



The effect of drama method on achievement level in English teaching: knowledge, comprehension and application levels¹

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Abstract

The aim of this research was to determine the effect of drama as a teaching method on the achievement level of primary school fourth grade students in English lesson. Accordingly in this research, the determination of the effects of drama method on total achievement level, on the achievement level of knowledge, comprehension and application categories of cognitive domain and on the permanence of the subjects learned formed the problem of the research. As the method of the research, Pretest-Posttest experimental design with control group was used. The research was carried out with 50 students from two separate classes at the 4th class whose gender, socio-economical conditions and the previous year academic success resemble each other. Their being control group and experimental group was determined randomly. The data was collected via an achievement test that consisted of the questions concerning knowledge, comprehension and application levels including the subjects weather conditions, seasons, food and drinks that were developed by the researcher. Research findings: in the teaching of English lesson, the teaching method based on drama is more effective than the traditional teaching method at the 1- total achievement level, 2- achievement levels of cognitive domain knowledge, comprehension and application categories and 3- the permanence of the subjects learned.

Key Words: Drama Method, Achievement, Language Teaching, Teacher, Teaching Methods

¹ This research was produced from master thesis in the Institute of Social Sciences of Nigde University.

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Introduction

Human that has been tried to be described as a bio-socio-cultural organism gets in contact with the living beings and objects in the external world since he was born. According to Sönmez (2006), human beings have to be in touch with the other people as a matter of the struggle of fulfilling the needs and the social necessities and existence. Şahin (2006) expresses the main and tender factor of this communication is language. According to him, language skill is the most important quality of human beings. This feature enables humans to express their emotions, considerations and demands at large. In other words, human beings need to inform his existence and to be informed of the awareness of his existence. The human in this need uses various communication methods whether verbally or non-verbally. For this reason, (Demirel, 1997) the language is an indispensable factor for an individual's living in a society and being provided of communication between the individuals and the society. In this sense, (Tokgöz, 2006) the most important features that make the humans different from the other living beings are speaking, thinking, reasoning and judgment abilities.

According to Susüzer (2006), the language that underlies communication between human beings is a sophisticated and very advanced system that enables emotions, thoughts and desires to transfer to the others by making use of the common elements and rules in terms of voice and meaning. The features of the language can be listed as (Susüzer, 2006; Selçuk University, 2009): 1- The first and main function of the language is its being an understanding means. 2- One of the most important features of the language is its being natural. 3- Each language has some rules peculiar to itself. 4- Language is a living organism that lives in its own rules has some features such as being born-growth- maturation. 5- Language is a common property of a nation. 6- Language is a social being.

Every nation has a mother tongue peculiar to itself. The other languages that are spoken by other societies and learnt afterwards except for mother tongue are called as foreign languages. Although the number of the languages spoken by existing societies in the world is not known, it is around 3000-3500. Although so many languages exist in the world, the international relationships that are getting increased nowadays cause the nations insufficient to communicate each other by using their own language, and require a necessity to learn the languages of other countries (Susüzer, 2006). During history, especially current age, some reasons such as an individual's being forced to live in another society having and

carrying out various relationships multiply on the fields of commerce, politics, recruitment, science, art, working, tourism, education, culture, communication bring out the necessity of another language. Besides this, the developments in science and technology and the proliferation of mass media made learning another language compulsory. However, since such a lot of languages existing on Earth are impossible, learning of the languages of some nations comes into prominence (Demircan, 1988; Şahin, 2007). Second language teaching means all of the proficiency gaining activities for using another language except for the mother tongue for a special purpose.

Drama Method

In the historical development of drama, the experiments of Franz Cizek, an Australian Art teacher who arranged free exams for the pupils in Applied Arts School in Vienna in 1898 are the first examples of the usage of art in education (Ay Oyat, 1997). In these Works done by Cizek, the application of “pretending” adopted as a natural education (Kodaz, 2007). In the beginning of the twentieth century, about the first drama lessons carried out in the classes, Harriet F. Johnston, a village teacher, adjusted every subject to a dramatic movement on her work about dramatic method. In 1930s, drama existed in school program (Çevik, 2006). In 1970s, the relationship between drama and education, the role given to drama teachers, the subjects, usage area of the instructions, conclusions and responsibilities are reorganized and drama method began to be used in learning-teaching process with the meaning of today (San, 1996).

According to Önder (2004), total physical response activities in learning-teaching process gives more effective and permanent products. Therefore, drama is a teaching method that gives the pupils total physical response learning opportunity and atmosphere by taking their emotions and imaginations into consideration. With this method, a pupil internalize different situation by total physical response and by making use of his/her own life, more effective learning is occurred. Drama at the aim of education gives opportunity to portray the subjects such as history, literature and social, universal, abstract concepts and to have them meaningful via feeling concretely the experiences that are specifically arranged.

