

MOTIVATE ESL STUDENTS' INTRINSIC SKILL IN THE ESL CLASSROOMS**Dr.T.MEKALA & Ms. C.DIVYA**ASSISTANT PROFESSOR,
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ABSTRACT: *English is the primary business language and it has become almost a need for people to speak English if they are to enter a global workforce, research from all over the world shows that cross-border business communication is most often conducted in English. Its importance in the global market place therefore cannot be understated, learning English really can change your life. This project provides two major functions. The first function of this paper is to offer an **alternative to the more traditional teaching pedagogy** currently used in the ESL classroom. Theatre- based activities, such as playwriting and improvisation, have been positively linked to many linguistic and non-linguistic aspects of language acquisition such as self-esteem, intrinsic motivation, and self-confidence. It is also providing space for students to use the language – particularly in circumstances where they're guaranteed success and encourage confidence in students.*

*The second major function of this paper is to provide **ESL students the opportunity to experience the language through a more authentic medium**, complete with teachable non-verbal cues, colloquial jargon, and emotional content. While most theatre scenes and plays are pre-written, they are designed to mirror spontaneous conversation. Though students may not have the support of a native speaker, with the attached curriculum they will still be able to familiarize themselves with the nuances of the language. As a result, students will internalize the less easily taught implications of the language, as well as the grammar they are so rigorously taught. By exposing students to language mimicking real-world application, they gain valuable skills that are missing in traditional teaching materials. Through instruction of these skills, and by having students employ them in a variety of situations, learners build confidence and cultivate a desire to learn.*

Preferably, this specially designed curriculum is formulated to insert itself within the ESL classroom, as an alternative – or supplement – to current teaching pedagogy. However, it is important to keep in mind that all chosen texts, all created scripts, and all activities developed, would be done with consideration for the class unit's language goals. Through a mixture of drama-based activities, students are exposed to the necessary grammatical, syntactic, phonological, morphological, and pragmatic knowledge in contextualized situations mirroring an authentic English-language environment. And by lowering students' anxiety, providing an engaging classroom environment, and delivering consistent content, their receptivity to learning is heightened in all ways.

Key Words: alternate teaching pedagogy, ESL classrooms, real world application

Drama in the EFL/ESL Classroom

Theatre respects integrity, imagination, beauty, balance and humanity. It achieves all this through a construct that is completely imagined, not only on the part of the audience that enters this construct. Theatre then is an experience of pure imagination," says David S. Craig.

The use of drama has major implications in the language classroom. In particular, drama has been found to increase learner self-esteem and confidence, oral proficiency, general literacy skills, and to promote purposeful learning. Because dramatic texts are designed to flow like natural language, they are a great source of linguistic support in areas lacking opportunities for students to participate in authentic language situations.

The use of theatre provides students with the chance to explore language not only through verbal communication, but also through the expressing of emotions and non-verbal communication. Butt (1998) found that improvisation activities were a great tool in promoting confidence within the classroom. Ideally, these exercises achieved two particular goals: 1) full participation by the students in a space that allowed them to produce language without correction or judgment, and 2) increased risk taking in an environment where a certain level of trust has been built. Improve games that require students to tune into their classmates teach them to focus on one another's behavior and attitude, teaching them how to react properly. The beauty of exercises done without set scripts is that, in giving students a specific topic to address, the educator allows them space to discover the language themselves, in a low-stakes environment; within the context of a game.

Miccoli (2003) offers support for using theatre in the language classroom as a means of providing students language-related cultural information not traditionally provided in the classroom. According to Miccoli, language is not only the words that are spoken, but incorporates how native speakers interact with one another, shake hands, hold their bodies, etc. By using theatre in the classroom, these aspects are introduced in a more natural way. Additionally, Miccoli's investigation revealed that confidence and trust were effectively built in the theatre-language classroom, allowing the students to function and support one another as a cohesive unit.

