

Drama as Pedagogy in L2 Learning:

A Literature Review

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Do you think that to believe in the imaginative fiction of another person, and bring it to life, is a trifle? That is what we do to the work of the dramatist; we bring to life what is hidden under the words; we put our own thoughts into the author's lines, and we establish our own relationships to other characters in the play, and the conditions of our lives; we filter through ourselves all the materials that we receive . . . we work over them, supplementing them out of our own imagination. The material becomes part of us, spiritually, and even physically; our emotions are sincere, and as a final result we have truly productive activity.

(Stanislavsky, 1936, p. 52)

It is my belief that at the heart of every teacher is an individual that yearns to engage their students in productive activity—activity that breaches the standardized testing of No Child Left Behind, the cinder-block worlds of traditional pedagogy, and, I dare say, Method. It is for this reason that I am interested in drama as a resource in the language classroom as well as drama as a transformative, human-making activity (Zafeiriadou, 2009; Via, 1978), with the potential to affect our personalities, adjust our codes of behavior (Hismanoglu, 2005; Livingstone, 1983), and mold our autonomy as individuals (Barnes, 1968).

With this literature review my intention is to synthesize the differing opinions of scholars and show what is meant by such terms as drama, theatre, and dramatic activities such as role-play and simulation. I also want to show the evolution of drama in the classroom from Douglas Barnes's and Richard Via's separate work in the late 60's/early 70's to more contemporary manifestations of classroom theatre, while also looking at research in the field with a global perspective. I also hope to make a case for theatre in the L2 classroom by looking at what the literature has to say about the advantages of drama, its effects on student motivation and efficacy, and how it fits into today's post-method, communication-based, student-centered curriculum of foreign language learning.

According to Via (1987), “Few would disagree that drama has at last established itself as a means of helping people learn another language. A great deal of our everyday learning is acquired through experience, and in the language classroom drama fulfills that experiential need” (p.110).

Before defining some of the terms surrounding drama, I first want to peel back a few layers of pedagogical theory in an attempt to give weight to the topic of drama as pedagogy in L2 learning. In answer to the question, why is drama relevant in today’s classroom; I am influenced by Kumaravadivelu’s writings on “postmethod” theory and Spada’s exploration in the current trends in communicative language teaching in regards to second/foreign language teaching.

According to Kumaravadivelu (1994), second/foreign language pedagogy has made a shift from the conventional methods of classroom policy to a new world where “postmethod” is the norm. Teachers are no longer looking for an alternative method but rather an alternative to methods. This shift, as Kumaravadivelu puts it, “motivates a search for an open-ended, coherent framework based on current theoretical, empirical, and pedagogical insights” (p. 27) and he puts forth 10 macrostrategies for teachers to effect targeted learning outcomes: 1) maximize learning opportunities, 2) facilitate negotiated interaction, 3) minimize perceptual mismatches, 4) activate intuitive heuristics, 5) foster language awareness, 6) contextualize linguistic input, 7) integrate language skills, 8) promote learner autonomy, 9) raise cultural consciousness, and 10) ensure social relevance. While I have chosen not to organize my literature review along this framework, I will refer back to most of these macrostrategies in an attempt to show how closely aligned drama as pedagogy in L2 learning fits Kumaravadivelu’s “postmethod” theory.

I also looked at Nina Spada’s definitive work on the communicative approach in L2 teaching, which according to her has also reached a turning point (2007). According to Spada, communicative language teaching is “a meaning-based, learner-centered approach to L2 teaching where fluency is given priority over accuracy and the emphasis is on the comprehension and

production of messages, *not* the teaching or correction of language form” (p. 272). The learner is now seen as an active participant in the process of language learning and teachers are expected to develop activities to promote self-learning, group interaction in real situations and peer-teaching (Sam, Wan Yee, 1990). I elevate *drama* as a means achieve this end.

Also central to Spada’s work was that “language proficiency is not a unitary concept but consists of several different components” (Spada, 2007, p. 273), including linguistic competence, pragmatic knowledge, information on the socio-linguistic appropriateness of language, and strategic competence or compensatory strategies with the recommendation that L2 pedagogy should include all components in its curriculum. That established, I felt it fitting to include her work in a literature review of drama as pedagogy in L2 learning as I hope to show that drama and it’s pedagogical implications do account for all components listed above as well as add further weight to the review.

Definition of Key Terms

Drama, theatre, dramatic playing or activities—whatever the term used, most people have a sense of what is being referred to—a form of art that communicates feelings and emotions, thoughts and concerns through performance—the medium, the participant himself in front of a formal audience or not, all originating from the first appearance of communal life in the history of human civilization. And yet, even with this consensus on *what is drama*, debates have been circulating for years over exact definitions.

