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ENHANCING STUDENTS' PRONUNCIATION MASTERY THROUGH DRAMA TECHNIQUE IN EFL CLASSROOM AT ISLAMIC HIGH SCHOOL IN TASIKMALAYA

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Abstract: The fluency of pronunciation is influenced by how often the students say the words, so the more they speak, the better the pronunciation will be. To improve students' pronunciation abilities in learning English, appropriate techniques are needed. This research was conducted to find out drama techniques implemented to enhance students' pronunciation mastery of the EFL class in one Islamic Senior High School Tasikmalaya, and to learn about the challenges and opportunities during drama techniques implemented to improve their pronunciation mastery. This research used qualitative paradigm with the type of descriptive approach. The research subjects were typically students of 10th-grade in EFL classes who implemented drama techniques. There are five students and two teachers who were interviewed. The implementation of drama techniques in learning English in EFL classes to improve students' pronunciation is played in the classroom during learning hours and also outside of learning. In applying this drama technique, there are several steps taken by students and teachers in learning, namely determining the topic of the drama, compiling a drama script, dividing roles, practicing dialogue and performing the drama. There are five supporting factors in applying drama techniques to improve students' pronunciation, namely cooperation, environment, special schedule, and having competent supervisors and complete and adequate facilities provided. Meanwhile, the factors that hinder the implementation of drama techniques to improve students' pronunciation in EFL classes are unequal understanding, lack of students' interest and students' participation in the program. Sometimes, students show the feeling of enthusiastic about learning and even feeling bored with these activities.

Keywords: Drama; EFL, Pronunciation; Technique

INTRODUCTION

English is an important language for everyone to master for being one of the international languages used by many countries around the world. Therefore, most countries make English one of the mandatory lessons taught to students at school. Indonesia makes English one of the mandatory subjects for educational institutions. The Indonesian curriculum emphasizes the importance of students mastering English by developing both receptive and productive skills (Samad & Rahmiati, 2022, p. 69). English will not be mastered if it is just studied, but it must be made into a habit. For this reason, speaking skills are given significant focus to ensure students can effectively communicate in English. Key components like grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, fluency, and comprehension must be well-executed during speech to prevent misunderstandings between the speaker and listener (Raffy & Harmayanthi, 2019, p. 1). Therefore, the correct pronunciation of words in the language is very necessary. This aims to ensure that errors do not occur in conveying meaning.

One important aspect that must be mastered in learning English is pronunciation. Correct pronunciation will make it easier for the person you are talking to understand the meaning of what is being said. The fluency of pronunciation is influenced by how often we say the words, so the more we speak, the better the pronunciation will be. However, speaking in English poses several challenges for students; there are among others: 1) many struggle due to a limited understanding of the language; 2) they often choose to use their mother tongue instead of English during lessons; 3) opportunities to practice English communication are rare; and 4) a lack of confidence prevents most students from speaking English effectively (Raffy & Harmayanthi, 2019, p. 1).

Mastery of pronunciation in English is very important so that errors in pronunciation must be avoided. This error is very dangerous and fatal because if someone say one word wrong, it will affect the meaning of the word itself. Like the pronunciation of the word "beach", in English the word this is read /bi:tʃ/, and the vowel sound /i:/ is read long. Meanwhile, if there is even the slightest error in it pronunciation, for example, the vowel sound /i:/ is pronounced as a short vowel sound /I/ then the sound of the word will change to /bItʃ/ or in Indonesian "bitch", which is a very negative and even taboo word. From this, it can be concluded that pronunciation errors can greatly affect the meaning far away and this is very dangerous if left unchecked (Gumelar & Riandi, 2021, p. 101).

Speaking is a crucial and purposeful activity at which the speaker aims to influence or engage the listener. Consequently, the ability to speak here includes correct pronunciation (Hakim, 2019, p. 50). Communication skills encompass listening, reading, writing, and speaking, with speaking being a vital life skill that students must develop (Pasaribu, 2023, p. 10). For English learners, good pronunciation plays a key role in effective conversation and significantly enhances their speaking abilities. Based on research conducted by Hanafiah, (2019), the main difficulty in speaking English is pronunciation which is still not precise, mastery of vocabulary is still small, low motivation, and mastery of grammar is still low. Whereas vocabulary and grammar help students to speak fluently. In advancing the role of English in Indonesia, speaking skills are a primary focus for English learners across various educational levels, including schools, universities, and other learning institutions.

