



A STUDY ON EFFECTIVENESS OF THEATER BASED TEACHING ON STUDENT'S INTEREST IN LEARNING AT THE HIGH SCHOOL LEVEL

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Abstract:

This study investigated the effects of drama and theatre as a teaching strategy on the achievement of students in English language in Govt. School, Davangere City. One research question guided the study. 100 students were used as subjects for the study from three different schools. The students in each school were divided into two groups experimental group and control group. Both groups were taught a topic together using literature method. They were then subjected to a pre-test. In the next two lessons, Experimental group was taught a topic through the drama and theatre method, while Control group remained in the classroom and was taught the same topic using a traditional method. A uniform post-test was administered to both group on Interest for learning. The result of the pre-test was compared with that of the post-test. The comparison formed the basis for the analysis, decision and conclusion in this work. The findings revealed that the group that was taught with the drama and theatre method learning interest was better than those taught using the traditional method. Based on this finding, the paper recommends, among others, that all would-be-teachers should be trained in the skills of using drama and theatre as a teaching method.

KEY WORDS: Drama and theatre, students' Interest, English language teaching

1. Introduction:

Researchers have long recognized that teaching technique is at the heart of many of the pervasive problems Nigeria face in teaching young children English Language. The result is that many secondary school students are unable to learn the skills needed to enable them perform well in English language. This has adverse effect on the quality of the English Language spoken in India. This low level of performance could, probably, be due to poor teaching method. The method presently in use by most teachers of English language is mainly the lecture method. Probably, lack of innovative methods that are problem-solving oriented and interactive such as drama and theatre could be the cause of poor performance of students in English. This is because the traditional method predominantly in use seems to make students passive participants and not having interest in the teaching and learning processes. The interaction with others afforded by drama and theatre could enable learners to have more influence on the learning processes and the activities become responsive to their needs.

2. Concept of Drama and Theatre:

Drama has a Greek origin, “drain” which means, “to do.” Aristotle, sees drama as “mimes is,” meaning “imitation of an action.’ Atabo and Abuh (2010) in Abrams (1981) see drama as a prelude to theatre. According to Abrams (1981), dramas is the literary form designed for the theatre in which actors take the roles of characters, perform the intended actions and utter the written dialogues. One can say, therefore, that drama is a composition that tells an imaginative story of human action in dialogues intended to be presented on the stages for the entertainment of an audience.

3. The notion of classroom drama and theatre:

The theatre and drama method of teaching has a long history. Its use in the teaching of foreign languages can be traced to the 19th century (Schewe 2007). In the classroom setting, drama and theatre is viewed as teaching method. In this view, the phrase is taken as an entity and thus it attracts singular verbs and pronouns. However, it is worth nothing that drama and theatre as a teaching method is different from conventional drama and theatre. The pedagogical sense is characterized by brevity of presentation, slim volume (mostly two or three page length) with the aim to teach a definite curricular topic. These features contrast on each point with those of conventional drama and theatre. Morgan and Soxton (1994) aver that in classroom drama, it is the educational focus; that is, what is to be taught; and the dramatic focus is, how will the students achieve an understanding of the educational focus? These are the basic consideration of drama and theatre as a teaching strategy.

But in spite of the benefits that drama and theatre could provide for the improvement of language learning, there seems to be no meaningful application of these methods in English language instructions in most School classrooms. Thus, students’ performances in English language have been poor due to not having interest in learning. There is need to seek ways of making the teaching of English more effective in order to enhance students’ performance. This paper guesses that drama and theatre method might produce a better impact on the Interest of students than traditional method of teaching. This study, therefore, seeks to find out the effects of drama and theatre on secondary school students’ Interest in learning English language. To guide the study, one research question and one null-hypothesis were formulated. These are:

4. Research question:

Will students interest is better in a language lesson when drama and theatre method is used than when exposed to a traditional method?

5. Hypothesis:

There is no significant difference in the mean Interest score of students taught English with drama and theatre and those taught with the traditional method.

6. Method:

This study employed the quasi-experimental design. The quasi-experimental design is adopted for the study because it is a non-randomized experimental and control group pre-test, post-test study.

The simple random sampling technique was used to sample 100 secondary school students each from three schools in Government School in Davangere City, making a total of 100 students which constitute the sample for the study. In each school, the class teacher was requested to produce the best 100 students in basic secondary two. The set of 100 students was divided into group Experimental and Control Group of 50 students each. In sharing the students up into Experimental and Control Group.

