How Drama Enhances English-Speaking Skills: The Role of Drama in Teaching English-Speaking Skills in Selected Secondary Schools in Kigali City, Rwanda

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ABSTRACT

The incorporation of drama in teaching English-speaking skills plays a crucial role in promoting students' speaking skills. Despite drama being among genres of literature that may improve and sharpen the higher level of students 'speaking skills, in Kigali City secondary schools, poor speaking skills are due to the low level of students and it is difficult to pronounce some words, which is mostly influenced by the excessive use of their mother tongue. The objective of this research was to identify the role of drama in teaching English-speaking skills in selected secondary schools in Kigali City. This research was qualitatively designed to achieve the general objective "tto find out the extent and role of using drama in teaching English language to promote students' speaking skills in selected secondary schools in Kigali City." The social-cultural theory of using drama to teach the English language guided this investigation. It used a descriptive research design with a random sample of 100 students and 4 teachers in selected schools in Kigali City from a target population of 1004. Data were collected using questionnaires and interviews to gather primary data. The results of the study revealed that the application of drama features and drama activities in the classroom in teaching English language had positively promoted students' speaking skills in Kigali City secondary schools, especially in the control group (language combinations). In addition, the results of the study confirmed that students developed a positive attitude when drama was used in classes and could improve their speaking skills. Moreover, the limited use or lack of drama in the non-control group (non-language combinations) led to an unsatisfactory level of English-speaking skills. Therefore, using drama in four selected secondary schools in Kigali City improved students' speaking skills to the extent of fluency, pronunciation, and accuracy. The research recommends that teachers should be aware of the importance of using drama to increase their learners' motivation in speaking skills and initiate clubs of speaking competitions through drama.

Keywords: *Drama, English, Secondary Schools, Speaking Skills, Students, Kigali City*

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1. INTRODUCTION

English is the language that is most spoken worldwide (Northrup, 2013). It is the language of science and technology and a gateway to the outside world, and it led to the need for study that would be advantageous to students and offer them "maximum educational value ((Anthonyet al., 199). English language competency has become an important component of academic achievement and eventual employability, particularly in English as a foreign language in educational contexts. Proficiency in English communication skills has emerged as a crucial requirement that language learners must satisfy (Alasmari & Alshae'el, 2020). Oral and written language are both forms of communication. The language comprises four essential skills, namely speaking, reading, and writing, and those four skills are connected to one another (Ananto & Rusmiati, 2018). Learning the English language has become important because it is the most common form of communication around the globe (Shehata et al., 2020).

Drama is a special action to increase enjoyment of the activity and communication in the learning process (Alshraideh & Alahmdi, 2020). As Astiandani and Mustofa (2021) argue, students will be inspired to practice speaking and develop their imaginations through the use of drama, which will also help them have fun in class. In drama, individuals with diverse learning styles have the opportunity to come together and interact, balancing each other's strengths and weaknesses in language acquisition, and then the students get the opportunity to speak. The teacher offers the drama script and affords ample rehearsal opportunities to the students, aiming for them to gain proficiency in English through practice. Incorporating drama elements into the delivery of academic content in the

classroom is thought to stimulate and improve specific speaking activities, such as those that place an emphasis on fluency, correctness, pronunciation, stress, intonation, etc. (Akyüz & Tanış, 2020).

As a teaching style, drama is applied worldwide. In Australia, drama is one of the communicative-based techniques (Gill, 2013), and this can demonstrate how such a strategy might help students get better at speaking English. Students from English-speaking backgrounds studying in this country face the challenge of having to communicate English orally in a variety of contexts (Gill, 2013).

In Turkey, in line with English-speaking skills, drama has been thought to give students an opportunity to practice their English by putting it in real-life situations (Noor et al., 2012). It has been extensively used by language teachers in speaking classes because it allows for specific speaking exercises that concentrate on different aspects of spoken communication, such as the ability to express ideas smoothly, precision in language use, proper articulation in all factors of a language, etc. (Rew & Moon, 2013). In addition, some other studies have demonstrated how using drama helps EFL students improve their speaking skills in an EFL setting (Akyüz & Tanış, 2020).

