

Chapter 6 : Conclusion

6.1 Introduction

This thesis investigated the efficacy of Drama in Education in teaching grammar to middle school students. We initiated the study with the development of a framework to develop plans for teaching grammar. Subsequently, this framework was implemented in the execution of three intervention programs. The First case study explored the application of Drama in Education in online mode for teaching the English language, primarily English grammar. The study made an attempt to highlight the challenges experienced during the integration of DIE in an online setting. Through this intervention program, we also sought to gain insights into the perception of both students and their parents regarding viability and practicability of DIE in online mode for teaching English language.

The other two intervention programs attempted to understand the role of drama in the physical classroom in developing grammar. Additionally, these interventions aimed to distinguish the shifts in classroom dynamics brought about by the integration of drama compared to traditional language teaching methods. Through these two case studies, we also aimed to understand the difference in student behaviour between those instructed using DIE approach and those taught through the conventional teaching methods.

6.2 Discussion

This section discusses the findings in relation to the previous research studies in the field. We discuss the findings from the second and third case studies followed by a discussion on the findings of the online case study.

6.2.1 Discussion on Findings from the Case Studies Conducted in Physical Mode

When focusing on the results of DIE intervention in teaching tenses and parts of speech, the results clearly show a positive effect. We find that DIE is effective in developing Middle School Students' Tense and Parts of Speech accuracy in particular, and increasing English grammar accuracy, in general. The result corroborates the empirical research by O'Gara (2008), which shows the effectiveness of drama in teaching verb tenses over the traditional method in the school context. Additionally, the study furthers the findings by Hietz (2021), which suggests that drama-based teaching helps students to improve their grammar. However, there remains a lack of empirical studies on the efficacy of Drama in Education or drama-based teaching specifically for Grammar learning. Therefore, the study provides some insight for future researchers working in the area of grammar teaching using DIE.

In addition to the quantitative results, findings from observation and field notes provide further evidence of the positive impact of DIE. Students exhibited a sense of ownership and expressed their engagement and interest in the method, describing it as both enjoyable and experiential. Moreover, their participation in the classroom was enhanced over the duration of the study. These findings substantiate the previous studies on L2 learning using DIE (Rothwell, 2011;

Dunn et al., 2012; Abenzoa & Decoursey, 2019; Zaroog, 2021; Hietz, 2021; Piazzoli, 2022; Jacobs, 2023).

This result corroborates the findings of Stinson and Freebody (2006) that show that the intervention group performed better in the post-test of vocabulary learning. Though vocabulary learning differs significantly from Parts of Speech learning, both studies substantiate the potential of process drama in the L2 classroom. Additionally, the study suggests that the students improved significantly in their scores for both the open and closed classes. Open-class words, being productive in nature, often lead to confusion as they can belong to multiple Parts of Speech categories. At the same time, closed-class items are relatively unproductive. Despite the differences between these two meta-categories, process drama demonstrated potential benefits in enhancing the understanding of both open-class and closed-class parts of speech. This result indicates that the process drama can be equally good in comprehending the different complexities of language. However, further investigation into the degree of improvement in each part of speech would provide a deeper understanding of the utilization of the process drama method in teaching and learning word classes.

The observational field notes stress the importance of using the practice of process drama for the additional factors, such as motivation, attitude, and confidence, which affect L2 learning. The findings of this study may serve as a motivation for practitioners to integrate pedagogical approaches that facilitate the learning process and transform the classroom environment. Process drama, with its inherent characteristics, has the potential to address these additional factors automatically. By incorporating process drama into language teaching, educators can create an engaging and interactive learning environment that promotes active participation, self-expression, and a welcoming attitude of the learners towards the L2 lessons. These

findings further the result of the studies by To et al. (2011) and Kalogirou et al. (2017), which report that motivation and confidence among students increased and more students started expressing themselves in the classroom. However, both studies used more than two research tools to collect the data to enrich their findings. Therefore, the findings from the present study might have presented a different and comprehensive result if the data were collected using other tools such as focus group discussions, semi-structured interviews, questionnaires, and reflective journals.