A researcher-made Language Learning Interest Test (LLIT) was used to generate data for the study. The test contained 10 items on guided composition in which the students where requested to follow clear instructions. To ensure content validity of the test instrument, the researchers set both the pre-and the post-test questions from CBSC Curriculum from the relevant unit.

Two topics were selected: informal letter writing and narrative writing. The lesson plans prepared by the researchers. The lesson plans on drama and theatre were used to teach the experimental group in each school while the lesson plans written on the traditional method were used to teach the control group. The treatment session lasted for six weeks. After treatment, the same test was re-administered as post-test on the two groups – treatment and control. The data were analyzed based on the research question and hypothesis. The research question was answered using mean, standard deviation and t-test. It was test at 0.05 level of significance.

7. Results:

Research Question Will there be a significant difference between the mean Interest in learning an English language test of students who are exposed to drama and theatre method and that of students not exposed to it? Tables below are analysis of both the pre-test and the post-test scores of students in order to provide an answer to the research question.

a. Hypothesis H₀:

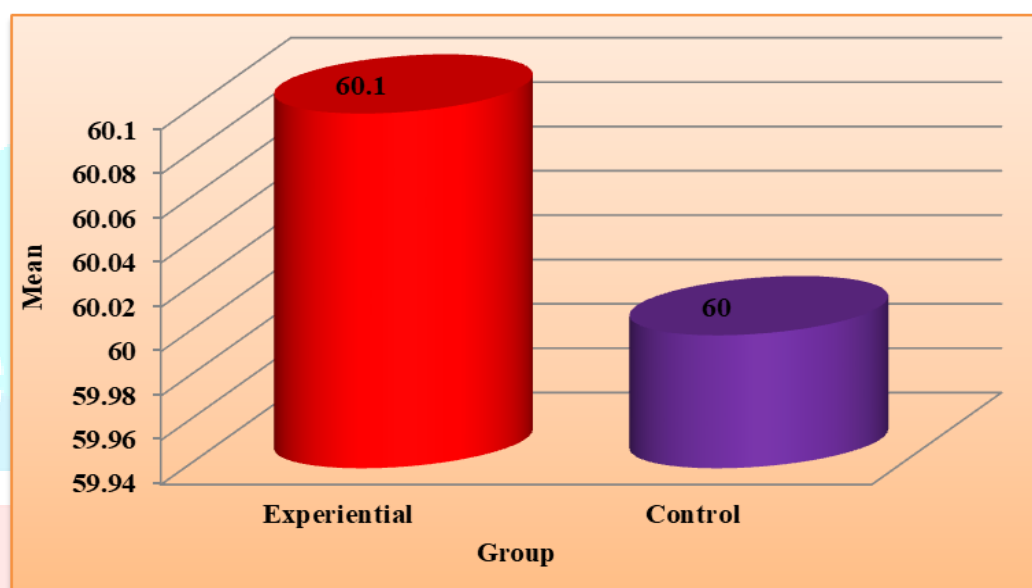
There will be no significant difference between the mean Interest learning in an English language test of students who are exposed to the drama and theatre method and those students not exposed to it.

The data collection through the pre-test administered to the student before teaching them how to write narrative essays are presented below. t-test is then used to establish the directional bearing of the above result.

Table - 1: T-Test of the Interest by Group Experimental Group and Control Group Pre-Test

Group	N	Mean	S.D.	T-value	Significance
Experiential	50	60.1	12.34	0.863	No significance
Control	50	60.0	15.23		

