

# Significance of Drama and Drama Exercises in Teaching Turkish as a Foreign Language, the Case of IBSU

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## Abstract

The objective of this study is to determine the role of using drama and/or dialogs performed by students to make the lecture more entertaining and provide strong skills while teaching Turkish as a foreign language. There are few adequate studies for drama application for Turkish as a Foreign Language teaching. The studies performed in this area are mostly towards teaching Turkish as a mother tongue. In the article an attempt is made to demonstrate the significance of drama exercises in teaching a foreign language and a conclusion is made that drama and performances increase the involvement and motivation of students in the class and develop speech.

**Keywords:** Drama, Performance, Reading, Teaching Turkish as a Foreign Language

## Introduction

The most crucial element of the efficiency of teaching and learning a language is the teacher. However, all the required conditions for the concentration of the student during the class should be provided by such items as classroom setting type and technological devices. Providing these conditions in an educational institution will facilitate language learning. (Arşın, 2006, p.19). Modern educational approaches require the mentality of teaching, the knowledge of how to access information rather than how to store it as the basis of education system. Thus, it results in the development of many learning and teaching methods enabling the student to gain knowledge and develop skills independently.

Today creative drama as a method of activating the individual in learning process, enabling learning by doing and living, and actualizing the individual as being creative and productive is a brief development of all features of the individual being used (Kara&Çam, 2007).

The word 'drama' is derived from 'dran' in Greek, which means 'to do, to make, to act' (Aytaş, 2008, p. 11). Drama contributes to the requirements of individuals, such as developing basic communication skills, fulfilling the needs of the contemporary society, making conscious decisions and learning sustainably (Öztürk, 2008, p. 1). Drama in education is defined as an activity performed for a specific purpose.

Creative drama is the most efficient method to get the

information at first hand. Those who learn using this method are released from a passive mode and transformed into an active mode and express their opinions freely. They observe, experiment and discover themselves. In this sense a creative drama is a strong alternative against the parrot fashion and totalitarian education approach (Aslan, 1999, p. 11).

## I. Significance of Drama in Teaching Turkish as a Foreign Language

If you compare Turkish with other foreign languages widely spoken over the globe, teaching Turkish as foreign language is highly new. That is why, while planning to teach foreigners, methods of teaching Turkish as a foreign language (TFL), the applications of other languages towards motivation should be taken into consideration. This case will view screen plays (rehearsal, dramas, etc.) as an efficient method in foreign language teaching. (Arslan&Gürsoy, 2008, p. 111). While screen plays are applied in TFL teaching:

Four language skills: reading, writing, listening and speaking are not sufficient in language teaching courses. As well as these skills reinforce the subject of learning other memorable methods that are also required. Although drama is not included in Turkish as a foreign language course books yet, it is significant in terms of reinforcing the subject being

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learned. Reading or listening texts/conversations included in Turkish teaching course books could be performed as role-plays, and thus, the permanence of information could be sustained.

According to the determination of GüldenTüm, (2010: p. 1902-1905) the following are acquired through drama while teaching Turkish as foreign language:

- Language structures are studied in a more entertaining way.
- Language is learned in a more comfortable communication environment.
- The pronunciation and stress of words are more accurate.
- Confidence increases in the pronunciation when using the language.
- The words and expressions are used more accurately in a natural environment.
- Higher cognitive skills develop and the perception of sub-meanings or connotations are facilitated.
- Culture-related teaching is facilitated.
- Student are prepared for real life (as the materials are authentic (i.e., not prepared for educational purposes).
- The student can master the language faster.

## II. The Effect of Drama On Student Motivation in Teaching Turkish as a Foreign Language

Drama is a method that can be used in all training environments with comfort. As it increases self-confidence and develops language skills without a written text, drama is crucial for language teaching. Drama activates students, thus, it increases their motivation. The most permanent method of gaining knowledge is learning by doing. If the students do not have any opportunity to practice with native speakers, it is possible to enforce the learned material through the drama method.