In Turkey, primary school education programs have been rearranged by using constructivist approach as a base. The aim of this arrangement (MEB, 2007) is informed as activity based that balances knowledge and skill that provides opportunity to interact of the

pupils with environment by taking their own life and individual differences into consideration, and implementation of a new concept via active learning methods and techniques. According to Dikici, Koç and Gündoğdu (2003), learning via drama method is a kind of reconstruction. By this way, a person examines the concepts acquired, loads them new meanings and overviews his former experiences. Gönen and Dalkılıç (1998), express that drama gives opportunity to gain some proficiencies such as evaluating, creating, exploring, asking questions, solving problems, hypothesizing, and empathy skills. According to Piaget (cited in Senemoğlu, 2005), the pupils learn something in conclusion of the interactivity with the experiences and their environment.

There are different viewpoints that handle drama as a method or technique. According to San (1990), drama can be defined as a person's making sense and portraying an experience, an event, an idea, sometimes an abstract concept or a behavior and his review previous cognitive patterns in game processes and in a group-working by making use of some theatre or drama techniques such as drama, improvisation, role-playing. According to Önder (2004), being animated of natural and social events by making use of some concepts such as action, speaking and imitation is called as learning method via drama. Drama method (Sönmez, 2007) provides opportunity to telling the things they see or imagine using action, speaking and imitation. It gives them opportunity to express their own emotion and thought while portraying somebody else's situation and behavior. Drama (Kaner, 1990; Gönen, 1992; Karadağ, 2007) can be classified commonly as creative drama, educative drama, psycho-drama and socio-drama.

There is a common viewpoint about the benefits of drama method's being used in child education and in the classroom. In teaching-learning processes, drama method has some positive effects in view of cognitive, language, social, physical, and psychomotor effects for the development of a child (Karadağ, 2007; Gönen ve Dalkılıç, 1998; Gönen, 1992). Koç and Dikici (2003) point out educative drama as an educative activity that requires lingual and social learning by using pedagogical facilities of role-playing. According to McCaslin (1984), drama let the creative powers, fantasia that exists every child potentially free, it reveals and develops them. O'Neil and Lambert (1995) have a viewpoint that all pupils who participate in drama activities learn the situations, events, relationships by exploring them. Edwards and Springate (1995), express that drama activities provide wide opportunities for bringing out the creativity of the child.

The most important another change is in the roles of teacher and student. Drama provides having a more free and convenient relationship by eluding the traditional roles completely. Especially the difference in the role of the teacher creates a convenient atmosphere for learning. Because in drama activities, the teacher is not the person who knows the truth of everything, authoritarian, being bewared, the unique prevalent of the class. The teacher is the person who participates in the activities with the students, plays games with them and who is consulted when it is necessary. In conclusion, the students feel more comfortable in the classroom and use the language without getting stressed and being afraid of making mistakes (Önder, 2004; Çevik, 2006; Susüzer, 2006). To sum up, drama is a method that provides pupils an opportunity to learning by doing and experiencing based on the emotions and imagination of the pupils.

In this research, it was aimed to determine the effect of drama method as a teaching method on the achievement level of primary school fourth grade pupils in English lesson. Accordingly, in this research, it was searched for the answers of the questions a- What is the effect of drama method on total achievement level? b- Does the achievement level on knowledge, comprehension and application categories show difference between the group on which drama method was applied in the teaching of weather conditions-seasons and food-drinks subjects? c- What is the effect of drama method on learning permanence in English lesson of primary school fourth grade students?

Research Processes

In the research, Pretest-Posttest experimental design with control group was used. Two classes whose gender, socio-economical conditions and the previous year academic success resemble each other were chosen. Their being control group and experimental group was determined randomly. The data was collected via an achievement test that consisted of the questions concerning knowledge, comprehension and application levels including the subjects of weather conditions, seasons, food and drinks that were developed by the researcher. This achievement test is applied to experimental and control groups as pretest in the beginning of the application and posttest at the end of it. With the aim of determining the effects of drama on the permanence of the learning, the achievement test was applied to experimental and control groups two months after the application.