6.2.2 Discussion on Findings from the Case Study Conducted in Online Mode

The findings from the qualitative study explain how the learners and their parents perceived the pedagogical application of Drama in Education in online mode for teaching the English language and enhancing social and cognitive skills. Though the online case study remained at an exploratory level, it provided good insights into the following perspectives.

The findings indicate that Zoom and WhatsApp-mediated drama strategies helped learners successfully co-create activities even in online spaces. The intervention program also enhanced students' confidence, social skills, motivation and linguistic ability of the learners. These findings from the study align with Maor et al.'s (2023) study, which indicates that compared to traditional in-person classrooms, online sessions demonstrated greater creativity in terms of fluency and flexibility. However, Maor et al.'s study also highlights the lack of originality while conducting the classes online, contradicting the present study's findings suggesting that planning and practice demanded greater originality while teaching the L2 classes online.

The results corroborate the findings of Radhika and Bhuvaneshwari (2023), emphasizing that technology-enabled learning fosters interactive communication between instructors and

students, boosting students' confidence in engaging with their peers. This alignment is consistent with the findings of Cziboly and Bethlenfalvy (2020), which highlight that online platforms offer a versatile means of delving into urgent issues through the medium of drama. The pandemic was a big concern, and the students were isolated. Therefore, the urgent need of the language learners was to interact with the other learners. The online process drama helped them interact with each other and co-create their learnings together.

The findings extend the study by Göksel and Abraham (2022), which claims that the conduction of drama in online mode proves to be more beneficial than in offline mode in some instances, like giving autonomy to learners to rearrange their own space, also allowing participants from different parts of the world to participate. In this study, we could easily connect with the learners from three different parts of India. If the study were conducted on a large scale, it would not have a big task connecting the learners from different parts of the world. Further, students at home could rearrange their own space at their convenience. Also, bringing various artefacts to the session was more accessible for the students. The findings from this study contradict the views by the participants in Eljack et al.'s (2023) study, mentioning distraction as a factor in decreasing the productivity of online classes; none of the students said technical difficulties in using Zoom and WhatsApp applications for their study purpose. However, the participants in Eljack et al.'s study were adult learners. This contradiction provides us with an understanding of how young learners are more technologically friendly when using digital media for their learning.

The findings from the present study support the outcomes from the González Becerra and del Río Alcalá (2022), which report that despite the absence of physical presence, learners

enhanced communicative competence through orality practices, genre exploration, and multimodal strategies.

The findings from the analysis of the observation and field note further the results of Eljack et al. (2023), indicating that the utilization of Zoom facilitates English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students in establishing meaningful connections with both their mentors and peers, thereby enhancing their overall productivity. While comparing the results to the use of Drama in Education in physical mode, this study supports the finding of Stinson and Freebody (2006), who reported that the relationship among learners was improved. Also, their observation on intercultural awareness corroborates the findings of Piazzoli (2010), who concluded that the students get a chance through process drama to develop intercultural awareness by maintaining the distancing yet empathizing with the characters and getting a chance to reflect and negotiate meaning.

The reflective observations and field notes from the facilitator in this study diverge from the conclusions drawn by Aggarwal & Elembilassery (2023). The letter states that, in online settings, the course content was contracted by narrowing the scope of the course coverage. In contrast, the present study demonstrates that roleplay was performed effectively and could easily be connected with other activities to develop the process and provide a deeper experience to the learners. Moreover, the facilitator was able to exercise and reflect on the cross-curricular learnings with students, extending the course coverage. Furthermore, the findings from this study contrast with the results of Ponnusamy et al. (2023), who indicated that a majority of school teachers experienced mental and physical discomforts during the transition from face-to-face teaching to online teaching. In contrast, the current study showcased a positive and

enthusiastic facilitator who conducted classes cheerfully, maintaining physical comfort within their own space while effectively connecting with students in the virtual environment.