The student who participates actively in drama activity not only discovers his / her own abilities, but also learns how to react to the problems encountered by making improvisation in unordered texts. While making improvisation, the teacher can switch in the situations when the student encounters difficulties, and the student can immediately apply what s/he has just learned from the teacher. This increases the language learning motivation of the student.

Drama technique increases the motivation of learning a language. Through drama techniques the vocabulary repertoire and both oral and written communication skills develop. In this method, the student is activated; those who feel alone in the classroom are socialized and are more eager to col-

laborate in the learning process. Expression, communication and social behavior skills of the students in various cases develop (Akpınar&Kara, 2010 p. 10).

The studies on the psychological benefits of creative drama exercises in education are continuing. The information derived from application results reveals that creative drama is effective in developing the student's desire to participate in the class voluntarily. (Aytaş, 2008, p. 22).

## III. Method

In this study a structured natural method, which is a sub-branch of observation method, is applied.

## IV. Participants

The population of the study consists of 15 Georgian students who attended the Turkish-I course in the second semester of 2014-2015 academic calendar at the International Black Sea University.

## V. The Limitations of the Research

The limitation is that research deals with one group (15 students) of only one level of Turkish (Turkish I) for just 15 weeks. Further, larger-scale research, will, of course, be necessary.

## VI. Research Process

15 students attending Turkish I course have been divided in two groups consisting of 7 and 8 people, and they were delivered the same text. The text given to the first (Control) group was read in the class and the related questions were answered by the students. The second (Experimental) group was divided into two sub-groups, each consisting of four people, and they were requested to perform the related text. The test was given to the students in the fourteenth week, and in the fifteenth week the feedback of the previous week was received.

## VII. Sample of the Research

The sample of the study has been prepared by the teacher under the framework of vocabulary, grammar, reading, and writing taught in the first 8 chapters of Lale 1 Course Book (Öztürk& Akçay, 2013).

## VIII. Test to Assess Learning Results

The comprehension + recall questions below were asked to the two experimental groups in written (without the text in front of their eyes) and the results were analyzed.

1. Who was Lady Hatice in last week's reading?
2. Where did Nino go for lunch?
3. What was Nino's classmate's name?
4. What are Ayşe's mother's and father's names?
5. What are Ayşe's mother's and father's jobs?
6. How old is Nino?
7. Does Nino have any siblings? If yes, how many?
8. What is Nino's father's job?
9. Which level of education do Nino and Ayşe attend?
10. Is it difficult for Nino to live in Turkey?

## IX. Findings and Discussion

The answers given by the students are indicated in table 1 as "+" for correct and "-" for wrong answers.

Table 1. Test Results for the Control Group

Question	Student						
	1 <sup>st</sup>	2 <sup>nd</sup>	3 <sup>rd</sup>	4 <sup>th</sup>	5 <sup>nd</sup>	6 <sup>th</sup>	7 <sup>th</sup>
1.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
2.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
3.	+	+	-	+	-	-	+
4.	-/-	+/-	-/-	+/-	+/-	-/-	-/-
5.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
6.	+	-	+	-	+	+	-
7.	+ /	- / -	+ /	- / -	- / -	- / -	+ /
8.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
9.	+	+	+	-	+	+	+
10.	+	-	+	+	+	+	-

As seen in Table 1 the control group students could not exactly remember the text they read after one week. The mostly remembered question ("Which class does Nino attend") was remembered by all except one student. The reason for this may be explained by the fact that the students answering the questions were also the sophomore students.

The second question "Is it difficult to live in Turkey according to Nino?" was answered correctly by 5 people. We can make two different comments for this. The answer of the first question is "yes" or "no" that is why, if the student does not remember it, s/he can answer at random – and the probability of guessing the correct answer will be 50%. Secondly, since the text is in Turkish, they can guess that the answer will most probably not be "It is difficult to live in Turkey", thus they could have given the answer "yes".