For the purposes of this literature review I felt it necessary to create a working definition of a few terms (i.e. drama, theatre, etc.) both because the literature does not agree and because of a need for precision in my later discussion of several scholars on the forms that dramatic activities take in the classroom.

Drama

As defined by Via (1987), *drama* is “communication between people” (p. 110) that conveys meaning. According to Susan Holden (1981), drama is synonymous with the idea of ‘let’s pretend;’ “it asks the learner to project himself imaginatively into another situation, outside the classroom, or into the skin and persona of another person” (p. 1), where the focus is on “*doing* rather than on the presentation” (p. 8). She goes on to say that drama cannot be separated from interaction with other people and that it must include the communication of meaning. Usually drama is interaction between two or more participants without an audience, and most scholars agree that it is drama that most often makes an appearance in the classroom, as it is process rather than product that is the focus of drama (Zafeiriadou, 2009).

Theatre

As opposed to drama, which lacks communication with an audience, theatre is just that; it is concerned with the audience’s presence in mind (Holden, 1981; Via 1978). According to Via (1987), *theatre* is “communication between people for the benefit of other people, which includes play production” (p. 110). And, like drama, Via goes on to say that theatre must also convey meaning, “among the performers and between the performers and the audience (p. 110). As the literature review will show, scholars are divided on the function of drama versus theatre in the classroom. Much of the reason for this divide is due to the debate over what makes up a *dramatic activity*. Must it lead to the stage or can process as an end in itself be effective in the classroom?

Dramatic Activity

While Via (1987) is somewhat vague on the subject, he defines *dramatic activities* or techniques as “strategies to achieve either drama or theatre” (p. 110). Maley and Duff (1978), on the other hand, are very clear in what they mean by dramatic activities:

They are activities which give the student an opportunity to use his own personality in creating the material on which the language class is to be based. These activities draw on

the natural ability of every person to imitate, mimic and express himself through gesture. They draw, too, on his imagination and memory. . . They are dramatic because they arouse our interest, which they do by drawing on the unpredictable power generated when one person is brought together with others. Each student brings a different life, a different background into the class. (1978, p. 1)

They then go on to say what dramatic activities are *not*: putting on plays in front of a passive audience, rote memorization of lines which “lose their savour even before they are spoken” (p. 1), nor are they, according to Maley and Duff, the process that leads up to some final performance, claiming that the value of drama in the classroom lies in process above product. Via argues claiming that the ownership that rehearsing and presenting a play is valuable for students: “a play can give students a reason to use language” (Via, 1976, p. 6) and “students with a definite, interesting goal progress faster and further” (p. 7).

Because of these two divergent opinions on drama progressing into a production, I have included in this review studies that look at both scenarios in the classroom.

Under the label of dramatic activities are a few techniques that I feel would be valuable to define at this point: simulation and role-playing. While I find they are very closely related and can be defined in relation to each other, scholars again disagree, while some feel they shouldn't even be present in classroom drama at all.

Simulation. Simulations are dramatic, communicative activities that ask students to solve a problem. The setting and type of problem closely simulate an experience students may face in every day life and they work together to achieve a consensus or solve the central problem. In simulations, students bring their own opinions to the table and represent their own motivations and attitudes about the problem (Livingstone, 1983; Via, 1987).

Role-playing. On the other hand, role-playing is generally seen as an extension of simulation activities where a group of students are asked to take on different personas other than themselves with motivations and attitudes matching those new personas. In role-playing, “each student would be given particular information about his role” (Livingstone, 1983, p. 1) in the form of a role-card:

You are a university student who is writing a term paper for one of your classes. Because you are involved in the school musical that rehearses every night, you know you will not finish writing the paper before the deadline. Ask your professor for an extension, but try to avoid telling him why your paper will not be finished in time.

It should be noted that these definitions are reversed according to Holden (1981), are upheld by Maley and Duff (1978), and rejected as not having value by Bolton (1992). Bolton, first, finds the terms, simulation and role-play, to be synonymous and, second, tells us that “[they have] little to do with dramatic art, where children take on roles in order to assimilate facts or develop behavior skills” (p. 111). He goes on to say that this is because the learner’s focus is too much involved in the function of the language to be taken serious as drama. Personally, I feel that in rejecting the terms under his definition, he has unknowingly made a case for why they, in fact, should be included as dramatic activities in L2 classrooms. In agreement with Kumaravadivelu’s sixth macrostrategy (1994), contextualized linguistic input includes all of the above forms of dramatic activities, which, according to him, “promote syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic use of language (p. 32).