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Findings

Table 1 The results regarding the effect of drama method on the total achievement level

	Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	df	t	Sig.(2-tailed)
Pretest	Control	25	20,02	14,56	48	,81	,41
	Experiment	25	22,52	16,00			
Posttest	Control	25	73,44	11,17		8,08	,000
	Experiment	25	89,40	8,36			

According to Table 1, the mean of control group pretest achievement level grade is $X=20,02$, Std. Deviation is $S= 14,56$, the mean of experimental group pretest achievement level grade is $X= 22,52$, Std. Deviation is $S= 16,00$ found. It was found that there is no difference [$t_{(48)}=.81$ $p>,05$] between pretest achievement level means of experimental group and control group. The means of control group posttest achievement level grade are $X= 73,44$, Std Deviation is $S= 11,17$ and the means of experimental group posttest achievement level grades are $X= 89,40$, Std. Deviation is $S= 8,36$ found. It was found that there is a significant difference [$t_{(48)}=8,08$ $p<,001$] between posttest achievement level means of experimental group and control group for the benefit of experimental group.

Table 2 The levels of pretest-posttest total achievement level of experimental and control groups on weather conditions-seasons and food-drinks subjects

Total Achievement	Subjects	Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	df	t	Sig.(2-tailed)
Pretest	Weather cond.	Control	25	9,36	3,63	48	,41	,67
		Experiment	25	9,84	4,43			
	Foods-Drinks	Control	25	31,20	13,47		1,10	,27
		Experiment	25	35,32	12,91			
Posttest	Weather cond.	Control	25	72,00	10,84		5,04	,000
		Experiment	25	86,00	8,64			
	Foods-Drinks	Control	25	74,72	11,98		6,60	,000
		Experiment	25	92,80	6,63			

According to Table 2, on weather conditions-seasons subject, the means of pretest grades of control group are $X= 9,36$, Std Deviation is $S= 3,63$, of the experimental group are $X= 9,84$, Std Deviation is $S= 4,43$. The difference between weather conditions-seasons pretest

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achievement level grade means of experimental and control group is not [$t_{(48)}=,41$ $p>,05$] significant. On food-drinks subject, the means of pretest grades of control group are $X=31,20$, Std. Deviation is $S= 13,47$, of the experimental group are $X= 35,32$, Std. Deviation is $S= 12,91$. The difference between the food-drinks pretest achievement level means of experimental group and control group is not [$t_{(48)}= 1,10$, $P>,05$] significant. Weather conditions-seasons control group posttest grade means are $X= 72,00$, Std. Deviation is $S= 10, 84$, of the experimental group, it is $X= 86,00$, Std. Deviation is $S= 8,64$. The difference between food-drinks subject control group posttest achievement grade means is [$t_{(48)}= 5,04$ $P<,001$] for the benefit of experimental group. Food-drinks subject control group posttest grade means are $X= 74,71$, Std. Deviation $S= 11,98$ and of the experimental group, it is $X= 92,80$, Std. Deviation $S= 6,63$. The difference between the food-drinks posttest achievement level means of experimental group and control group is [$t_{(48)}=,6,60$, $P<,001$] in favor of experimental group.

Table 3 The levels of pretest-posttest total achievement level of experimental-control groups on weather conditions-season subjects at knowledge, comprehension and application categories

Subject	Group	Achievement Level	Pretest/ Lasttest	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	df	t	Sig.(2-tailed)
Weather condit. Season	Control	knowledge	Pretest	25	7,52	2,40	24	-54,74	,000
			Lasttest	25	34,40	2,00			
		comprehension	Pretest	25	1,92	2,61		-46,66	,000
			Lasttest	25	34,64	4,11			
		application	Pretest	25	,40	1,00		-15,78	,000
			Lasttest	25	16,96	5,16			
	Experiment	knowledge	Pretest	25	6,00	2,00		-36,90	,000
			Lasttest	25	30,88	3,56			
		comprehension	Pretest	25	1,92	2,03		-42,71	,000
			Lasttest	25	36,56	3,76			
		application	Pretest	25	1,44	1,78		-8,47	,000
			Lasttest	25	10,72	5,22			

According to Table 3, on the subjects weather conditions-seasons, the experimental control groups cognitive domain knowledge, comprehension and application pretest-posttest grade means are significant in favor of posttest achievement level grade means at the level of $P=,001$.

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Table 4 The levels of pretest-posttest total achievement level of experimental-control groups on food-drinks subjects at knowledge, comprehension and application categories

Subjects	Group	Achievement Level	Pretest/ Lasttest	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	df	t	Sig.(2-tailed)
Food-Drinks	Control	knowledge	Pretest	25	23,40	4,89	24	-12,86	,000
			Lasttest	25	36,00	,000			
		comprehension	Pretest	25	9,72	7,56		-9,44	,000
			Lasttest	25	24,00	,000			
		application	Pretest	25	2,08	3,85		-28,54	,000
			Lasttest	25	32,80	6,63			
	Experiment	knowledge	Pretest	25	23,04	5,59		-11,20	,000
			Lasttest	25	34,92	1,91			
		comprehension	Pretest	25	5,40	6,42		-13,23	,000
			Lasttest	25	19,32	4,58			
		application	Pretest	25	2,24	4,17		-18,24	,000
			Lasttest	25	20,48	6,51			

According to Table 4, on food-drinks subject, the experimental control groups cognitive domain knowledge, comprehension and application pretest-posttest grade means are significant in favor of posttest achievement level grade means at the level of $P=,001$.

