

Abstract

This research focuses on the application of the pedagogical discipline Drama in Education (DIE) in second-language (L2) classrooms for teaching English grammar. In this study, we have followed the construction grammar approach and innovatively blended the notion of teaching grammar explicitly with the practices followed under DIE. Explicit grammar teaching emphasizes providing clear and detailed explanations of the grammar rules and thus prioritizes accuracy and comprehension. However, the notion of explicit grammar teaching lacks support from numerous scholars. The basic argument for their discontent is that it becomes an additional burden with little or no relevance for the students to learn each grammar rule separately. Moreover, students fail to effectively apply the memorized rules or find their usage in real-life applications. With the emergence of construction grammar in L2 teaching and learning, grammar teaching has taken a different approach. *Construction Grammar* suggests that learning grammar involves understanding how linguistic forms (like morphemes, words, and phrasal patterns) are associated with their semantic or discourse function (Ellis, 2023). Therefore, language instructors shifted their attention to usage-based models of language teaching and started implementing innovative approaches in the research and pedagogical practices in teaching and learning L2 grammar. However, recent research studies underline the inefficiency of any single method in imparting second language skills to students' diverse nature (i.e. socio-economic background, motivation, cognitive ability, language aptitude). Thus, the learners and teachers need to have many options to select one that works for them. Moreover, it was also found that any method for second language study can only be effective when learners' engagement with texts is performed because they have a genuine interest in them, they are willing to explore their meanings, and they feel motivated to write since they have some valuable information to share. The later researchers understood this limitation well and proposed the postmethod pedagogy. Postmethod pedagogy is a quest to find an alternative to method rather than an alternative method (Kumaravadivelu, 1994). The post-method pedagogy empowers language educators to formulate theories of practice specific to the classroom and facilitates the creation of innovative, location-specific practices.

Drama in education aligns well with the postmethod conditions. It stands out as a unique field combining performance and teaching methodologies, focusing on process-oriented theatrical strategies tailored to actively involve diverse learners (McAvoy & O'Connor

2022). DIE has gained considerable research interest in L2 education in recent years. It has also been noted that various practices and conventions have been developed to use drama for language teaching goals, i.e., improvisations, simulations, creative drama, and drama in education/educational drama. Regardless of variations in their approach, all of these practices serve the common purpose of enhancing language skills among learners. Such variations indicate how every type of drama in L2 instruction has value because it creates circumstances for cross-linguistic interactions and promotes genuine communication between teachers and students. As a result, the typical classroom interactions are radically and productively changed. However, there is a dearth of research on the application of DIE in teaching grammar. Additionally, no research has been done using field experiments to understand the impact of DIE in the Indian context. For this reason, the present study employed the practice of process drama to investigate its efficacy in teaching English grammar. Process drama is a practice developed under the pedagogical discipline of DIE, combining a series of connected activities so that students create meaning for themselves by engaging in the activity which matches their cognitive ability. The practice of process drama is used so widely in educational settings that the term has become almost synonymous with drama in education. This practice goes beyond mere improvisation, role-play, mime, simulation, or else to generate the targeted experience.

In the context of India, this research might hold significant value since the National Curriculum Framework for School Education 2023 emphasizes the integration of art in all its forms—visual and performing—throughout the curriculum and the learning process (National Steering Committee for National Curriculum Frameworks, 2023). This approach, broadly known as Art-integrated learning, promotes experiential learning, which results in greater comprehension of the concept and the development of critical thinking and creativity (CBSE, 2019). Furthermore, the National Education Policy 2020 has explicitly advocated for the widespread use of experiential learning and integrating art across disciplines as a pedagogical strategy (Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India, 2020). Consequently, the present study assumes considerable significance within the National Education Policy 2020 framework.

The research thesis includes three case studies based on three different contexts. The methodology employed in the studies consists of mixed methods. The primary data collection involved language tests utilizing the pretest-posttest design, reflective journals

through observation and field notes and a supplementary component utilizing semi-structured interviews. In this work, we have also attempted to develop a framework for developing lesson plans, aligning theoretical foundations within drama in education principles blended with construction grammar principles.

All three experiments confirm that DIE is a viable pedagogical approach for learning English grammar in second-language classrooms. The study contributes to the existing literature on integrating drama-based practices into L2 teaching and emphasizes the potential benefits of incorporating experiential learning strategies, such as DIE, in language curricula. Additionally, in the age of technological shifts, the study initiates the discussion on conducting online drama in education sessions for L2 teaching and learning. Thus, the findings of this study have implications for language educators, curriculum designers, policymakers, and software developers, offering valuable insights and practical recommendations for integrating process drama in L2 teaching methodologies in diverse educational settings. Additionally, this research contributes to the ongoing discourse on innovative language teaching techniques, catering to the needs of the diverse student populations in language classrooms.