Ernst-Slavit and Wenger (1998) found that using drama in a pullout ESL classroom involved increased opportunities to use oral communication skills. Typically, oral communication in the ESL/EFL classroom is relegated to practicing vocabulary and grammatical structures. However, theatre – improvisation in particular – allows students to utilize their oral

proficiency skills for purposeful communication. This is especially important in EFL settings where the classroom provides the only opportunity. Also, through student-generated theatre texts, learners are able to express themselves creatively, using the language for reasons other than structural language practice. Charlyn Wessels (1991), an EFL teacher at Stevenson College in Edinburgh, uses her students' generated material (recordings, essays, videos, etc.) as authentic material for future classes. These materials can be adapted for various levels of language proficiency, and cover the main language skills (writing, speaking, grammar, pronunciation, reading, and listening).

Once students begin to find their place on the stage, the next step is to build them into an ensemble. The idea is for them to see themselves not as a solo player, but as an important piece to a larger puzzle. Some of the games included are invaluable in getting students to work together. For example, 'The Machine' is an excellent way to get everyone in sync. By asking students to pay attention to their classmates, and compliment their actions to one another, the educator instills in them the skills necessary to communicate with one another. Slowly, students will learn to listen to and trust one another. When that happens, everyone is finally on the same page.

After building the ensemble, the next step is to fine-tune its focus. When onstage, students must speak, listen, move and react. And while it sounds like what we do in everyday life, there are some unique challenges that present themselves when one takes the stage. For example, because students will be working from full scripts, they will know how the story ends, unlike in real life. As a result, it will probably be difficult for them to keep their reactions fresh, to play each line as it comes and not the end of the scene. Ideally, the educator wants students to learn to hear each line for the first time, every time they perform. Some of the exercises provided are designed to help students expand their toolkit, making this possible. Students are required to pay close attention to their cast-mate in the center of the circle, and react quickly when the spotlight is on them. It requires concentration and trust, both in themselves and in others.

Now that students have filled their toolkit with the basics, it is time for the next step: putting it into practice. Improvisation is a great stepping-stone toward scripted exercises, as it allows students a spontaneous, creative outlet. It is also a wonderful way to create level-appropriate scripts in the classroom, by recording student-generated content. Improve gives students the chance to speak, move and react – like with scripted scenes – but with the added benefit of true, in the moment reactions. Exercises such as

'Beads on a String', where students must go from point A to point B, are excellent. Not only are students asked to pay close attention to the flow of conversation, and how to keep the scene moving in the right direction, but they must also discover their objectives and stay true to them over the course of the scene.

Conclusions

Knowledge of the English language has become an extensive requirement in countries all across the globe. As one of the universal languages, it opens both academic and professional ways that might otherwise be inaccessible. While many countries require English language study in elementary, middle, and/or high school, it is difficult to adequately impart the benefits of learning to young students. United with the lack of need for the language independent of the classroom, students lack motivation and interest.

By providing teachers and administrators with an alternative method for teaching English, they receive the tools necessary to create a more engaging and interactive curriculum. In parallel, students are provided with a medium focused on more authentic language, when measured up against traditional pedagogical materials. Through the development of this project, it is possible to create a theatre-based curriculum for English language programs in both traditional K-12 schools, as well as private language institutions. The curriculum itself is customizable by applying the process to any program's specific language material, guaranteeing teachers continue to impart the desired linguistic information. The supplemental aspects – tongue twisters, stories for adaptations, etc. can be used, as is, by all.

The benefits of developing theatre-based curriculum according to this model are twofold. One of the greatest benefits, for any academic program, is building intrinsic motivation in students. When students are motivated to study – when they come to class desiring knowledge – they immediately retain more than students who are resistant. Unfortunately, due to a lack of support from the outside environment, intrinsic motivation is difficult to cultivate, particularly through the use of traditional materials. With a Theatre-based approach, students are offered the opportunity to acquire language through creativity, exploration and play.

The other crucial benefit lends itself to authentic use of the language. In ESL environments, students have the benefit of needing English outside of the classroom: at the grocery store, in other classes, at the library, etc. Whether or not they desire learning, they receive automatic reinforcement from their surroundings. Students in EFL settings, on the other hand, have little, if any, support outside of the classroom. Their spoken practice is limited to the conversation exercises used in their classroom, which largely test grammar and vocabulary acquisition. By using theatre, students are exposed to many different forms of authentic language. They practice the forms through performance, they display their command of the forms through improvisation, and they practice grammar and vocabulary through writing. A theatre-based curriculum is truly a universal method for language teaching.

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