Table 5 Posttest grades of experimental-control groups on weather conditions-seasons

Categories	Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	df	t	Sig.(2-tailed)
knowledge	Control	25	30,88	2,56	48	4,30	,000
	Experiment	25	34,40	2,00			
comprehension	Control	25	30,56	3,76		3,65	,001
	Experiment	25	34,64	4,11			
application	Control	25	10,72	5,22		4,24	,000
	Experiment	25	16,96	5,16			

According to Table 5, when the posttest achievement level grade means of experimental control groups on weather conditions-seasons are compared, they are significant in favor of experimental group at knowledge step [$t_{(48)} = 4,30$ $P < ,001$], at comprehension step [$t_{(48)} = 3,65$ $P < ,001$], at application step [$t_{(48)} = 4,24$, $P > ,0001$].

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Table 6 The posttest grades of experimental-control groups on food-drinks.

Categories	Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	df	t	Sig.(2-tailed)
knowledge	Control	25	31,92	1,91	48	2,82	,007
	Experiment	25	36,00	,000			
comprehension	Control	25	19,32	4,56	48	5,09	,000
	Experiment	25	24,00	,000			
application	Control	25	20,48	6,51	48	6,62	0,000
	Experiment	25	32,80	6,63			

According to Table 6, when the posttest achievement level grade means of experimental control groups on food-drinks are compared, they are significant in favor of experimental group at knowledge step [$t_{(48)} = 2,82$, $P < 0,007$], at comprehension step [$t_{(48)} = 5,09$, $P < ,000$], at application step [$t_{(48)} = 6,62$, $P > ,000$].

Table 7 The results on the effect of drama method on permanence of acquisitions

Subjects	Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	df	t	Sig.(2-tailed)
Weather cond. - Seasons	Experiment	25	82,88	11,13	48	4,73	,000
	Control	25	70,16	7,52			
Foods-Drinks	Experiment	25	88,00	6,60	48	6,64	,000
	Control	25	70,96	11,44			

The permanence of acquisitions on weather conditions-seasons subject, Table 7, in experimental and control groups is significant [$t_{(48)} = 4,73$ $P < ,001$] in favor of experimental group. The permanence of acquisitions on food-drinks subject in experimental and control groups is significant [$t_{(48)} = 6,64$ $P < ,001$] in favor of experimental group.

Conclusion

It was founded that the teaching based on drama method in English teaching is effective. Actually learning a foreign language is an anxious process. Since drama method gives an individual an opportunity to participate naturally in teaching-learning process, an individual participates in this natural process as himself actively. It can be said that this situation has a positive effect on permanence of the lessons learnt. This conclusion is supported by other research findings about the effect of drama method on different levels and subjects. Taşlı (2003),

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Çevik (2006) and Susüzer (2006) express on their research that drama and game methods are effective on motivation, keeping the attentions up, developing the creativity, and keeping the pupils out of psychological stress in foreign language teaching. Taşlı (2003) in English teaching, Tanrıseven (2000) in Maths teaching, Koç (1999) in Social Sciences teaching, Akyüzlüer (2007) in the developments of Musical skills proved the efficiency of drama.

In English teaching, the teaching method based on drama is more effective on the categories of knowledge, comprehension and application of cognitive domain and on total achievement than the traditional method. The reasons of this are, an individual has a cognitive awareness about academic, social, professional, and recognition of different cultures. This situation requires the pupils to motivate, direct to foreign language learning and to participate in this process actively. During the process, the pupils make the information that is necessary for them meaningful and internalize it and when it is necessary they perform this information as a behavior.

In English teaching, the teaching method based on drama method is effective on the permanence of the lessons learnt. Maybe, it can be said that the most important finding of this research is this. Because, thanks to the teaching based on drama method, there is an observable and permanent behavior change that is in conclusion of an experience. In the teaching based on drama method, the pupils have a positive attitude towards learning in the beginning of the process, during the process and after the completion of the process.

The conclusion of the research, the suggestions below are made about the situations arrived at and the forthcoming researches: 1- By making experimental works on the other lessons in primary school education program, the effect of drama method on the achievement should be searched. 2- English teachers should be trained about the application of drama method aimed at increasing their cognitive proficiency, affective features, and behavioral skills. 3- Drama lesson should be given a place in all teacher training areas of the undergraduate program that raise teachers.

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