The third question dealt with Nino's age. 4 students' replies to this question were correct. It is possible to explain the reason by students' age being 19 – same as Nino's. Probably this helped them answer the question.

Fourth question: "Does Nino have any siblings? If yes, how many?" The first part of this question was answered "Yes, there is" by 3 students, but they could not give the correct answer to the second question. This guess may be because of the short answer format.

According to the test results, 6 of the 10 questions about the text were either not answered or answered incorrectly. We can conclude that the students may recall only 10% of what they have read (Aslan, 1999; Kamal, 2013: 53).

The experimental group was asked the same questions. The results are shown below:

Table 2. Test Results for the Experimental Group

Questions	Student							
	1 <sup>st</sup>	2 <sup>nd</sup> st	3 <sup>rd</sup> st	4 <sup>th</sup> st	5 <sup>nd</sup> st	6 <sup>th</sup> st	7 <sup>th</sup> st	8 <sup>th</sup> St
1.	+	+	+	+	-	+	+	+
2.	-	+	+	+	+	-	+	+
3.	-	+	+	-	+	+	+	+
4.	+ /	+ / -	+ / +	+ / +	+ / +	+ / +	+ / +	+ / -
5.	- / +	+ / +	+ / +	- / +	+ / +	+ / +	- / +	+ / +
6.	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
7.	+ / -	+ / -	+ / +	- / -	+ / +	+ / +	+ / +	+ / +
8.	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
9.	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
10.	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+

The students of the experimental group who have performed the text gave completely accurate answers to 4 questions. These questions are: How old is Nino, What is Nino's father's job? Which level of school do Nino and Ayşe attend? And is it difficult for Nino to live in Turkey? We can explain the reason of their accurate answer according to Kamal (2013, p. 53): it is possible to say that "People remem-

ber 10% of what they read, 20% of what they hear, 30% of what they see, 50% of what they see and hear, 70% of what they say, 90% of what they do and say.”

One student could not answer the question “Who is Lady Hatice?” However, others gave correct answers. The second and third questions (Where did Nino go for dinner? and What was Nino’s classmate’s name?) could not be answered by two people. The reason of this is that the name Ayşe is not included in the questions, as a result student might have forgotten it.

The 4th, 5th and 7th questions with two answers (What are Ayşe’s mother’s and father’s names? What is Ayşe’s mother’s and father’s job? and Does Nino have any siblings? If yes how many?) were not accurately answered by some students. Two students could not remember the father’s name, 3 - the mother’s name, 1 student gave no answer to the 7th question and 2 students could not remember the number of siblings. The reason why students could remember the mother’s name, but not the father’s one can be explained as Ayşe’s mother name is included in the previous question. Since the job of the Nino’s and Ayşe’s fathers is same, engineering is stressed in the text, so it was easier to remember it than mother’s job (doctor), which was mentioned just once.

## X. Conclusion

In teaching Turkish as a foreign language active participation of students makes learning more effective.

The study confirmed that the effect of drama/performance method which is not commonly used in teaching Turkish as a foreign language on the students was positive. It was more effective than the traditional reading and question/answer approach. It was demonstrated that the experimental group students could remember the text learned by performing could be recollected well even after one week.

In the control group the students got bored while reading the text, however, in the experimental group they enjoyed while making drama, and they continued to ask questions which even were not included in the text, for example; “What is your native language? How many languages can you speak? How many rooms are there in your house?” “Do you have any uncles, aunts?” etc.

It has been demonstrated that drama has increased the motivation of students, and the self-confidence of students also increased, since they managed to speak the language they are learning while performing the drama.

While performing drama the students could express themselves freely. This will facilitate the development of their speaking skills on a more advanced level of Turkish.

Teachers of Turkish as a foreign language should prepare and hold lively and engaging activities to remove the monotonousness and attract their students’ attention. In addition to the four language skills, constituting the main elements of language teaching methods, they will develop com-

munication and cooperation skills. As a result of the study, it has been determined that drama has a crucial significance in teaching Turkish as a foreign language that should be applied by students.

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