The observations regarding the difficulties in aligning with curricular goals originally formulated for physical classrooms are consistent with Namboodiri's (2022) findings. Namboodiri emphasizes the critical challenge of adapting an online learning mode to a curriculum designed for traditional classroom settings. Therefore, online learning in higher education must distinguish itself through innovative pedagogical practices that encourage student connection, engagement, and transformation, producing positive outcomes for all stakeholders involved.

The findings derived from the comprehensive analysis of the three case studies counter prevailing misconceptions regarding the applicability and resource demands of Drama in Education. Contrary to the prevailing notion that process drama is confined to specialized language laboratory settings, the empirical evidence demonstrates their efficacy within both conventional and virtual classroom environments. Additionally, the results refute the misconception that process drama necessitates excessive time and resources for effective implementation. These findings highlight the versatility and feasibility of integrating process drama into mainstream educational contexts and technology-mediated space.

6.3 Synthesis of the Findings from All Three Case Studies

The synthesis of findings from online and offline case studies emphasizes the multifaceted nature of integrating DIE into language learning contexts. Across all three settings, learners exhibited an increased involvement in the learning process, suggesting the potential of DIE to

improve student motivation and participation. Furthermore, there was a noticeable sense of ownership among students in all three investigations. Within the context of the online case study, it was observed that learners displayed a positive inclination towards the pedagogical approach, as a significant proportion expressed enthusiasm for the interactive and immersive nature of online DIE sessions. Similarly, the offline case studies highlighted the stimulating and collaborative atmosphere cultivated through in-person DIE sessions. Across all three settings, the classroom environment remained energetic and learning-oriented, with students demonstrating enthusiasm for peer feedback and collaborative activities. The facilitator observed an increased level of motivation among students, who expressed a positive attitude towards the process drama throughout the program. The integration of DIE enabled learners to represent various facets of their identities, facilitating active participation and enhancing language skills.

While there were significant accomplishments in all three situations, certain challenges emerged that necessitated thoughtful deliberation. In the online environment, disparities in network connectivity and technological challenges were barriers to smooth communication and engagement.

In a physical classroom setting, the absence of session recordings presents a notable drawback compared to online sessions, where the embedded feature to record sessions facilitates a post-reflection and reassessment, enriching the learning process. Moreover, learners' communication dynamics among themselves in physical classrooms are predominantly oral, limiting the scope for multifaceted interaction. Conversely, online platforms offer versatile communication channels, enabling students to engage in oral, written, or visual communication, transcending spatial barriers and fostering inclusive participation.

Furthermore, physical classrooms present limitations in intercultural communication opportunities, while online platforms offer a more inclusive and diversified setting for cultural interactions, hence fostering a genuinely intercultural learning atmosphere.

Talking specifically about linguistic growth, physical classrooms provide potentially superior outcomes for grammar teaching in our study. However, future research may attempt to determine the effectiveness of integrating DIE in an online setting, specifically for grammar teaching. The intrinsic make-believe process in DIE presented issues due to the virtual form of communication and activities in online interventions, which potentially led to a heightened risk for misunderstanding and misinterpretation. On the other hand, the physical classroom setting provides a feeling of tangible presence and proximity, enhancing the authenticity of the make-believe experience. Additionally, the student's prior acquaintance with physical classroom formations and the possibility of engaging in diverse forms may contribute to a more immersive learning atmosphere compared to virtual settings.

6.4 Implications

The findings from this study deliver implications for language instructors, curriculum developers, and policymakers. Additionally, the findings from the online study have implications for software developers. Language educators can take advantage of the framework provided in this study to incorporate drama-based activities into their lesson plans, which may enhance learners' engagement and immersive learning experiences. By integrating DIE practices in L2 classrooms, teachers can enhance learners' engagement, stimulate active participation, and develop an in-depth understanding of L2 grammar, particularly and overall

language. Moreover, educators can adapt and customize these practices to accommodate learners' diverse learning needs, styles and preferences.

The present study's findings provide implications for curriculum designers in advancing language curricula with innovative teaching practices. DIE concepts can be incorporated into language courses to improve the relevance and efficacy of teaching resources, giving students more comprehensive language learning opportunities. Curriculum designers can enhance students' language proficiency, creativity, and critical thinking abilities by including drama-based tasks, exercises, and evaluations in the language curriculum. Furthermore, by creating curriculum materials that facilitate the smooth integration of DIE into language training, they may guarantee conformity with educational objectives and standards.

