RESEARCH ARTICLE

STRENGTHENING EFL STUDENTS' VOCABULARY THROUGH LEARNING DRAMA

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ABSTRACT

The current study aims at strengthening EFL students' vocabulary through learning drama. Twenty one Saudi students, who learn the course "16th Century Drama" in the second term (1435/1436 AH) in Faculty of Science and Arts in AlMandaqat ALBaha University, are considered to be the samples of this study. Pre-test and post-test were administered to the students to measure their vocabulary improvement. The researchers used SPSS to analyze the data. The findings of this study recommended that learning drama effectively helps in widening students' vocabulary.

Keywords: creative drama, vocabulary, language teaching, role play, assessment

1. INTRODUCTION

Learners are supposed to acquire and learn vocabulary through involvement, understanding and experience. Such experimental knowledge is one of the best ways of educational drama. It is a learning planed chance to exercise the language in an operation which was not present in a traditional language classroom. This process involves using the language to acquire and learn it, which is the central objective of communicative language teaching (Howat, 1984, P.297).Generally, drama has two main purposes, on the one hand to edify, enlighten and educate and on the other, to entertain or amuse. Drama gives the learner an opportunity to take personal trip through dynamic experimental learning. It can create entertainment, pleasure and motivation and provides various chances for the use of language in a context and is also useful in teaching and learning cross-curricular content, etc. (Phillips, 2003; Hillyard, 2010).

2. Literature review

2.1 What is Drama?

The word drama means to do or act, and its origin is Greek. It is derived from the Greek verb '*dram'*, which refers to action. Drama is a mode of expression which relies mostly on verbal articulation and gesticulation of the actors involved. It is a story to be presented through performance. Drama was used in ancient times as the most suitable means to tell a tale, represent a situation, or to configure a poetic idea.

As a literary form, drama has engaged the attention of literary critics, performers, and those concerned with dramaturgy. It is one of the most popular, peculiar, and enthralling of the literary forms. Drama underlines the most tragic and the most comic moments of our lives. It represents life in all its glory and misery. Drama may have a variety of aims such as social, political and religious. It may appeal to a variety of people for a variety of reasons.

The early drama converted the popular ancient festivals and the traditional rituals of dance and song into plays. With the passage of time, drama acquired roots. There were attempts by specific secular entertainers in the domain of performance and action. Some secular playwrights tried to solicit the favour of the audience, watchers and spectators by staging plays in the vernacular. Therefore, drama represents a perpetual conflict between the good and the evil and it directs and guides its audience to the good against the evil.

Not only that, there are a number of ways in which drama can be defined:

1. It could be seen as a blanket term covering "a wide range of oral activities that have an element of creativity present" (Hubbard et al 1986: 317).

2. Susan Holden takes drama to mean any kind of activity where learners are asked either to portray themselves or to portray someone else in an imaginary situation.

3. Holden (1981) defines drama to mean any practical and educational activity which stimulates the use of language in everyday life and involves some amount of imaginary situation.

4. Drama is a discrete skill in itself (acting, theatre, refined skill), and therefore it is offered as a 'subject' in secondary school. However Drama is also a tool which is flexible, versatile and applicable among all areas of the curriculumthrough its application as a tool in the primary classroom.

5. The SACSA Framework defines Drama as:'the enactment of real and imagined events through role-play, play making and performances, enabling individuals and groups to explore, shape and represent ideas, feelings and their consequences in symbolic or dramatic form.'

Drama contributesto the development of:

- the use of imagination
- powers of creative self-expression
- decision making and problem solving skills
- understanding of self and the world
- Self-confidence, a sense of worth and respect and consideration for others.

2.2. Creative Drama

According to the Children's Theatre Association of America creative drama is defined as improvisational, non-exhibitional, process-centred forms of drama in which participants are guided by a leader to image, reflect and enact upon human experience (Davis and Behm, 1978).

The literature relative to drama supports the use of creative drama as the preferred term for dramatic experiences that are designed for development of participants rather than for preparing participants for performance before an audience (Freeman, Sullivan and Fulton, 2003).

Some terminologies of drama that used for educational purposes include: Creative drama (Ward, 1930), *developmental drama* (Cook, 1917), *educational drama* (Way, 1967), *process drama* (O'Neill, 1995), and *informal drama* (Wagner, 1998).

In addition, creative drama is always improvised (Ward, 1952) because it is created on the spot, and it is not written. The students may act a story that they have read by using their own words, or a dialogue,

whether the content is taken from a well-known story or is an original plot (*Procedial of Social and Behavioral Sciences 2 (2010) 439–443).*

The learner is both speaker and hearer, play a role while interacting with others in role. What is most important is that learners are practically engaged in *creating drama.* A leader guides leaners to imagine, reflect, and enact on issues presented in the story or situation (Siks,1958).

