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Dramatic Play Research in Teaching English Literature

Abstract

The article is devoted to the organization of experimental work on teaching English works of fiction based on dramatization. The article examines the use of dramatic elements in the process of teaching literature as a method that promotes a deeper and more emotional perception of the text. The influence of dramatization on the development of language skills, critical thinking skills and intercultural communication are explored in students. The article analyzes the results of the experiment, showing that the use of dramatization helps to improve the understanding of works, develop creativity and confidence in the use of language, as well as increase interest in literature in general.

Keywords: *dramatization in teaching a foreign language, role-playing games, adult education, literature, works of art, theater performance*

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İngilis ədəbiyyatının tədrisində dramatik oyun tədqiqatı

Xülasə

Məqalə ingilis dilində bədii ədəbiyyat əsərlərinin dramatizasiya əsasında tədrisi üzrə eksperimental işin təşkilinə həsr edilmişdir. Məqalədə ədəbiyyatın tədrisi prosesində dramatik elementlərdən mətnin daha dərin və emosional qavranılmasına təkan verən bir üsul kimi istifadə olunması araşdırılır. Dramatizasiyanın tələbələrə dil bacarıqlarının, tənqidi düşünmə bacarıqlarının və mədəniyyətlərarası ünsiyyətin inkişafına təsiri araşdırılır. Məqalədə eksperimentin nəticələri təhlil edilərək göstərilir ki, dramatizasiyadan istifadə əsərlərin dərk edilməsini təkmilləşdirir, yaradıcılıq və dildən istifadəyə inamı inkişaf etdirir, ümumilikdə ədəbiyyata marağı artırır.

Açar sözlər: *xarici dilin tədrisində dramatizasiya, rol oyunları, böyük təhsil, ədəbiyyat, sənət əsərləri, teatr tamaşası*

Introduction

Research in the field of foreign language learning emphasizes the importance of developing foreign language communicative competencies through game-based methods that actively engage students. This approach aligns with the requirements of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) and significantly enhances communication skills.

Research

There are five main types of games used for educational purposes: locomotor, social, object-based, linguistic, and dramatic (role-playing) (Andersen, 2004). Each of these types has unique advantages for student development; however, in recent years, dramatic play has become particularly important in shaping foreign language communicative competence. Dramatic play typically involves assigning and adopting roles, which are then performed by participants.

While drama serves as a powerful teaching tool that enables students to explore various situations, characters, and contexts, dramatic play forms the foundation for creating an entire world of drama and represents a method of deeply understanding the surrounding world through role-based interaction (Braverman, 2002).

Literature Review and Methodology

Drama (from the Greek *dráma* – action) is a genre of literary works intended for theatrical performance. The core of drama always revolves around conflict, which may arise between characters or between characters and society. Such works predominantly feature monologues and dialogues, whether in prose or verse. Drama portrays serious confrontations in which relationships between characters or between characters and society are rich in dramatic tension. The plot of a drama is characterized by intense struggles that occur not only at the level of external conflicts between characters but also within their inner worlds.

Eric Berne described dramatic play as a "transaction – a way of interpreting social interactions," in which individuals "try on life" by putting themselves in the roles of adults, animals, and objects. This process helps individuals learn to trust themselves, think independently, make autonomous decisions, and openly express their emotions.

Drama has "a defined beginning, climax, and resolution" and includes dramatic play, story dramatization, improvisational pantomime, shadow plays, and other improvised dramatic forms.

Our research indicates that dramatic play fosters the development of communication skills and self-management by providing participants with the opportunity to symbolically create and transform emotionally rich events. However, in the modern educational system, a gap persists between recognizing the value of this method and its actual implementation in practice.

As I.D. Gomez stated, "An engaged and interested student will learn, and drama directly engages (Gomez, 2010). " Drama consists of activities such as role-playing, pantomime, modeling, and improvisation.

Role-playing immerses students in real-life situations that may be "stressful, unfamiliar, complex, or contradictory," requiring them to analyze their own emotions in relation to others and their circumstances. At the initial stage, students typically imitate one or two actions, but as the game progresses, they expand their roles to include multiple actions relevant to their characters. Thus, role-playing enhances students' communicative and affective skills by stimulating natural conversations and allowing participants to act in settings that help them overcome their fear of emotional, linguistic, or social constraints.