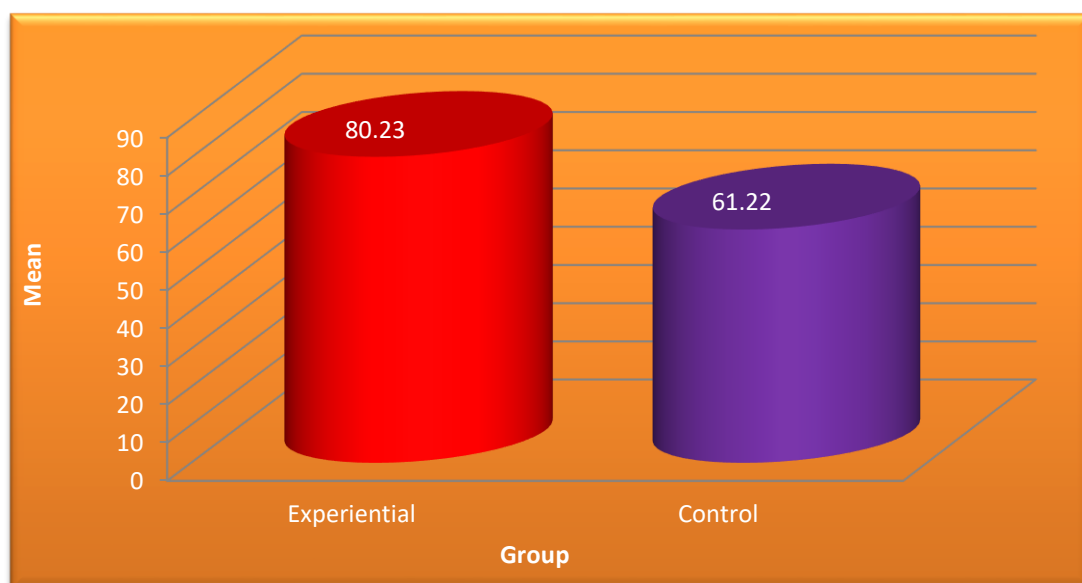
The t-test above indicates calculated t of 0.863; it is less than critical t of 2.36 (df 98, 0.01). Null hypothesis is than accepted. There will be no significant difference between the mean Interest value of the two groups, in an English language test of students who are exposed to the traditional method of teaching.

Graph- 1: Comparison of Scores of the Interest by Group Experimental Group and Control Group Pre-Test**Table 2: t-test of the performance by group A & B in the post-test**

Group	N	Mean	S.D.	t-value	Significance
Experiential	50	80.23	11.25	12.34	Significance at 0.01 and 0.05 level
Control	50	61.22	16.72		

The t-test above indicates calculated t of 12.34; it is more than critical t of 2.36 (df 98, 0.01). Null hypothesis is than accepted. There will be significant difference between the mean Interest value of the two groups, in an English language test of students who are exposed to the traditional method of teaching.

Graph- 2: Comparison of Scores of the Interest by Group Experimental Group and Control Group Post-Test



8. Discussion:

To answer the research question using the tests administered to the two groups of students (Experiential and Control), it is manifest that students exposed to the drama and theatre method the interest for learning significantly better than those exposed to the traditional method. In the course of using the drama and theatre method, the students discovered by themselves the concepts and procedures they were being taught. By this self-discovery and active participation, the students remembered the subject matter better and showing interest. This agrees with Marino and Gibber (2013) when they assert that, an advantage (which as well becomes an aim) of the drama and theatre method is that interest is enhanced and concepts are remembered longer as a result of participation. As a result, they performed better in the test.

From the findings of this study, the necessity becomes clear for schools to intensify efforts in employing the drama and theatre method of presenting English language lessons. However, a good preparation is needed in terms of writing the play script (into which the lesson is built) carefully. Also rehearsals, as well as a good summarizing exercise after the dramatization, will go a long way in enhancing both the manifest (learning) and the latent (interest) aims of this method.

It is noted, however, that the drama and theatre method is exacting when used. It places enormous tasks on the teacher and the student alike in the scrip as the student who double as actors and audience would already have mastered the concepts and procedures being taught ever before the final play production. In this way, over-learning takes place and remembrance is greatly enhanced.

In testing the hypothesis, it was discovered that there was a significant deference between the mean achievement in an English language test of students exposed to the drama and theatre method and that of those who were exposed to the traditional method. A t-test at 0.05 level of significance was used to test the hypothesis. In the pre-test, the calculated value which was derived was 0.863. This means that the hypothesis was upheld. But in the post-test, the calculated value was 12.34 which was greater than the level of significance. This then means that there was significant difference in the rate of learning interest between students taught with traditional method and students that participated in drama and theatre instructions.

9. Conclusion:

From the foregoing discussion, one can conclude that students exposed to drama and theatre method achieved significantly higher than those not exposed to it. It implies therefore that this method of teaching English language is more effective and so worthwhile. The drama and theatre method is very suitable and therefore important to the teaching of English language because, apart from the topic or subject matter that is built into the play to be learnt, the method is a drill on other language skills like inducing imagination, giving practice in speaking and writing, as well as composure to public speaking. Seen in this light drama and theatre method can be taken as the proverbial one stone that kills many birds as other language skills that are not targeted in the play presentation are also acquired.

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