In Lampung, Indonesia, the language skills of the students do not progress as intended by the curriculum. And the issue has been debated with the Indonesian educational system, particularly with regard to EFL learning success (Göktürk et al., 2020). While the students' varying interests, skills, and reasons for learning a foreign language are one of its central goals, It has been suggested that using English drama pedagogy as an instructional instrument to investigate and comprehend the students' interests, skills, and motivations should be a possible solution to the issue (Göktürk et al., 2020). In this regard, research has been carried out on the project of using drama as a means of delving into knowledge and facilitating learning in Indonesian schools for the instruction of English as a foreign language in order to explore and understand students' interests, skills, and motivations in using the English language, especially in speaking (Nanda and Susanto, 2021).

In the African context and Namibia in particular, the study investigated the use of drama in English teaching to improve students' speaking skills (Namundjebo et al., 2018). According to Namundjebo et al. (2018), several researchers have offered workable solutions to enhance the academic underachievement at schools in Namibia, despite the fact that many researchers have attributed students' low English proficiency levels to a variety of issues. In Nigeria, drama is another tactic to help students become more proficient communicators (Eckersley, 2016). Students can have the opportunity to acquire knowledge and articulate their thoughts using verbal communication with the aid of drama and drama methods such as setting, characterization, aside, monologues, and soliloquy (Iroh, 2022). According to Iroh (2022), drama introduces a specific measure to enhance the learning experience by promoting active, engaging, communicative, and context-based methods, as students tend to be more participative in verbal conversation.

In addition, particularly in Rwanda, drama is important to the development of the learners' personalities because it offers students varied possibilities to engage with the arts, helping them to grow as creative, self-assured, and capable individuals who can go out into the world and impress others (Ministry of Education [MINEDUC], 2015). This indicates that drama helps students immensely since it boosts their self-confidence and gives them the skills they need to speak in public, particularly in the English language, and they get the ability to combine a wide range of skills from various sources (MINEDUC, 2015). Mugnier (2023) indicates that drama also relaxes everyone because entertainment has always been its primary goal, and it can help students improve their language skills by broadening their vocabulary and boosting their speaking confidence.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

Studies show that students are less active in speaking the English language when their speaking level is low and it is difficult to pronounce some words. In addition, the researcher, being a secondary school teacher himself, observed that students have a low level of mastery of English, especially in speaking skills where they want to speak fluently but are still struggling in this way due to excessive influence of their mother tongue, being too shy to speak English with others, a lack of pressure to motivate themselves in their speaking, and fearing to make mistakes in their speaking. A low level of English speaking refers to a lack of speaking practice, fear of mistakes, lack of word usage and grammar practice, low motivation, low participation, unfamiliar word pronunciation, and fear of criticism (Václav Hemerka, 2009).

According to Khudhur Omar (2023), low English speaking skills consistently affect the majority of students who lack the vocabulary and pronunciation skills needed to carry on a discussion in their speaking. Many students are aware that it is insufficient for them to be able to only read and write the target language without being able to speak it (Fajaryani et al., 2023). Václav Hemerka (2009) indicated that low English speaking is affected by an unsuitable environment, limited vocabulary knowledge, a lack of motivation and inhibition, and the dominance of grammatical exercises given to students.

Therefore, this problem of speaking English in Rwandan schools can be tackled by using drama in teaching English to promote students' speaking skills, particularly in Kigali City secondary schools. This technique can also allow students to learn and practice speaking English by learning the language through acting in conversation repetitively, which can actively help students enhance their speaking skills in terms of pronunciation and fluency.

1.2 Research Objective

The main objective of this study is to find out the extent and the role of using drama in teaching English language to promote students' speaking skill in selected Rwandan secondary schools.

