

## **Drama Performance: Its Impacts on Students' Proficiency in the EFL Outside the Classroom Setting**

**I Ketut Warta**  
*IKIP Mataram*

**Abstract:** Disability to function in oral and written English has been serious problems among students in higher education learning. This study is an attempt made to find out possible solutions to such problems through drama performance. The study is experimental in which subjects of different groups in the study were provided with different treatments. Data analysis show that students' performance level developed from basic to intermediate, from being marginal user to modest.

**Key words:** impacts, drama performance, proficiency, EFL, classroom.

Although the problem of using spoken and written English is an old matter, its implications, however, is very serious and needs an urgent solution. A recent study by Rachman, as it is reported in *Suara Pembangunan*, September 8 1997, finds out that the ability of both undergraduate and graduate students to communicate in English is very poor. Tadjudin, rector of University of Indonesia, expects that the university students have a good command of English. But the fact is not the case. This reality, as Rachman concludes it, is due to the teaching method. Many ways of teaching have been practiced toward the improvement of students' proficiency, but the result is too far from being expected. If this reality is to be changed, a study on drama performance is imperative to improve students' language skills. It is believed that students



instructed under creative teaching strategies and interesting instructional materials perform better than those who are instructed under conventional methods do.

Most experts in the field of language studies, if not all, are of the opinion that skills cannot be taught in a way we teach mathematics. Although one cannot learn how to speak or write, one can, however, be made a good speaker or writer. As with skills generally, probably the best way to get students to command language proficiency is to insist on their doing practices. This is true as Evans (1984) observes that in a sense, skills cannot be taught any more than one can teach riding or dancing or musical appreciation. However, a good speaker can be made. This can be made in one way, namely by practice. And one way of practicing language skills is that of performing drama (Maley and Duff, 1982; Miller, 1988). Drama, as Moffett (1967) and Jullian (1976) put it, is a better way to improve students' proficiency. Through drama performances students can gain pleasure, and enjoyable atmosphere (Cameron, 1995). Dukore (1974) holds the view that drama can provide the students with opportunities to develop their personal relationships, relations among the students, relations with teachers, and people outside the class, their creativity, and interest which than can lead to learning.

It is predicted that if all students are actively and creatively involved in performing a drama, their interest and creativity would increase, and this would yield fruitful learning experiences which, then, would allow learning to take place. Such prediction is based on the assumptions that drama arouses students' interest and creativity; that interest and creativity provide students with learning experience; and that learning occurs when students have previous experiences on learning.

As with other research into teaching, the present study on drama seeks to investigate the effects of teaching method and those of other conditions, which can be controlled by teachers. In particular this study aims at finding out if drama can develop students' proficiency, and the effectiveness of drama as literature and performing drama in learning English, and the impacts of drama performance on students' interest and creativity. Therefore, the findings this research expected to tell teacher how to teach.

## METHOD

This study is characterized as being experimental; and was carried out at three different places with different samples. The first two studies were considered as the pilot studies, while the third was the main study. Samples of the study were randomly selected. The selected samples were then put into two different groups and were provided with different treatments. The impacts of the treatment were compared to see the difference; and the significance of the difference is statistically tested.

A number of instruments are developed. These include a set of questionnaires, interview guidelines, guideline identification of the creative student, creative attitude scale, writing test, and a set of questionnaires on ESDG view. The study has been conducted in three different places: at Muhammadiyah University Mataram, at Puri Bunga Hotel, Senggigi Mataram, and FPBS-IKIP Mataram. The first two mentioned are considered the pilot study, while the main study is carried out at IKIP Mataram. The pilot study was intended to find out some improvements on research instruments and techniques of analyses. A lot of changes have been made in the instruments, especially the modification of questions, time and instructions.

## RESULTS

Analyses on the data and test of significance show that the students' performance level develops from basic to intermediate. Also, there is a significant difference in performance, on the level of 0.05, between students performing drama and those who did not. It is also found out these students' interest and creativity increase. And surprisingly, the number of ignorant students decreases. There were, though small in number, 3 (12.50%), and 4 (16.47%), students who belong to neither creative nor not creative; they were just ignorant students. Data on students' ability to use spoken and written English are represented by score and performance level; while creative students, creative attitude, and interest are demonstrated by categories. The presentation of the research findings includes students' oral and written English; creative students; creative attitude; interest; and students' performance level. These will be presented in table and graph (see appendix).



