraid of the usage, performing, pronouncing and acting out the plays. At first, the implementations of the plays were thought to be hard or even impossible by the participants. With the help of masks and reminder of the plays stick back to the masks seemed to encourage students to show themselves and prove their abilities in front of the crowd. It is seen that there is a statistically significant difference between the pre-test and post-test results of the self-confidence level questionnaires (p

<, 05). The general self-confidence levels of the EG show a positive and statistically significant change after implementing the plays.

Many studies state that there is a close and positive correlation between self-confidence and success (Beilock & Gray, 2007; Covington, 1984; Laird, 2005; Otacıoğlu, 2008; Owens, 2001; Woodman & Hardy, 2001; Woodman, Akehurst, Hardy and Beattie, 2010). Similar to these findings, this study shows that performance helps to raise self-confidence and self-confidence provides individuals to reach success.

Comparison of Control and Experimental Groups' General, Intrinsic and Extrinsic Self-confidence Levels before and after the Dramatic Texts Implementation

An overall evaluation on and a comparison between the control group and experimental group, in terms of their general self-confidence (GSC), extrinsic self-confidence (ESC), and intrinsic self-confidence (ISC) levels are presented in this section. Table 4 gives chance to compare two groups easily and see the change for both groups.

Table 4. The levels of GSC, ESC and ISC of both groups

	N	*Control Group Means*	*Experimental Group Means*
Pre-test	*28*		
GSC		*4,03*	*3,62*
ISC		*4,09*	*3,68*
ESC		*4,22*	*3,56*
Post-test	*28*		
GSC		*3,96*	*4,06*
ISC		*3,97*	*4,09*
ESC		*3,95*	*4,04*

The control group has higher scores than the experimental group in the pre-test according to the table above. Higher values were thought to be resulted from the control group's feeling so relaxed of their not being included in the implementation process. The low values of the experimental group were also thought to be resulted from the students' anxiety about the implementation of the play, taking individual responsibilities on stage. So, this process was completed by declining values of control group and inclining values of the experimental group. It can also be said that the experimental group had chance to answer this question "How are the others seeing me?" (Otacıoğlu 2008, p. 916).

4. Conclusion

Drama providing learners a fragment of a real world has a very important feature to develop self-confidence which represents self-knowledge, love of own, setting explicit goals and emotions and the attitudes and behaviors towards others (Şar, Avcu & Işıklar, 2010). Contrary to the language education given in education system that sees language as a part of phonological, syntactic, lexical arrangements, Short (1998) also stated that drama should be seen as series of communication cases beyond its having linguistic features. Such kind of characteristics of drama opens a door to effective and comprehensive communication which is the forefront aim of language teaching.

In this study, it is also observed that there is a very close relationship between self-confidence and success or performance. This situation can be thought from two aspects; one is that self-confidence cause individual to reach success or successful performance (Beilock & Gray, 2007; Covington, 1984; Laird, 2005; Owens, 2001; Woodman & Hardy, 2001; Woodman, Akehurst, Hardy & Beattie, 2010); the other is that performance cause individual to raise self-confidence (Collie & Slater, 1984; Gürler, 2013; Showalter, 2003). Both cases can be thought to be true as both self-confidence and performance are the triggered factors of each other.

Longer time to complete the application process, much more participants for such studies and different dramatic texts can be used for further studies. These kind of experimental studies are known for their providing generalization so according to the findings, the use of dramatic texts and performing them on the stage in front of the crowd encourages learners to use target language effectively. Materials related to the plays are also very helpful to make participants feel comfort and gain enough self-confidence to speak loudly, pronounce correctly and perform a play. Using dramatic texts and performing at least one play in one semester will provide learners to feel self-confident enough to speak in the target language which is one of the initial aims of all language lessons or courses.

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