2.2.1 Advantage of using creative drama in the classroom

One of the main concerns in foreign language education is to find ways of creating for the students a more natural language learning environment. The classroom is not the best place to get to controls with a foreign language. It is claimed that it is almost impossible to do a meaningful teaching without employing creative drama.

According to Demircio (2010) Creative drama is a valuable addition to classroom instruction. It gives a context for meaningful language production and listening, forcing the learners to use their language resources and, thus, enhancing their linguistic abilities. Equally important, the affective filter is lowered: increases in self-esteem, self-confidence, spontaneity, reducing embarrassments, feelings of alienation and sensitivity to rejection. Drama also provides situations for reading and writing. It is very useful in teaching literary texts and it helps in analyzing plot, characters and style. It involves students more positively and actively in the text by using the techniques of drama to teach English language. Some advantages of using drama in language learning/teaching are developing students' performance in learning, providing better 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 fluently (MOGHADDAS, B & GHAFARINIAE, R: 2012).

2.2.3 Drama and vocabulary learning in the classroom

Duffelmeyer (1979) argued that the way words are learned is very important in that it affects how well they are really understood. It is often the case that the knowledge gained by the learner is only the apparent meaning of the word and the important meaning of the word is missing. An effective classroom method is creative drama, which provides psychological meaning as well as logical meaning. Motivation for vocabulary learning is simply to make working with words enjoyable.

According to Thornbury (2002) creating a classroom atmosphere in which words are fun and playing with words is encouraged can be a powerful answer to the very natural fear of making mistakes that can so easily hinder learning.

Sam concludes that "Drama helps to extend, retain and reinforce vocabulary and sentence structure through role play and communication games" (Sam, 1990; P.86).Maley and Duff strongly note that drama opens personal creativity and energy and this is wonderful aim of learning. In fact drama encourages student sensitivity and imagination and thus makes learning more realistic and meaningful (Femandez and coil, 1986; Sam, 1990).

2.3 Previous studies

In their study, MOGHADDAS, B & GHAFARINIAE, R (2012) investigate teaching drama, its advantages to language teaching and learning, and how to utilize drama in English classrooms. Their paper concludes with some diverse activities for contributing English learners in India. The study concluded that the application of drama in English language classrooms helps in enhancing language retention and greatly assisted language development.

Demircioglu(2010) in his paper, he investigates teaching English vocabulary learning through drama. The main aim of the study is to determine whether drama has an extended impact on young learners' vocabulary teaching. It also covers the results of drama implementation. Thus, the results of this paper show that teaching vocabulary to young learners through drama is more effective than traditional vocabulary teaching methods.

3. Methodology

3.1 Tools of Data Collection

3.1.1 Pretest.

3.1.2 Posttest

3.2*Population*

The population of this study from which subjects were drawn are 21 Saudi EFL students who learn the course 16th Century Drama as a main subject in Faculty of Science and Arts in AlMandaq, Al Baha university.

3.3 Methodology

1. The researchers use content analysis and SPSS program to analyze the data collected by the pretest and posttest.

2. The general research approach was analytical and experimental.

4. Data Analysis and discussion:

4.1 Analysis of the pre-test

Table 1: Result of question 1

	Pretest result	
S1	√ 9	X 1
S2	√ 4	X 6
S3	√ 2	X 8
S4	√ 7	X 3
S5	√ 4	X 6
S6	√ 9	X 1
S7	√ 8	X 2
S8	√ 5	X 5
S9	√ 8	X 2
S10	√ 5	X 5
S11	√ 5	X 5
S12	√ 4	X 6
S13	√ 5	X 5
S14	√ 6	X 4
S15	√ 4	X 6
S16	√ 5	X 5
S17	√ 9	X 1
S18	√ 9	X 1
S19	√ 6	X 4
S20	√ 6	X 4
S21	√ 7	X 3

Table 2: Result of question 2

	Pretest result	
S1	√ 5	X 0
S2	√ 3	X 2
S3	√ 0	X 5
S4	√ 3	X 2
S5	√ 1	X 4
S6	√ 5	X 0
S7	√ 5	X 0
S8	√ 0	X 5
S9	√ 3	X 2
S10	√ 1	X 4
S11	√ 1	X 4

S12	√	5	X	0
S13	√	2	X	3
S14	√	5	X	0
S15	√	0	X	5
S16	√	3	X	2
S17	√	0	X	5
S18	√	5	X	0
S19	√	1	X	4
S20	√	0	X	5
S21	√	5	X	0

Table 3: Result of question 3

	Pretest result			
S1	√	4	X	1
S2	√	1	X	4
S3	√	1	X	4
S4	√	4	X	1
S5	√	0	X	5
S6	√	3	X	2
S7	√	4	X	1
S8	√	3	X	2
S9	√	5	X	0
S10	√	0	X	5
S11	√	3	X	2
S12	√	4	X	1
S13	√	2	X	3
S14	√	0	X	5
S15	√	3	X	2
S16	√	3	X	2
S17	√	2	X	3
S18	√	0	X	5
S19	√	3	X	2
S20	√	2	X	3
S21	√	3	X	2