1.3 Research Hypothesis

The implementation of drama in selected secondary schools in Kigali City leads to a significant improvement in English –Speaking skills among students.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0. Theoretical Framework

This study was guided by the Social Learning Theory, which was developed by Arbert Bandura. Social learning occurs through observation, imitation, and modeling, and individuals learn by observing the behaviors of others and the consequences of those behaviors (Berge and County, 2012). As Berge and County (2012) argue, this theory highlights the significance of modeling and reinforcement in the learning process. Therefore, according to Catania and Laties (1999) and Grusec (1992), in social learning theory, people learn new behaviors through imitating and observing others. According to van de Water (2021), drama provides students with the opportunity to watch and imitate the language and actions of others in a secure and supportive environment and develops students' speaking skills in a pleasant and interesting way by using drama in the classroom.

II. EMPIRICAL REVIEW

2.1 The Role of Drama in Teaching English-Speaking Skills

Incorporating drama elements into the educational experience phases of language acquisition cannot be separated from the advantages to the students. Fostering communication skills, developing imagination, and enhancing affective aspects are some advantages of adopting drama in the classroom, as confirmed by several scholars. Each component is described below:

2.2 Role of Drama in Fostering Students' Speaking Skills

Even though speaking is rarely examined during language learning, speaking plays a crucial role in the process of acquiring a language (i.e., mastering English). According to Olaya (2018), when speaking, improving speaking efficacy becomes the main goal, and students must quickly grasp and identify any language, grammar, or pronunciation errors that could lead to misinterpretation of the message.

Drama can also be used to increase the students' involvement in structural development because they are independent (Olaya, 2018). This instance can be described as a "learner-centered" strategy that emphasizes students' independence and autonomy (Olaya, 2018). Project-based learning, such as drama, pushes students to distribute their responsibilities among the group, which can help them develop their autonomy, and they must undoubtedly communicate with one another while working in a group during the debate tasks. In addition, since drama allows for dialogue and interaction, it can be used in language classrooms to teach speaking (Sukendro, 2019). Students can progressively practice dialogue and conversation to present the drama, adding to practicing daily talk when making preparations. Students can practice the conversation and dialogue in these instances both separately and collectively, and they can effectively remember dialogue by practicing so that they make fewer pronunciation, grammar, or vocabulary mistakes on stage (Olaya, 2018). Sukendro (2019) argues that students benefit from repetitive oral practice because it promotes the growth of characters, individual traits, and motivations, resulting in a more casual style of speaking. Thus, using drama in the classroom can help students improve their speaking skills.

2.3 The Role of Drama in Developing Imagination among Students

Students engage in drama when they develop ideas and incorporate them into a scene with unique characters and circumstances, making the scene meaningful to them and others. Without imagination and originality, the drama may be boring because the performer won't be able to relate to the characters or communicate effectively with the

audience (Albalawi, 2014). As a result, teachers use drama as one of the classroom activities to foster students' creativity.

From a drama perspective, one can argue that successful language learning is linked to a strong desire to communicate in a second language. Lee et al. (2020) contend that different levels of E.S.L. learners actively seek opportunities to participate in meaningful English conversations because effective language acquisition hinges on engaging communication. This kind of interaction facilitates enhanced comprehension, encourages the negotiation of meaning, and compels students to produce accurate language output.

2.4 The Role of Drama in Increasing Motivation, Self- Confidence and Decreasing Anxiety

The idea of affective aspects, which is closely linked to emotional factors in this context, is what links mental and physical processes (Lee et al., 2015). According to Albalawi (2014), drama offers three positive affective outcomes: increased motivation, increased self-confidence, and decreased anxiety.

Motivation is the force behind human action and is defined as something that moves or has the quality of moving (Jabor et al., 2017). As drama incorporates enjoyable, entertaining, and relaxing activities, it helps students cope with the stress of learning a new language (Alshraideh & Alahmdi, 2020). In a setting of cooperative learning, students can practice speaking with their classmates, and their interest, curiosity, and desire can increase due to the exciting atmosphere at the time of the drama activity, which promotes learning motivation (Alshraideh & Alahmdi, 2020). Students are more effective at learning the target language when they have enough self-confidence and a positive view of themselves, and their self-confidence has an impact on their motivation (Jabor et al., 2017).