- (1) **Oral English.** Students of the experimental group (N=24) scored 93.6 (pretest) and 133 (posttest). If these scores are compared, there are some differences of 39.4 points. On the average, the difference is 1.64 points. As with the control group (N=24), where the score is 96.8 points (pretest) and 111.2 points (posttest) with 14.8 differences and 0.6 mean, we have then mean differences of the two groups figuring at 1.04 points.
- (2) **Written English.** We found that students from experimental group (N=24) scored better or higher than the students from control. This is indicated by the differences, figuring at 35.4 points for the experimental and 8 points for the control group; and mean differences are 1.142 points.
- (3) **Creative student.** In relation to speaking ability, 8 (33.33%) students of the experimental group (N=24) are identified as being creative before the instructional activity was given. This number of creative students becomes 23 (95.83%) after they were instructed with drama. We found then that there are some differences in number, 15 (62.50%) of creative students of the experimental group before and after the drama performance. In relation to writing ability, the differences are 6 (25.00%). The comparison with control group shows that the number of creative students from of the experimental group is greater, that is 23 (95.83%) than that of the control group, 18 (75.00%). It is also found out that the differences of creative students before and after the instructional activity 1 (4.17%) which is far below the experimental group.
- (4) **Creative attitude.** It is found out that the number of differences in creative attitude of experimental group is greater, 15 (62.50%), than that of the control which is 9 (37.50%).
- (5) **Interest.** We found out that the number of students the experimental group increases from 8 (33.33%) to 21 (87.50%, meaning that there a difference of 13 (54.17%); while in control group the difference is only 3 (12.50%).
- (6) **Performance level.** In oral English it the found out that there is a difference (7.2) in scores of the experimental group (N=5) before and after the drama performance. The score is 18.8 points (pretest) and 26 points (posttest). This means that, on the average, student's

- development is 1.44 points. In relation to written English the development is 1.76 points.
- (7) **Test of significance.** It is found out, in oral English, the mean difference between the experimental and the control groups (1.64 and 0.6) is significant. The result of the t-test indicates that the observed t-value (2.781) is greater than that in the t-table (2.021). This means that our hypothesis is thus almost affirmed at the 0.05 by a one tailed test. In written English it is found out that mean differences of the two groups are 1.475 and 0.333. This difference is significant as it is indicated by t-test. The value (5.191) is greater than t-table that of the (2.021). The proposed hypothesis is thus, on the level of 0.05, affirmed,
  - (8) **Views of ESDG.** A questionnaire asking the views of ESDG was distributed to teachers, Faculty members and staff, and students. The result is that they are all of the opinion that ESDG needs to be continued.

## DISCUSSION

The present study, as it is stated earlier, is an attempt to develop students' ability to speak and write English, increase their creativity, and interest.

Many experts have emphasized that assessment for speaking and writing is a complex matter; and tends to be subjective. Many authors contend those skills such as speaking and writing cannot be taught, (thus cannot be evaluated), but one can be made a good speaker or writer; and this can be done through actions, or doing things. To borrow Dewey's phrase, a most popular slogan in the field of education, "Learning by doing", is still appropriate and applicable in learning language skills. The theory implies that if one has to learn speaking, he/she has to speak the language; we learn to speak or write by speaking or writing the language. It is also implied that one can know a thing only if he/she made it. In line with Dewey, Wittgenstein, a great thinker in the field of language, proposed his theory that "Language is use". Communication, he said, involves language; and that language is an instrument by which we communicate ideas; that the effectiveness of a tool depends on how we use it and for what purpose it is used. He provided a comparison between



use and taste by saying that we see that the book is red by looking, just as we tell that the tea is sweet by tasting it. So too, it might be save to say that we just see that students' ability to use spoken and written English is better or develops from basic to intermediate level.

Further Wittgenstein says that we surely can cut with a pen and knife; but a knife cuts better than a pen. The point is that we can use different methods in teaching and learning processes, but one method is more appropriate and applicable than other is. Results of the study show that the number of creative students increases from 8 (33.33%) to 23 (95.83%) or 15 (62.50%) before and after performing drama. This suggests that teaching speaking and writing through drama performance can awaken the students' creativity. Compared with students from control group, there is a difference in number of creative students, that is 15 (62.50%) and 9 (37.50%) or 6 (25.00%) for the oral English; and 6 (25.00%) and 1 (4.17%) or 5 (20.83%).