4.2 Analysis of the Posttest

Table 4: Result of question 1

	Posttest result			
S1	√	10	X	0
S2	√	6	X	4
S3	√	2	X	8
S4	√	7	X	3
S5	√	3	X	7
S6	√	9	X	1
S7	√	10	X	0
S8	√	2	X	8
S9	√	10	X	0
S10	√	9	X	1
S11	√	9	X	1

S12	√ 7	X 3
S13	√ 9	X 1
S14	√ 10	X 0
S15	√ 2	X 8
S16	√ 9	X 1
S17	√ 7	X 3
S18	√ 10	X 0
S19	√ 1	X 9
S20	√ 8	X 2
S21	√ 5	X 5

Analysis:

In assessing Tables (1) and (4) above, we come to figure out the following. The results of Pretest and the Posttest for S1, S2, S7, S9, S10, S11, S12, S13, S14, S16, and S18, are positive variation which means that there is progress between the Pretest and the Posttest whereas (S3) has the same result in the Pretest and the Posttest. S4 and S6 are as the same as S3 where there is no progress between the Pretest and Posttest. There is regress with the result of seven students. They are S5, S8, S15, S17, S19, S20, and S21 because the answer in the Pretest is better than the Posttest.

Table 5: Result of question 2

	Posttest result	
S1	√ 3	X 2
S2	√ 3	X 2
S3	√ 3	X 2
S4	√ 3	X 2
S5	√ 3	X 2
S6	√ 3	X 2
S7	√ 5	X 0
S8	√ 1	X 4
S9	√ 3	X 2
S10	√ 3	X 2
S11	√ 5	X 0
S12	√ 5	X 0
S13	√ 3	X 2
S14	√ 5	X 0
S15	√ 3	X 2
S16	√ 3	X 2
S17	√ 5	X 0
S18	√ 5	X 0
S19	√ 1	X 4
S20	√ 5	X 0
S21	√ 3	X 2

Analysis:

In the second question, see Tables (2) and (5) which contains five sub-questions, we, after comparing the results of the Pretest and the Posttest, come out with the following analysis. There is regress in the result of the Posttest for the following students: S1, S6, and S21. There is no change between the results of Pretest exam and the Posttest of nine students. They are S2, S4, S7, S9, S12, S14, S16, S18 and S19 with the exception that students S7, S12, S14 and S18 obtained the highest marks, 5 out of 5 in the Pretest and 10 marks out of 5

questions in the Posttest. The progress as a positive variation is shown in the results took place for nine students. They are S3, S5, S8, S10, S11, S13, S15, S17 and S20.

Table 6: Result of question 3

	Posttest result		
S1	√	5	X 0
S2	√	3	X 2
S3	√	3	X 2
S4	√	4	X 1
S5	√	4	X 1
S6	√	3	X 2
S7	√	4	X 1
S8	√	3	X 2
S9	√	5	X 0
S10	√	2	X 3
S11	√	4	X 1
S12	√	4	X 1
S13	√	4	X 1
S14	√	4	X 1
S15	√	4	X 1
S16	√	4	X 1
S17	√	1	X 4
S18	√	4	X 1
S19	√	4	X 1
S20	√	4	X 1
S21	√	3	X 2

Analysis:

In the analysis of the third main question that comprises five sub-questions, look at Tables (3) and (6) the variation charted as follows. We find that there are 13 students have positive progress in their results and variation between the Pretest and the equivalent Posttest. The census above shows those who get progress as S1, S2, S3, S5, S10, S11, S13, S14, S15, S16, S18, S19 and S20. Thirteen students obtained positive progress out of 21 students and seven have the same result the final as the same as the Pretest. They are S4, S6, S7, S8, S9, S12 and S21. Only one student, S17, has regress between the Posttest and the Pretest. It is worth mentioning that one student only, S9, gets full result in both the Pretest and Posttest.