Indonesia uses regional languages such as Sundanese, Javanese, and Dayak Bakumpai, while Bahasa Indonesia as a nation language is usually used in formal or national communication. Therefore, the method of teaching English as a foreign language (EFL) is a compulsory subject in both private and state schools. Some students studying English as a foreign language may face difficulties in using good pronunciation. Because it is only used in certain situations, it is difficult for them to produce certain English sounds; so some Indonesian students often make mistakes in pronunciation. As we concerned that good pronunciation is essential for English learners as it plays a vital role in effective communication and enhances speaking skills. It brings learners closer to a native-like accent and boosts their confidence in interacting with others. Clear and accurate pronunciation allows learners to convey their messages through understandable speech, ensuring their words are meaningful and easily comprehended by listeners.

One of the Islamic high schools in Tasik is an educational unit that makes English one of the compulsory subjects taught. However, there are still many students who do not master English well, including in terms of pronunciation. Based on the results of initial observations made by the author, many students feel embarrassed when pronouncing English. They admitted that their tongue felt stiff when pronouncing English. Apart from that, many students also say they do not like English lessons because they are boring. The teacher only focuses on the text in the book so many students are sleepy. Therefore, other techniques such as drama are needed to revive students' interest in English.

However, Initial observations reveal that the teaching methods used for English as a Foreign Language (EFL) in countries where English is a mandatory subject often rely on traditional approaches. These methods frequently result in student passivity and boredom, contributing to weak conversational skills in the target language, especially in contexts where English is taught as a second or foreign language. The heavy reliance on textbooks and teacher-centered instruction as the primary sources of information and knowledge further hinders students' active participation. As a result, many learners experience reticence during communication or interaction with peers in class. Thus, it is important to develop techniques for learning English as a foreign language.

One of the recommended techniques to improve students speaking is drama (Nisa & Hamid, 2021, p. 163). This is proven by research conducted by Angelianawati, (2019) that Incorporating drama into EFL classes offers numerous advantages. Drama, which involves portraying oneself or others through actions and words, provides a dynamic way for students to enhance their language skills, critical thinking, and creativity. Its interactive nature encourages students to actively use the language, making the learning process more engaging. Additionally, drama fosters student-centered learning, as staging a performance often requires teamwork during the preparation phase. This collaborative process not only provides students with more speaking opportunities but also promotes maturity and motivation. Post-performance discussions further enrich the experience, giving students additional chances to practice communication in authentic contexts. Moreover, research by Kumar et al. (2022) highlights that using drama techniques in teaching English as a foreign language significantly improves fluent speaking abilities and enhances communication skills within the target audience.

Several previous research have reports on the beneficial values of drama technique in improving students' pronunciation. Azizah (2021, p. 45), Do & Nguyen (2017), Korkut & Çelik (2021), Noureldin (2024), Subhan et al. (2021, p. 32), report on the progress in students' speaking performance after being given the drama treatment indicating that the freshmen university students have positive attitudes towards the utilization of drama-based role play activities. Similarly, Floare Bora (2024) and Gumelar & Riandi (2021, p.87) claim that the use of drama improves the ability of L2 high school students in oral accuracy, pronunciation and complexity. However, research on related topic conducted in Islamic Senior High School in Tasikmalaya need to be clarified. Therefore, the present study tries to fill the gap by finding out 1) drama techniques implemented to enhance students' pronunciation mastery of the EFL class in one Islamic Senior High School Tasikmalaya ; and 2) their the challenges and opportunities during the implementation of drama techniques.

METHOD

The researcher adopted a qualitative paradigm with the type of a case study because it involves the systematic exploration of social phenomena within their natural settings (Yin, (2018). The participants were five students of 10th-grade in EFL classes and two teachers who implemented drama techniques. EFL students in one Islamic Senior High School Tasikmalay. To obtain the data, the researcher used in-depth interviews, observation, and documentation. In-depth interviews would be the central data collection technique in this research. The form of the interview is semi-structured and open-ended questions were utilized to allow participants (two teachers) to express themselves openly. Whereas, participatory observations serve as a key element in

understanding the daily practices, interactions, and dynamics related to drama techniques. The last, documents such as lesson plans, progress reports, and other materials directly related to the program were collected.