The impacts of drama performance can also be seen in creative attitude of the students from the two groups. There is a difference in number of creative attitude of the students, that is 15 (62.50%) and 9 (37.50%) or 6 (25.00%).

Drama performance also influenced students' interest. There is a relationship between performing drama and interest. Students show their serious attention on the performance. They play the role attentively, and seem to enjoy working with other students, even though they have to sacrifice more time. This is all suggested by the results of the study, where there are some changes in the number of students' interest. And the difference between the two groups is 13 (54.17%) and 3 (12.50%) respectively for experimental and control groups, or 10 (47.62%).

One of the objectives of this study is to increase students' ability to use spoken English. The target performance expected is that of modest or competent speakers. When we say that this student is a competent speaker of English, we have in mind certain features of the student, or students in general, which would support the claim, she/he is a competent speaker. Put it in another way when a student is said better than the other or this student is competent speaker and that one is not, we presuppose certain standard or criteria when making such judgement. Any critical judgement, as Carroll (1980) claims, presupposes any standard or criteria applicable

to such claim. There are a number of considerations, all of which refer to characteristics of the student, and not to our feelings about or attitudes toward the student which may be said to constitute the criteria of a competent speaker. Such standard is called performance criteria.

Carroll applies performance criteria to judge students' ability to use spoken and written English. He classifies a student as expert, very good, good, competent, modest, marginal, extremely limited, intermittent, and non-speaker or writer (to use language band it is 9, 8, 7, 6, 5, 4, 3, and 2, 1/0). And each band has its own characteristics and conditions to follow. The point he wants to put here is that the concept marginal or modest (or whatever it is called) is condition-governed. We have, in assessing the students' performance, by the help of two native speakers, followed rules and conditions of performance criteria. The result is that we find out that the performance level (see graph on performance level) of the student develops 1.44 and 1.76, or from marginal speaker or writer to modest or between modest and competent, or from basic level to intermediate; in the phrase of Carroll, competent or modest speaker.

That is, the student has the capacity to participate in a discussion with several people; has the ability to understand and be understood in a discussion; has the ability to describe and discuss implications of events, graphics, and objects using a number of language skills; can cope with occasional but not frequent switches of topic and style of presentation. The student can also recognize when a different type of utterance is being used. Though the student will have break in comprehension in normal, rapid speech presentations and his/her own speech will be of less than native tempo for stretches. As for the accuracy, the student does not seriously misinterpret over meaning of utterance but not quite so ready to comprehend implied meaning. He is aware of his usage limitations, and sometimes his usage and accent is likely to be patently foreign. The student does not often ask for clarification unless presentation is unusually rapid or confusing. He can speak on his own feet, though he sometimes ask for repetition when speech is rapid or extended.

This means that, at least, results of the study suggest that students instructed under drama performance perform better than those who were instructed under conventional method do.

The end of the program was completed with a questionnaire asking



the views of ESDG. Certain people at the FPBS-IKIP Matarm were also interviewed. They were all involved in teaching and learning process.

This is used to see the views of ESDG, and a wider perspective applied to measure and evaluate the ESDG performance. Different people from different position were interviewed to see their perception on the program of ESDG. These people are teachers, the Faculty members and staff and students. As a crosscheck method the information we have will be more valid and certainly will be more various, because teachers, students, faculty members and staff are different persons with different position and role to play. In general, they are all of the opinion that ESDG performance worth continuing. Most of them contend that ESDG has some positive effects to students. Some of them, however, refuse to give their judgment, saying that it is too early to judge. Response such, To soon to judge, is natural, because it comes from different people with different purposes and roles to play.

There were, though small in number, 3 (12.50%), and 4 (16.47%), some students who belong to neither creative nor not creative. They were just ignorant; they did not give any response to any of the questions being asked; and they just stayed still when interviewed. These type of students, however, by the end of the performance, turn out to be creative.

### CONCLUSION

On the basis of results and discussion of the research findings a conclusion is drawn. The conclusion, that drama performance can be both an interesting instructional material and an effective method of teaching; that students' interest, creativity, and ability to use spoken and written English can be developed to a certain degree; and that such development can be done through drama performance.