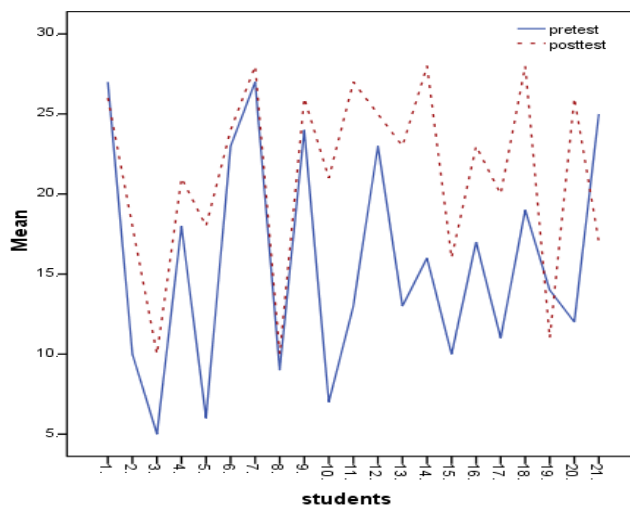*4.3 Analysis of pre-test and posttest:*

Figure 1

Findings in figure (1) show the data are lined up in perfect parallel lines, which suggest that some correspondence arises between the two data. One possibility to describe these results is that students have reasonably higher scores in the post test when they study vocabulary through drama program.

Table 7: Correlations

		pretest	Posttest
Pretest	Pearson Correlation		.566[**]
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.007

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Results in Table 7 shows that there is a statistically significant difference between the two data where the correlation is (r= .566 p.05). Discussion of this data will take place in the discussion section.

4. Discussion and Findings

The findings of the pre-test (fig. 1) show that the students' performance is weak in learning before exposing to Appreciating Drama course.

The analysis of the data, in Table 7 above, shows that there is a statistically significant difference between the results of pre-test and post-test where the correlation is (r= .566 p.05). This means that the performance of the students is developed after exposing to Appreciating Drama course.

These results support the findings of previous studies. The findings agree with the findings of effectiveness of teaching through drama on English as a foreign language

5. Conclusions

The application of drama in English language classrooms in Al Baha University provided to enhance vocabulary learning and greatly assisted language development. Drama techniques can be easily employed to imitate neighborhood organizations that reflect the fullest possible range of linguistic competence (Headthon, 1993; Elgar, 2002).

In addition, the findings of this study are in line with the findings of the similar studies and they strongly support them.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

Many recommendations have been made by the researchers

1.Intensive drama courses should be taught to strengthen students' vocabulary.

2. New techniques should be generated by instructors to teach drama.

3. Teachers should motivate students to enhance their vocabulary learning.

4. Other studies should be done in the same field in female colleges.

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Appendices

Pre-test and post test

Q 1.Choose the correct alternative and write it in the blank.

- Drama was brought into existence by the priests and ………………………of the ancient world.
  a) dramatists
  b) critics
  c) poets
  d) monks

- Drama has served a wide variety of …………………….……at different times and in different places.
  a) functions
  b) manners
  c) dramatists
  d) educations

- A ……………………………….…… is dominated by a serious tone, concerns kings and princes, deals with profound issues.
  a) comedy
  b) farce
  c) melodrama
  d) tragedy

- A …………………………………… typically deals with common people, is dominated by a light tone that encourages laughter
  e) tragedy

f) melodrama

g) comedy

h) farce

- Shakespeare divided his plays into comedies, tragedies, and …………………………………… .

i) tragedies

a) histories

b) high comedies

c) tragicomedy

- After the ……………………………….…… the terms comedy and tragedy remained central.

a) 18th Century

b) 19th Century

c) 20th Century

d) Renaissance

- Comedy emphasizing wit and style among the upper classes became known as ……………………………….……**.**

a) high comedy

b) low comedy

c) middle comedy

d) old comedy

- ……………………………….…… as a popular, nonliterary form can be traced back to classical Greece.

a) Farce

b) comedy

c) history

d) audience

- ……………………………….…… is associated with physical action.

a) Renaissance

b) gondola

c) melodrama

d) situation

- Elizabethan theatre and the name of William Shakespeare are ……………………… bound together

a) situation

b) unjust

c) inextricably

Q 2. Match column **A** with **B** to make correct sentences.

A	B
1. The first proper theatre as we know it was the Theater, built at Shoreditch in	------- 1599.
2. Shakespeare became an owner of the Globe Theatre, which was built in	-------- 1623.
3. The most famous playhouse was the Globe	------- 1599.
4. Elizabeth I became Queen of England in	------- 1576.
5. The Tempest was not printed until it appeared for the first time in the Folio of	-------- 1558

Q 3. Tick (√) true or false (X) and correct the false.

a) Unlike many of Shakespeare's other plays, *The Tempest*, is not drawn from another, earlier literary work.

(   )

………

……………….……..

b) *The Tempest* opens in the midst of a storm, as a ship containing the king of Naples struggles to stay afloat.

(   )

………

……………….……..

c) Modern anthologies of Shakespeare's works list The Tempest as a tragedy.   **(   )**

………

……………….……..

d) Shakespeare divided his plays into comedies, tragedies only.   **(   )**

………

……………….……..

e) A comedy is dominated by a serious tone that encourages laughter.   **(   )**

……