The findings of the study extend the importance of recognizing and promoting innovative pedagogical practices, such as Drama in Education, within language education policies and initiatives. By highlighting the importance of experiential learning and creativity in language training, policymakers can recommend the incorporation of DIE approaches into national and regional frameworks for language education. Additionally, they can allocate funds and resources to support professional development programs that train teachers on using DIE practices. Policy makers can help improve language learning outcomes and develop students' 21st-century abilities by giving priority to the integration of DIE into education policies and frameworks.

Within the context of an increasingly digitalized educational environment, software developers are essential in enabling creative teaching and learning practices. The present study's

examination of DIE in an online setting highlights the need for software developers to create immersive and interactive online platforms designed explicitly for activity-based language teaching and learning. Software developers may provide language instructors with flexible tools for conducting engaging, joyful, interactive and effective language lessons in L2 classrooms in online mode. Furthermore, they can give priority to user-friendly interfaces, accessibility characteristics, and customizable functionalities so that instructors and learners can easily integrate these tools into their workflows for teaching and learning. Software developers can further the progress of technology-enhanced language education by working with educators and researchers, enabling educators to fully utilize DIE in virtual learning environments.

6.4.1 Implications for NEP 2020 and NCFSE 2023

The findings of the study hold significant implications for the aims and objectives highlighted in NEP 2020 and NCFSE 2023, especially for their implementation. In accordance with the policy documents, the findings from the present study make valuable contributions to the broader objectives of educational reform, art integration, language learning, and cross-curricular growth.

Through the lesson plans developed in the thesis and the framework provided for it, language educators can help cultivate a deeper appreciation of arts, an understanding of different languages, and critical and creative thinking amongst students, aligning with the NEP 2020's objective of facilitating experiential learning to develop an all-round individual, building all facets of growth (cognitive, affective, psychomotor, socio-emotional, and language) among learners while they acquire artistic skills. The findings in all three case studies show a positive shift in the classroom environment. The insights from those case studies can help to fulfil the

vision of NCFSE 2023, which emphasises the development of learners into individuals who possess a comprehensive range of skills, good health, ethical values, creativity, rationality, compassion, and care. Additionally, different drama conventions used in the session demonstrated stimulation of intriguing, engaging and joyous elements among the students, which aligns with the assertion of NCFSE 2023, which states that in order for information to be dynamic and interesting, rather than passive and stagnant, children must approach knowledge with a sense of curiosity and wonder.

The second and third case studies' findings show drama's utility in education to develop Middle school students' grammar skills and their usage in oral and written modes through different drama conventions. These findings are in accordance with NCFSE 2023, which states that instructors should strive to enhance their ability to recognise fundamental linguistic elements, such as words and sentence structure, and encourage students to apply them in oral and written expressions. Additionally, the framework given in the study provides a fine balance of art integration and explicit grammar teaching, which helps educators to implement policy objectives in the classroom.

The findings also show the possibility of DIE sessions to connect L2 learning with cross-curricular objectives. Also, the students will connect drama and arts to other disciplines. Educators can leverage the framework and lesson plans provided in the study to understand and practically implement the point mentioned in the NCFSE 2023 of emphasising meaningful connections between arts knowledge and other subjects (National Steering Committee for National Curriculum Frameworks, 2023)

Additionally, the findings also show that Drama in Education classes developed a sense of ownership in learners. Therefore, they led, guided and co-created activities in the process

drama. Therefore, the instructors may use DIE to develop ‘how to learn’ ability among learners, which has also been stressed by NCFSE 2023, which states that it is essential for all students to acquire knowledge, but more significantly, they should possess the skills of ‘how to learn’, becoming lifelong learners and possessing the capacity to adjust to evolving circumstances consistently.