The next step is analyzing the research data to yield more effective results. The interview data was transcribed, categorizing and interpreted, followed by examining and highlighting the responses from both students and teachers on how drama techniques can be used to improve students' pronunciation skills in EFL classrooms (Kaharuddin, 2021). Document analysis includes an in-depth examination of the content, identifying trends, changes over time, and any relevant information that can complement qualitative data collected through interviews and observations. The observation data was analyzed by using thematic analysis to find out the way the teacher implement the drama technique to improve students' pronunciation.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The results of research is related to the implementation of drama techniques in improving student abilities at an Islamic senior high school including the challenges and opportunities during its implementation. Based on the results of interviews and observation with the teachers and students, it can be seen that they played the drama using English and resulting in challenges and opportunities. The following discussion elaborate the findings and the discussion of the present research:

The implementation of drama techniques to enhance students' pronunciation mastery

The present study describes that one of the steps taken to get children to speak more often is to apply drama techniques in learning English. Based on the interview results it can be seen that to improve students' speaking skills, teachers apply drama techniques in EFL learning so that students become more fluent when pronouncing conversations. This statement is under the results of an interview administered to a teacher who also said that to improve student pronunciation, teachers apply drama techniques. According to the interview respondent's explanation, "*the drama technique which is considered as language learning medium can also increase self-confidence as well as improve language skills.*"(The 1st Teacher Interview). In addition, 2nd Teacher explained that "*the application of this drama technique is carried out to create a learning atmosphere that is interesting and not boring*". In applying this drama technique, it is done by composing a story which is later acted out by students. In the drama technique carried out by teachers and students, each player must involve in their role in the drama or story being played, so that each player is immersed in every situation and condition in animating their role.

There are several steps taken by students and teachers in learning. The first is determining the topic of the drama. At the first meeting, the students and teachers determine the topic of the drama that will be staged. Students who have been divided into each group prepare a topic that they will perform with their assigned friends. The choice of topic is not specifically determined, each student is free to determine the type of drama that will be played. The second is composing a Drama script. After determining the topic they want, the students who have been divided into several groups prepare a drama script that will be staged. The drama script is prepared as closely as possible to produce a satisfactory performance. The third is dividing roles. After the drama script is neatly arranged, each group divides the roles according to the characters they consider suitable to play those roles. Whether determining drama topics, compiling scripts, or dividing roles, is not only done at school, but students also do group work outside of learning hours to complete their learning of drama techniques. The fourth is practicing dialogue.

During the research, the researcher also asked the students to practice conversation in the class, in pairs. While students showed their dialogues in the class, researchers recorded their performance, vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, fluency, and comprehension. In this action some students were not ready to practice their dialogue in front of the class in the first meeting. With teacher's permission, they could continue to practice their dialogue in the second meeting.

Then, the researcher and collaborators check the students' mistakes individually or in pairs and provide explanations about their performance. Furthermore, based on the results of interviews, training and memorizing dialogues is quite short; it is approximately 3 weeks.

From the results of the student respondents' explanations, it is said "*We are generally do the training process three times a week. At a time agreed upon with the teacher, each group performs the drama they have prepared*". *The performance takes place in front of the class*". Based on the interviews conducted with the 1st and 2nd Teacher, it is said "*the drama performance was not shown at once for all groups because the learning time was short. Drama performances are divided into two days during English learning hours*".

Those result of interview confirms the implementation of drama technique in EFL class of an Islamic senior high school in Tasikmalaya. This is an evidence that the present study has been conducted under the recommendation of Nisa & Hamid (2021, p. 163) who reports on the beneficial value of drama technique in increasing student speaking ability. Whereas in speaking, the pronunciation is one of elements that contribute to the successful of fluent speaking. One of the steps taken to get children to speak more often is to apply drama techniques in learning English.

Challenge and Opportunity Encountered by Students

Based on the results of research it indicates that the application of drama techniques in learning English in EFL classes can improve students' pronunciation is played in the classroom during learning hours and also outside of learning. Each student has a predetermined role. Each player must feel deeply involved in their role in the drama or story being played so that each player is immersed in every situation and condition in animating their role. In drama, there is a collaborative art form where individuals come together to transform, perform, and reflect on the human experience. Through drama, people explore various elements and tools that enhance their understanding of human nature. Drama is a conversational act that is shared and carried out together by using drama as a way to get motivation and improve students' speaking skills (Raffy & Harmayanthi, 2019, p. 20).

In carrying out these activities, of course, there are supporters and honors. As for supporting factors in applying drama techniques to improve students' pronunciation, namely cooperation, environment, special schedule, and having competent supervisors and complete and adequate facilities provided. Meanwhile, the factors that hinder the application of drama techniques to students to improve pronunciation in EFL classes are unequal understanding, lack of student interest, and student participation in the program. Students have a fluctuated feeling; sometimes students feel enthusiastic about learning, sometimes students feel bored with these activities.