Engaging in communication exercises in a fun environment could increase participants' drive and help them gain speaking confidence (Hayati et al., 2020). In this case, Hayati et al. (2020), put it simply, say that students will be more pleased and confident in speaking when they practice speaking a lot. Additionally, drama can boost students' self-confidence by encouraging them to talk louder, clearly, and with a diverse tone (Gill, 2008).

The final affective advantage of drama is decreased anxiety. Social anxiety, which includes fear, emotional discomfort, sadness, tension, and concern in different social situations, is one form of anxiety that significantly impairs learning (Shand, 2011). According to Shand (2011), students occasionally experience anxiety because drama is done on stage, especially in a classroom setting where there must be a large audience, and in this case, when they are on stage, they worry that they will make mistakes in their words and their actions. Hence, it can be argued that students can learn more about how to manage their anxiety so that they can act confidently and make fewer mistakes by using drama in language classes (Jabor et al., 2017).

2.5 The Role of Drama in Minimizing the Level of Anxiety among Introvert Students

In drama class, students collaborate in groups and should support one another as a team (Ashton-Hay, 2005), because the intelligence of different students varies. While some students are more gifted at picking up new languages, others have outgoing, communicative personalities and are attracted to being introverts, while others are shy and fearful (Ashton-Hay, 2005). All of these different kinds of language learners can interact in drama, complementing each other's language learning strengths and weaknesses. Due to the fact that they are not working alone, it should increase students' interest and confidence in speaking (Göktürk et al., 2020). Göktürk (22020) argues that the students then have speaking roles in the drama, and the teachers give them the drama script and encourage them to use it frequently at home in the hopes that they will improve their English-speaking skills.

III. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

The document discusses the importance of design in research, particularly using qualitative research design methods (England, 2022). This highlights the qualitative aspect of this study, which examines the role of drama in teaching English to improve students' speaking skills. The decision to use qualitative methods is justified by the topic's complexity and the need for in-depth analysis.

3.2 Research Population

According to Shukla (2020), the research population is the set or group of all individuals or units to whom the research findings are to be applied. In this study, the researcher randomly selected four secondary schools in Kigali City, out of 143 schools in total, with a population of 1004. In selecting those schools, the researcher compared schools in the control group and the non-control group just to observe their different levels of speaking English. As a result, the study's research population consisted of 4 teachers and 1000 students, including 182 students from school 1,

124 students from school 2, 438 students from school 3, and 257 students from school 4. The total population consisted of 1004 participants.

3.3 Sample Size and Sampling Technique

Sampling the study size is the process of selecting a group of people from a population in order to estimate the characteristics of the entire population. The main advantages of sampling are faster data collection and lower cost (Neilson, 2011). Neilson (2011) defines sample size as a method that gathers information about an entire group by selecting and studying a smaller, more representative group of individuals.

The sample for this study was drawn from the target population using the designated formula of Mugenda and Mugenda. According to him, when the study population is less than 10,000, a sample size of between 10 and 30% is a good representation of the target population (Makworo, 2020). For that reason, the researcher prefers to use 10% of the target population.

To determine the sample size of students, the same sampling was systematically used to determine students from four schools in Kigali City, with a total number of 1002. Using the previously described Mugenda and Mugenda formula, the sample size for all students was 1002x10:100=100.2, indicating a sample size of 100 students.

Based on the formula described above, the sample size for teachers is not necessary to be sampled due to its small number (4 teachers). Therefore, a large number of teachers were eligible.

3.4 Research Instruments

The research instrument that was used in this study was interviews. An interview is a dialogue aimed at collecting information, where an interviewer guides the discussion by posing questions, and an interviewee responds to those questions. This interaction can take place either in person or over the phone (Wang et al., 2011).

Through interviews, the researcher selected questions to ask some of his respondents, including teachers and students, and the answers from them were recorded using an audio recording device.

