



INDONESIAN EFL LEARNERS' PERSPECTIVE ON THE IMPACT OF DRAMA-BASED INSTRUCTION ON THEIR SPEAKING CONFIDENCE

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Abstract

Speaking confidence remains one of the main challenges faced by English Education students, especially in their early semesters. This study aims to explore the impact of Drama-Based Instruction (DBI) on students' speaking confidence, based on their previous experiences implementing this approach in class. Using a qualitative approach, data were collected through student reflections and semi-structured interviews. The findings indicate that DBI helped students reduce anxiety when speaking, improve pronunciation, and encourage freer verbal expression. Students also reported that emotional involvement in dramatic roles created a safe and supportive environment for using English orally. These findings suggest that DBI can be an effective approach to building speaking confidence among early-semester students in the context of English as a foreign language learning.

Keywords: Drama Based Instruction; Speaking; English Education Students.

INTRODUCTION

Speaking is an essential skill in learning a language; however, it is challenging for the students, especially in the initial semesters. In reality, the fear of being wrong, self-consciousness about the way they speak, and students' anxiety about public speaking deter them from using English orally, regardless of whether they are in the classroom or in a real-life situation. Drama-Based Instruction provides an alternative route to tackle these issues in learning. Drama enables students to experience language by becoming another individual.

Affective Filter Hypothesis – Stephen Krashen (1982) proposed that emotional (affective) factors such as anxiety, motivation, and self-confidence play a crucial role in second language acquisition. When learners feel anxious, embarrassed, or lack confidence, their "affective filter" rises, which blocks language input from being processed effectively by the brain. On the other hand, when learners feel comfortable, motivated, and confident, the filter lowers, allowing input to reach the language acquisition device more easily. Drama provides a safe space where students can freely express themselves while exploring language through character roles and real-world interaction. In this situation, DBI engages students on an emotional and cognitive level, which can greatly improve motivation and speaking abilities. Drama-Based Instruction (DBI) is not merely about teaching language, but about bringing it to life in an authentic, communicative, and enjoyable context. Unlike traditional teaching methods that tend to be passive or strictly structured, DBI offers a more interactive

and meaningful learning experience. Experiential Learning Theory – David Kolb (1984) emphasized that effective learning occurs through direct experience, rather than through memorization or theory alone. DBI aligns well with this view as it engages students in real-life experiences such as role-playing characters, simulating situations, and participating in authentic dialogues. This topic is important to discuss at present because, in the context of English language learning that increasingly emphasizes real communicative competence, students are not only required to master cognitive aspects such as grammar and vocabulary, but also to be able to communicate confidently in various situations. Therefore, I chose this topic to explore firsthand the impact or personal perspectives regarding the implementation of Drama-Based Instruction (DBI). Although there have been several studies on DBI, many of them still focus on academic outcomes (such as scores, grammar, or fluency), and few have deeply examined students' perspectives on how DBI helps build their speaking confidence. Based on the students' firsthand experiences taking part in theater-related activities, this study explores how DBI affects their speaking confidence. The study aims to investigate how students view theater as a means of enhancing their public speaking abilities. Through semi-structured interviews and reflective responses, the research seeks to understand how DBI reduces anxiety, develops fluency, and strengthens students' self-confidence in English oral communication

METHOD

To acquire detailed information about students' experiences with drama-based instruction, this study used a qualitative approach. Semi-structured interviews with English Education students who had previously taken part in drama-based learning sessions were used to gather data. Open-ended questions about the participants' perceived progress, difficulties, and confidence were posed. After being transcribed, the responses underwent a thematic analysis..

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Several important themes about the effects of DBI were identified through the analysis of interview data:

1. **Confidence Growth:** After seeing drama performances repeatedly, students frequently reported feeling more confident. “i feel more confident when i understand my role”, said one student. This is in line with research conducted by (Davis, 2017) that found Drama-Based Instruction can help students overcome nervousness and increase their confidence in participating in learning activities.
2. **Anxiety Reduction** Despite their initial nervousness, students gradually lost their fear of public speaking, particularly after they had mastered the dialogue.
3. **Improvement in Speaking Skills:** Participants said their fluency, intonation, and pronunciation had improved. They noted that acting in roles forced them to speak clearly and with emotion
4. **Application in Real Life:** Participants said they felt confident in academic environments but still needed to work on confidence in unfamiliar or formal settings. Drama, however, was viewed as a foundational experience.

We found patterns like better fluency, less anxiety, and more confidence. Students' descriptions of their changes before and after taking part in drama activities—specifically, in their speaking abilities—were the main focus of the analysis

CONCLUSION

Students studying English education benefit greatly from Drama-Based Instruction (DBI), which helps them become more comfortable speaking. Students' speaking performance, fluency, and anxiety levels all improved with consistent practice and emotional engagement in theater. Early-semester speaking classes are encouraged to use DBI. To expand its pedagogical applications, future studies might examine DBI at various levels and language proficiency levels.

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