Even though there are inhibiting factors in implementing drama techniques to improve students' mastery of pronunciation, the results shown a satisfactory. Students are becoming more confident in English pronunciation even though there are still some mistakes. In line with the research conducted by Do & Nguyen (2017), Korkut & Çelik (2021), Noureldin (2024), Subhan et al. (2021, p. 32), the results shows the improvement of students' English speaking ability in public. This is clearly illustrated from the start of the activities before the brainstorming stage, none of the students dared to take their role in the story and show the ability to speak deep English according to the dialogue. This can be seen during the stages at which the training was completed by many of the students without feeling nervous and without being burdened by playing roles. Not only encourage, the application of this drama technique, also increases students' English vocabulary so that they can improve their English-speaking skills. This can be visible when they appear, following the story script.

Applying these drama techniques has many positive impacts on students. The application of drama techniques in EFL classes encourage students to practice a lot their dialogue in English. The language pronunciation that is carried out makes students more fluent in pronouncing English. Language gains meaning only when it is actively used in conversations. Engaging in dialogue with others not only boosts our confidence but also provides opportunities to learn from our mistakes

and gain insights from those around us. In the drama technique used by teachers in EFL learning, they also develop their ideas and expand their imagination in using various appropriate expressions when practicing speaking

This study further supports the research reported by Do & Nguyen (2017), Korkut & Çelik (2021), Noureldin (2024), Azizah (2021, p. 45), who asserts that the use of drama techniques in teaching self-introduction has successfully improved students' English language skills. These improvements include their ability to identify and use the simple present tense, personal pronouns, objective pronouns, possessive adjectives, and possessive pronouns.

The enhancement of students' overall language abilities is evident, with an increase of 24 students demonstrating improvement. The application of drama techniques has also positively influenced students' attitudes. It has helped build their confidence, as seen in their willingness to stand in front of the class and speak English, as well as their readiness to ask and answer questions. In addition, the drama method has fostered cooperation among students, leading to greater cohesion in the classroom. Furthermore, students have become more open to admitting mistakes, sharing ideas, and motivating each other to study. This aligns with the findings of Gumelar & Riandi (2021, p.87), who highlighted the significant impact of voice drama techniques on students' mastery of pronunciation.

Additionally, the present research is in line with the research conducted by Floare Bora (2024) and Raffy & Harmayanthi (2019, p. 21) which demonstrates using drama techniques to teach engineering processes can significantly enhance students' speaking skills at SMP 1 Atap Pakis Jaya Karawang. The results from each cycle of the study show a noticeable improvement in students' speaking abilities. Through observation, the researcher noted several positive changes in the student's performance. Firstly, students' pronunciation improved as they repeated words after the teacher, allowing them to practice and refine their pronunciation at every session. Secondly, their vocabulary expanded as they learned new words by observing the teacher's acting, which made vocabulary acquisition more engaging and less intimidating. Thirdly, students' confidence grew significantly. They no longer felt shy or self-conscious about making mistakes and practiced dialogues freely without fear of being judged. Furthermore, students' motivation increased as they began expressing themselves with more emotion, which helped them connect with the language. They believed that by managing their emotions, they could boost their motivation to learn and speak more confidently. Finally, their grammar improved through inductive learning. Instead of memorizing grammar rules, students learned through repeated reading and speaking practice, which led to a natural grasp of grammar as they practiced dialogues.

Based on the explanation aforementioned, it can be concluded that teaching pronunciation using drama techniques makes a positive contribution, especially in improving mastery of pronunciation. Increasing pronunciation skills using drama techniques is formed by several factors: 1) Students frequent practice dialogue using English, 2) Self-confidence increases, 3) Students' mastery of vocabulary increases, 4) and Develops students' ideas. Despite the hinder, the drama technique also provides the students the opportunity to increase their motivation. So, the teacher might be accommodated by this learning media in supporting the successful teaching activity.

CONCLUSION

The present research showed that the implementation of drama technique provides the students an increase in their language pronunciation. Teaching pronunciation using drama techniques makes a positive contribution, especially in improving mastery of pronunciation. Increasing pronunciation skills using drama techniques is formed by several factors such as students often practice dialogue using English, self-confidence increases, students' mastery of vocabulary increases, and developing students' ideas. Furthermore, there are five supporting factors in applying drama techniques to improve students' pronunciation, namely cooperation, environment, special schedule and having competent supervisors and complete and adequate facilities

provided. Meanwhile, the factors that hinder the application of drama techniques to students to improve pronunciation in EFL classes are unequal understanding, lack of student interest, and student participation in the program. Students shows the various and fluctuated feeling: enthusiastic about learning or feeling bored with these activities. Due the limitation of the study, the further research is recommended to broaden the study using the more sophisticated methodology to obtain the comprehensive result.

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