### SUGGESTION

Although the problem of students' ability to use spoken and written English is an old matter, the implication of such problem is very serious and needs an urgent solution, particularly for the students of FPBS, IKIP Mataram. Some of the possible reasons for the need of research and solution to such problems are the objectives of EFL teaching, as stated by the principle guideline (GBHN), and the primary function of spoken and written language as a means of communication. The fact that most of us, if

not all, in every aspect of our lives need to communicate each other; and that communication is made possible only by either spoken or written language. Based on the results of the study and the conclusion drawn from the research findings we have a number of suggestions for further research and for teachers of English in Indonesia, at FPBS IKIP Mataram, in particular.

Research into teaching should be intensively carried out (by teachers) to investigate the **What** and **How** to teach. Further studies on drama performance should be conducted to find out its impacts on other language skills such as listening and reading comprehension, not only on speaking and writing. Further studies on drama performance should involve the Faculty, if possible, the Institution, so as the problems of administration, facilities, and financial supports may not hinder the process of the study. Further studies on drama performance should be carried out with larger samples and conducted at different semesters and different places. Teachers of English should be creative and innovative by constantly doing experimental studies on teaching. Teachers of English should pay extra attention to students who are identified as being ignorant.

### REFERENCES

- Cameron, L. 1995. *Excel Studies in Literature: Drama Women in the Sun*. Australia. Pascal Press.
- Caror, B.J. 1980. *Testing Communicative Performance*. Pergamon Press, Ltd. Oxford.
- Dewey, J. 1916. *Democracy and Education*. McMillan. New York.
- Dukore, B.E. 1974. *Dramatic Theory and Criticism*. New York. Holt, Rineheart and Winston, Inc.
- Evans, T. 1984. *Drama in English Teaching*. London. Croom Helm.
- Julian, L. 1976. *Modern Drama*. New York. Singer Company, Inc.
- Maley, A and Duff, A. 1982. *Drama Techniques in Language Learning*. Cambridge. Cambridge University Press.
- Miller, J.Y. 1988. *Drama*. Massachusetts. Heath Company.
- Moffett, J. 1967. *Drama: What is Happening?* National Council of Teachers of English, Campaign.
- Wittgenstein, J. 1953. *Philosophical Investigation*. Basil Blackwell & Mott. Oxford.



**APPENDICES**

**Appendix 1. Performance Scale**

Rating Scale	Performance Criteria
9	Expert user, speaker, writer
8	Very good user, speaker, writer
7	Good user, speaker, writer
6	Competent user, speaker, writer
5	Modest user, speaker, writer
4	Marginal user, speaker, writer
3	Extremely limited user, speaker, writer
2	Intermittent user, speaker, writer
1	Non-user, speaker, writer

**Appendix 2. Assessment Scale for Intermediate Level or Modest**

Variables	Empirical description
Size	Can participate in a discussion with several people keeping in touch with the gist even if occasional lack grasp of details.
Complexity	Can understand and discuss one or two major points and supporting details. Can make a firm point but disturbed by noise and distractions.
Range	Can describe and discuss implications of events, graphics, and objects using a number of language skills and tones.
Speed	Will have breaks in comprehension in normal, rapid speech presentations and his own speech will be of less than native tempo for stretches.
Flexibility	Can cope with occasional but not frequent switches of topic and style of presentation.
Accuracy	Does not seriously misinterpret over meaning of utterance but not quite so ready to understand implied meaning. Accent and sometimes usage is likely to be patently foreign.

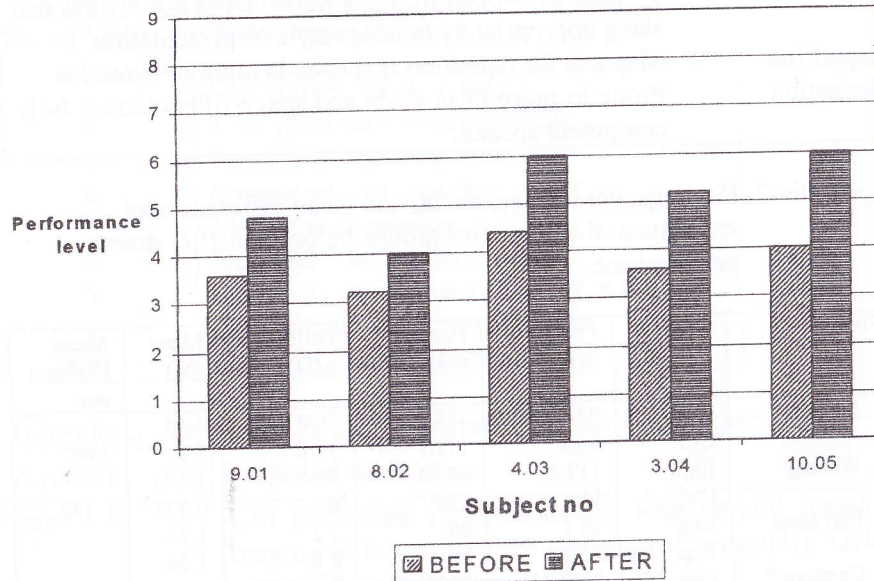
Appropriacy	Appreciates major styles of presentation including some slang and regional usage, but can not be puzzled by such deviations from the norm. Does not always use slang appropriately or adapt style of presentation.
Repetition Hesitation	May ask for repetition if speech is rapid or extended. Prone to more false starts and space-fillers than a fully competent speaker