6.5 Limitations

6.5.1 Limitations of the Case Studies Conducted in Physical Mode

Within our research context, it becomes essential to acknowledge the limitations of the present study, which should be considered when interpreting the findings. During our research study, we experienced various limitations owing to several reasons. Firstly, due to time constraints, we were able to conduct only two case studies in physical mode. The first case study had sixteen classes of 50 minutes each for teaching Tenses, allowing us to cover only eight tenses: Present Indefinite, Past Indefinite, Future Indefinite, Present Continuous, Past Continuous, Future Continuous, Present Perfect, and Past Perfect. Moreover, our primary focus remained on affirmative sentences for each of the eight tenses. We could not explore how effective the method can be when the changes in the word order occur within a sentence. The second case study had twenty classes of 50 minutes each. During these twenty days, we could cover all parts of speech, but cross-curricular topics could have been explored more.

Secondly, the sample size is relatively small in both studies, which may limit the generalizability of the results. A larger sample size would provide a more comprehensive understanding of the effectiveness of DIE in teaching grammar concepts.

The study does not consider gender distribution; thus, the discrepancy between gender distributions between both groups might affect the results of the study. Additionally, the cultural, linguistic, and educational contexts in which the study took place may have influenced the outcomes.

The classroom infrastructure was not designed in accordance with the need for the process of drama-based pedagogy. We carried out the research in the classrooms initially intended to teach traditionally. If the infrastructure had been different, the result might have been more positive in favour of process drama-based second language teaching.

Due to the limited resources, we could take a control group and a treatment group in the same school, which might have created sample contamination as the students may talk to each other about the way the sessions were conducted. This limitation might have some effect on the findings of the studies conducted in both case studies undertaken in physical mode.

6.5.2 Limitations of the Case Study Conducted in Online Mode

Researchers faced several limitations while conducting the study online. One noticeable limitation is the relatively small number of participating students, which limits the generalisability of the outcomes. Ideally, it would have been better if the study was conducted with a more extensive participant pool, representative of an entire classroom strength, to understand whether the schools could include online drama. Also, the study does not consider socioeconomics and gender distribution, as it would have given a different perspective if we had looked at it from these perspectives. The socioeconomic perspective also plays a vital role because the resources and the space to perform activities differ in different households. Additionally, performing activities at home might be perceived differently by different

genders. On the other hand, the group lacked homogeneity as three of the students belonged to grade 6 and three belonged to grade 7. The conducting of the intervention would have been convenient if the students had been of the same grade.

Furthermore, online platforms such as WhatsApp and Zoom are not designed to conduct drama classes. They have been mainly designed for meetings and chats. The result might have been more positive if we could use an online space designed explicitly to conduct Drama in Education sessions. Also, we could conduct the study for fifteen days only. If we had conducted a longitudinal study, then the results would have given in-depth results with a clearer picture of the implementation and utility of the process drama in an online space.

6.6 Directions for Future Research

Future research should aim to conduct longitudinal studies to address limitations and explore the topic in detail. Undertaking longitudinal research will comprehensively analyze the long-term effects and sustainability of process drama-based language instruction in L2 classrooms. Additionally, studies should explore socioeconomic and gender perspectives to understand how these factors impact the reception and effectiveness of drama-based language teaching. Moreover, further research can inquire into the process of drama's applicability in multicultural settings, nurturing intercultural awareness. It will contribute to a profound understanding of its effectiveness across diverse cultural contexts. Furthermore, future research should address limitations and challenges in implementing educational policies related to art integration in educational settings and explore how drama pedagogy can contribute to successfully implementing the National Education Policy 2020. Since both experiments in physical mode

were conducted in a quasi-experimental design, future researchers may attempt to conduct a study in a true-experiment design to avoid selection bias.

Talking specifically about the online context, future research should aim to replicate this study with a substantial number of participants, ideally representing a standard classroom strength, which will improve the generalizability and transferability of the results. In addition, comparative studies between offline and online drama sessions might be conducted to identify strengths and limitations associated with each mode, which would provide a better understanding of online adaptations. Investigating technological modifications aimed at optimizing online platforms for language teaching through drama, possibly through collaborations with software developers, may contribute to enhancing tools to suit the process drama's particular requirements.