Results and Discussion

The experimental sessions were organized based on the program and methodology proposed by this study. To determine the effectiveness of improving extensive reading and comprehension skills of literary works in English, the following research hypothesis was formulated: If the educational process is structured in a specific manner, the effectiveness of students' foreign language communicative competence can be increased through the improvement of extensive reading and literary text comprehension skills.

The primary goal of the experiment was to determine the role of drama, staging, and effectiveness in training future foreign language teachers. Based on this goal, the study addressed the following research questions:

1. What are the perspectives of future educators regarding the impact of dramatic activities on:
 - a. Foreign language learning,
 - b. The development of intercultural competence,
 - c. The ability to work individually or in groups, and
 - d. The development of vocabulary, speaking, comprehension, and listening skills
2. What are future educators' suggestions for implementing a drama course?

The experimental study was conducted at Fergana State University, Andijan State Institute of Foreign Languages, and Karshi State University in the faculties of foreign language and literature (English language). The courses "Literature of the Target Language Country" and "Home Reading" begin with the selection of literary works in collaboration with students.

The diagnostic functions of the experimental study allowed for the assessment of students' reading skills upon university admission. Based on the collected data, objectives were set, learning content was determined, and expected outcomes were planned.

№	Educational institutions	Total number of students	Experimental group	Control group
			EG	CG
1	Andijan State Institute of Foreign Languages	225	112	113
2	Karshi State University	229	115	114
3	Fergana State University	228	113	115
Total number		682	340	342

Pilot experiments were conducted over the past ten years. Staging and performances of English literary works were organized by students, including *Gone With The Wind* by Margaret Mitchell, *The Great Gatsby* by F. Scott Fitzgerald, and *Little Women* by Louisa May Alcott.

By working with dialogue-based situations, students reinforce lexical material, which is particularly important as communication requires the precise use of conversational clichés. These conversational structures enhance the accuracy and appropriateness of speech in the foreign language context. As a result, fluency increases, responsiveness to questions improves, questioning skills develop, and speech becomes more natural.

In this study, various research methods were employed, including literature analysis, the study of pedagogical experiences, analysis of previous research on the topic, student and teacher surveys, and interviews with students and graduates.

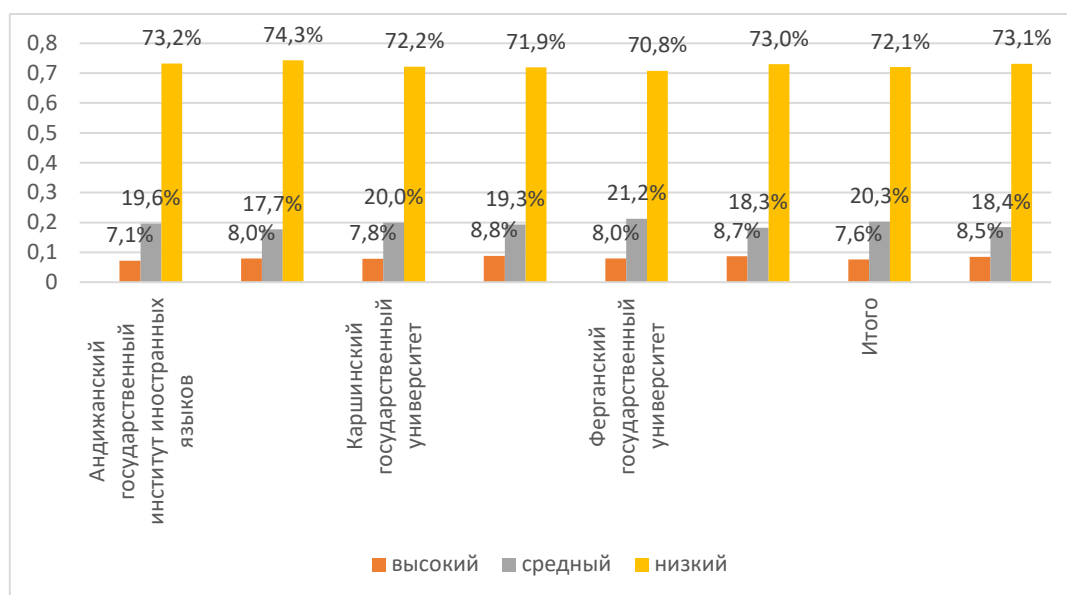
Methods of synthesis and abstraction played a key role in problem analysis and conclusion formulation.