3.5 Reliability and Validity of Data

The validity of the researchof the research determines whether it truly measures what it is intended to measure or how truthful the research results are, as well as the degree to which the results obtained from the analysis of the data actually represent the phenomenon under study (Drost, 2011). The validity of this study and the research warranted that the questions administered were simple, precise, and easy to understand by participants. The researcher also made sure that the set questions in the questionnaire and in the interview guide matched the research objectives.

Reliability of any instrument is the consistency with the same results that are achieved after repeated testing in the same samples, which indicates that the questionnaire may produce the same responses and results if it has been completed a second time (Hernon & Schwartz, 2009). The reliability of a questionnaire depends on a person answering the questions after a particular period of time. For example, the researcher administered a pre-test for the sets of questionnaires in a certain school, and then a pre-test was conducted again after a while at the same school, and it gave the same results.

IV. FINDINGS & DISCUSSIONS

4.1 Response Rate

The research sampled 104 students and teachers (100 students and 4 teachers) from selected secondary schools in Kigali City. Those who responded to the questions focused on the role of drama in teaching English-speaking skills. The responses to the research questions provided insights and perspectives on various aspects of drama's role in teaching English-speaking skills.

Table 1
Response Rate

Sampled	Responded	Response Rate
104	104	100%

According to Table 1, the study sampled 104 teachers and students from the control and non-control groups in selected secondary schools in Kigali. All interviewees responded to the questions, focusing on the role of drama in teaching English-speaking skills.

4.3 Presentation of findings
4.3.1 Students' Views on the Role of Drama in Teaching English Speaking Skills

The analysis aimed to determine the percentage of responses on how participants both control and non-control group perceived on the role of drama in teaching English speaking skills.

Table 2
Students' Views on the Role of Drama in Teaching English Speaking Skills

Group	Positive outcomes of the role of drama	Negative outcomes of the role of drama	Total
Control group	49(98%)	1(2%)	50
Non-control group	26(52%)	24(48%)	50

Most students in the control group 98% said that drama helps them experience real conversations inside and outside the classroom because it increases their vocabulary and helps them become more familiar with their daily speaking of the English language, among other things. In addition, drama helps students to get acquainted with one another, particularly where weaker students get more skills from stronger ones in speaking during acting plays on stages, and this improves strong experiences in their daily speaking and their motivation to speak English language is highly achieved. In addition, using drama and role play in general, when the teacher gives them oral activities that require them to be active participants, it creates a friendly environment where they can speak confidently without fear of making errors. 2% of the control group said drama is not a good method like debates and discussions because it takes time and seems boring to students.

However, students in the non-control group 48% of respondents said that the role of drama is insignificant since it is not applied in their schools. Thus, drama activities are not provided by teachers at schools, and this leads students to take drama as something irrelevant to improve their speaking skills. In addition, 52% said that drama is a good method for teaching English-speaking skills; however, it is not in their teaching and learning program. The students wish they could be more confident, active, and familiar with speaking English with their colleagues and their teacher if drama were put in place and given time in the teaching and learning program.

Different scholars have suggested the role of drama in teaching English-speaking skills. According to Olaya (2018), the role of drama is to increase the students' involvement in structural development because they are independent. This instance can be described as a "learner-centered" strategy that emphasizes students' independence and autonomy (Olaya, 2018). Project-based learning, such as drama, which pushes students to share their responsibilities with the group, can help students develop their autonomy, and they must undoubtedly communicate with one another while working in a group during the debate tasks. In addition, since drama allows for dialogue and interaction, it can be used in language classrooms to teach speaking (Sukendro, 2019).

When students develop ideas and incorporate them into a scene with unique characters and circumstances, they engage in drama, making the scene meaningful to them and others. Without imagination and originality, the drama may be boring because the performer won't be able to relate to the characters or communicate effectively with the audience (Albalawi, 2014). From a drama perspective, one can argue that successful language learning is linked to a strong desire to communicate in a second language. Lee et al. (2020) contend that different levels of ESL students will look for chances to interact and engage in meaningful English communication, simply because language learning requires meaningful communication, which enables students to improve their access to understandable information, encourage meaning negotiation, and force students to generate accurate output.