**Appendix 3. Findings, percentage, mean, and mean differences of experimental and control groups before and after drama performance.**

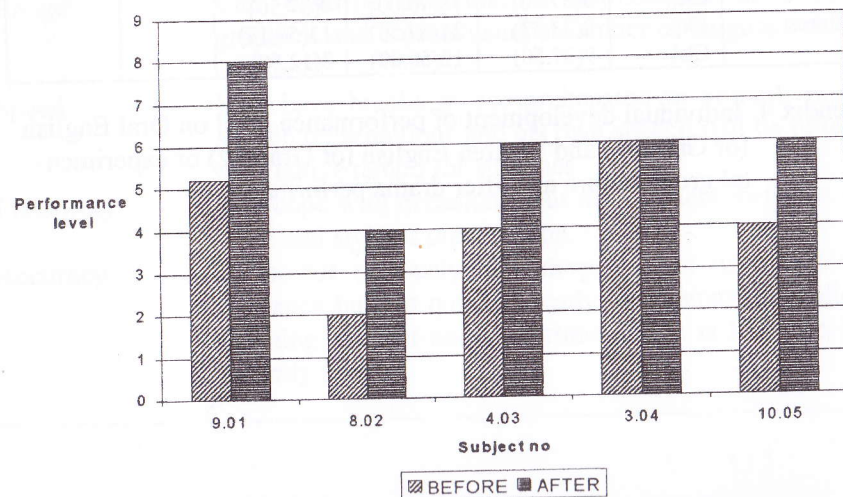
Findings	Groups	Pretest (x1)	Posttest (x2)	Differences (D)	Mean (M)	Mean Differences
1. Speaking	Exp.	93.6	133	39.4	1.64	1.04
	Ctrl.	96.8	111.2	14.8	0.6	
2. Writing	Exp.	112.8	147.2	35.4	1.475	1.142
	Ctrl.	116	124	8	0.333	
3. Perf.level	Exp.	18.8	26	7.2	1.44	1.76
	Exp.	21.2	30	8.8	1.76	
4. Creative *	Exp.	8(33.33)	23(95.83)	15(62.50)		
	Exp.	14(58.33)	20(83.33)	6(25.00)		
Creative**	Ctrl.	9(37.50)	18(75.00)	9(37.50)		
	Ctrl.	17(70.83)	18(75.00)	1(4.17)		
5. Creative at	Exp.	8(33.33)	23(95.83)	15(62.50)		
	Ctrl.	9(37.50)	18(75.00)	9(37.50)		
6. Interest	Exp.	8(33.33)	21(87.50)	13(54.17)		
	Ctrl.	9(37.50)	12(50.00)	3(12.50)		

**Appendix 4. Individual development of performance level on Oral English (or Graph 1) and Written English (or Graph 2) of experimental group before and after drama performance.**

Graph 1. Individual development of performance level on oral English of experimental group before and after drama performance



Graph 2. Individual development of performance level on written English of experimental group before and after drama performance



### CURRICULUM VITAE

I Ketut Warta was born on March 26, 1956, in Klungkung, Denpasar, Bali. He received his undergraduate degree (DRS) from Faculty of Letters, Udayana State University in 1984 and his Master degree (M.S.) from Hasanuddin University in 1992. From 1995 – present I Ketut Warta has been a graduate student at the same University for Doctorate degree in Linguistics focussing on English Language Studies. I Ketut Warta teaches English at the Institute of Teacher Training and Education, Mataram. This article is taken from from his doctoral dissertation.