In the second phase, experimental elements were developed, teacher coordination was established, and interaction methods with students were refined. Methods such as dramatization of literary works in foreign language learning were used. In the third phase, methods of analysis, synthesis, experimentation, and statistical processing of quantitative data were applied.

In the initial phase of the experimental study, extensive reading was often defined as the opposite of intensive reading. Preliminary investigations were conducted to determine its development.

Universities	Groups	Number of students	Levels					
			high		average		low	
			quantity	in%	quantity	in%	quantity	in%
Andijan State Institute of Foreign Languages	EG	112	8	7,1%	22	19,6%	82	73,2%
	CG	113	9	8,0%	20	17,7%	84	74,3%
Karshi State University	EG	115	9	7,8%	23	20,0%	83	72,2%
	CG	114	10	8,8%	22	19,3%	82	71,9%
Fergana State University	EG	113	9	8,0%	24	21,2%	80	70,8%
	CG	115	10	8,7%	21	18,3%	84	73,0%
total	EG	340	26	7,6%	69	20,3%	245	72,1%
	CG	342	29	8,5%	63	18,4%	250	73,1%

According to the results, in the experimental groups, high proficiency was 7.6%, medium proficiency was 20.3%, and low proficiency was 72.1%. In the control groups, high proficiency was 8.5%, medium proficiency was 18.4%, and low proficiency was 73.1%. This shows that the initial proficiency levels were almost identical, with a high percentage of low proficiency in both groups.



The study aimed to determine the effectiveness of dramatization and drama in developing foreign language communicative competence. Students demonstrated a positive attitude towards the use of drama and dramatization in classes.

Dramatization can be considered an effective linguistic-didactic method for enhancing foreign language communicative competence. Additionally, most participants stated that active engagement in drama helps students learn continuously and effectively. Moreover, participants noted that dramatic activities create an enjoyable learning environment. Another point mentioned by both experimental and control group students was that dramatic performances help develop abstract thinking skills. Participation in drama helped them better understand explanatory text materials in textbooks.

Regarding the impact of drama on students' intercultural communication skills, our experiments showed that 90% of respondents noted its positive influence on their understanding of foreign cultures. Literature reviews also discuss similar findings.

H. Gardner highlighted the unique social aspects of drama, stating that "interaction with others gives drama a completely distinct quality (Gardner, 1935)." Additionally, social integration through dramatic interaction fosters critical thinking, enhances problem-solving abilities, and improves oral communication skills, making students more sociable, productive, and determined individuals.

Our research demonstrated that social interaction in drama enabled shy students, particularly female students, to gain confidence and overcome embarrassment and timidity.

R.K. Sawyer also argued that classroom drama strategies help develop students' intercultural skills, such as empathy and adaptability, which are essential in the real world (Sawyer, 2011).

The assessment of the level of development of foreign language communicative competence of students based on dramatization was carried out using the following criteria: the criterion of meaningfulness of speech utterance, the criterion of productivity, the criterion of communicative motivation, the criterion of purposefulness and the criterion of expressiveness of speech.

Conclusion

Based on the final monitoring results, the following conclusions can be drawn:

1. Through targeted instruction involving dramatization and role-playing, students in the experimental group achieved a higher level of cognitive activity, with some reaching the fourth level of communicative competence.

The absence of such training in the control group prevented the students from remaining in the strong groups. According to the results of the final exam, they ended up in the category of average students, receiving mostly good and satisfactory grades.

2. Our educational system enabled weaker students in the control group to transition to an intermediate level, demonstrating creative approaches in task execution.

Thanks to the training system we developed, students from the control group who were previously considered weak were able to move into the intermediate category. The creative approach to completing assignments is reflected in the selection and organization of learning materials, as well as in the ability to present them in an engaging manner.

Creative assignments, such as reading literary works, composing dialogues, monologues, and polylogues, are completed by students at home with no time restrictions. The primary focus is on the quality of independent creative work. As practice shows, students in the control group (CG) and the experimental group (EG) exhibit different developmental trends at various stages of learning. In the control group, several students, for various reasons, did not complete their individual assignments.

All levels are closely interconnected with the student's internal and external position. The internal position is shaped by their motivation to learn a foreign language and their self-assessment of communicative skills. The external position reflects the realization of the internal one, meaning the practical implementation of communicative behavior.

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