4.3.2 Teachers' Views on the Role of Drama in Teaching English Speaking Skills

The analysis aimed to determine the percentage of responses on how participants both control and non-control group perceived on the role of drama in teaching English speaking skills. According to the responses of teachers, the role of drama in teaching English-speaking skills is presented in Table 3.

Table 3
Teachers' Views on the Role of Drama in Teaching English Speaking Skills

Group	Positive outcomes of the role of drama	Negative outcomes of the role of drama	Total
Control group	2(100%)	0(0%)	2
Non-control group	2(100%)	0(0%)	2

All respondents (language and non-language teachers) in common said that drama helps teachers express all ideas in the content through practices, and it provides learners with more vocabulary and improves their confidence in speaking by mastering good accuracy, pronunciation, and fluency. Others said that drama creates critical thinking between teachers and learners. In addition, drama encourages learners to reach a higher level of speaking, which later makes them good public speakers. Furthermore, they added that drama plays a significant role in teaching English speaking skills by providing an interactive and engaging way for students to practice and improve their language skills through improving pronunciation, enhancing fluency, building confidence, encouraging active listening, learning in context, learning in team, and developing mutual communication skills and encouraging active listening. However, teachers who do not apply drama in common said that they wish drama could be integrated in their schools just to increase their high level of speaking a language.

Drama is a good method that teachers use to improve their students' speaking abilities, and students can gradually practice dialogue and discourse to present the drama in addition to practicing daily talk when making preparations (Deer & Styan, 1961). Drama can also be used to increase the students' involvement in structural development because they are independent (Olaya, 2018). This instance can be described as a "learner-centered" strategy that emphasizes students' independence and autonomy (Olaya, 2018). Project-based learning, such as drama, which pushes students to share their responsibilities with the group, can help students develop their autonomy, and they must undoubtedly communicate with one another while working in a group during the debate tasks. In addition, since drama allows for dialogue and interaction, it can be used in language classrooms to teach speaking (Sukendro, 2019).

Teachers in both the control and non-control groups also confirmed that using drama activities can boost students' confidence in speaking English. Role-playing, for example, can reduce the anxiety that some students feel when speaking a language. In addition, drama often involves using vocabulary and expression, where students are exposed to new words. This exposure enhances their vocabulary and language use, which leads to a higher level of speaking skills. Furthermore, drama strengthens accuracy, fluency, and pronunciation, and repeated practice through drama activities improves students ability to communicate clearly and effectively, which contributes to their better speaking language skills.

Some scholars, like Alshraideh and Alahmdi (2020), said that drama is seen as a tool that helps teachers' express ideas through practical activities, allowing learners to acquire more vocabulary and improve their speaking confidence, contributes to mastering good accuracy, pronunciation, and fluency in speaking, fosters critical thinking between teachers and learners, and encourages active listening, learning in context, teamwork, and mutual communication.

In addition, drama creates a friendly environment, especially role play, which creates a friendly environment where students feel confident to speak without the fear of making mistakes (Hayati et al., 2020), and this contributes to a more effective language learning experience.

V. CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Conclusions

Both the control and non-control groups of students viewed the role of drama in teaching English-speaking skills as crucial. However, the non-control group does not apply it, even though some students and teachers report positive outcomes. Teachers viewed drama as a tool that facilitated practical activities, encouraged critical thinking, fostered active listening, and enhanced vocabulary acquisition and speaking confidence. Drama strengthens accuracy, fluency, and pronunciation, and repeated practice through drama activities improves students' ability to communicate clearly and effectively, which contributes to their better speaking language skills.

5.2 Recommendations

Based on the findings and the role played by using drama in teaching English language, it is recommended that the Ministry of Education in Rwanda integrate drama from primary school to empower students to know early the concept and role of drama in speaking skills because it is currently taught in secondary schools and at university level only. Therefore, students are not aware of its value and motivation for improving their English-speaking skills.

English language teachers should be aware of the importance of drama and recommend using this tool as a challenging task in order to increase their learners' motivation to improve their speaking skills.

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