For the benefit of this paper, when I refer to *drama*, I am using it as an umbrella term to mean all aspects of dramatic activity that could be conceived in a classroom. The term *theatre* will be restricted to only mean drama that is performed in front of a formal audience.

Historical Perspective

Drama as a resource in the classroom has been around since the beginning of the last century but by many accounts most manifestations of it went undocumented (Zafeiriadou, 2009). It was in 1937, Britain, that the first case of government sponsored theatre in education appeared (Aita, 2010). As a resource in the language classroom, it is a much newer concept; however, the fact that drama in L2 pedagogy is new to the scene does not mean that it hasn't gone through a few changes since its introduction. Beginning with Douglas Barnes in 1968, I want to look at the state of drama in education as it was making the transition into the L2 classroom.

In his *Drama in the English Classroom*, Douglas Barnes (1968) first presents his readers with a manifesto calling for democracy in education with drama as an essential part of that egalitarian education. For Barnes, where democracy meets drama is a very natural place:

In twentieth century urban democracies a wide range of roles is open to each young adult.

More than this, the diversity of our complex society tolerates a wide range of opinions, attitudes, and evaluations. That is, our society partakes of the nature of drama: it speaks not with one voice but with many. . .inside each one of us. Each must learn to tolerate the many voices within himself...[and] choose. (p. 2)

It is this *ability to choose* that Barnes felt was paramount for the modern student. To be able to go into all the complexities of a situation, to fight against stereotypes, to enter into the mind of the opposition and empathize accordingly was to Barnes what a democratic education must instill in its students, and it was through drama that his ideals could be achieved.

Barnes goes on to discuss drama in the English classroom. While not a theatre professional himself, he pushes for the incorporation of all dramatic activities from classroom drama to theatre, always highlighting along the way the need for student-student/student-teacher interaction where all parties have an open network to contribute to each others' successes. Here, I should state that this

democratic function of Barnes' theory of drama in the classroom aligns with Kumaravadivelu's second macrostrategy, facilitate negotiated interaction (1994), as well as the communicative approach. In the end, Barnes' plea was that educators help their students broaden themselves and to use language to explore and develop the world they live in—"what they create and what [they] perceive" (1968, p. 47).

Just shy of a decade later, Richard Via entered onto the stage. What separated Via from his predecessor and most of his successors in making a case for drama was that he came from a professional theatre background. And with that in mind, it isn't a surprise that he was the first to carefully apply the "techniques of teaching acting and dramatization to the classroom teaching of English (Lester, M. in the forward to Via, 1976, p. xiii). Out of Via's work comes "four golden rules for language teaching through drama" (1987, p. 112): 1) *Self*, much like Barnes' development of the individual, refers to the creation of self-identity through an actor becoming comfortable with the expression of his emotions and individual feelings. 2) "*The magic if*," adapted from Stanislavski, is a technique that allows students to ask, what if, and place themselves into any role or perspective. It is the origin of Livingstone's role-play (1983). 3) *Imagination*, closely related to *the magic if* is more concerned with *setting*. According to Via, *imagination* is the tool that allows a student to place himself into any environment, whether visited or not, invoking what later would become known as *simulation*. And 4) *The five senses*: sense of self, audience, relationship between self and audience, setting, and goal. For classroom application, Via submitted that being aware of ourselves, others, our surroundings, and our motivation to deliver meaning was the primary goal of language (1987).

In further discussion of Via's work and its alignment to Kumaravadivelu's post-method macrostrategies (1994) and the communicative principles mentioned in Spada (2007), I think it necessary to pay tribute to Via's contribution to theatre in the classroom as well. He not only

pushed for play production but also was the first to talk about its dual role in the language classroom. For Via, theatre has the double function of being both an end in itself and a topic for discussion and analysis, including it functioning as a vehicle for the authentic communication that must go on behind the scenes in preparation, rehearsing, and the business of production. He went on further to tell of the motivational benefits stemming from student ownership and leading to learner autonomy. In his words, theater is “real...language set in its appropriate cultural setting” (1987, p. 122), “it provides a good picture of language in its socio-cultural environment and shows us how the situation affects the language.” (Via, 1976, p. 6). In that, “language becomes the tool it is intended to be...and [students] make the language ‘theirs’” (p. 7). Without hyperbole, it is this concept that seems the prototype for both the communicative approach (Spada, 2007) and all Kumaravadivelu’s macrostrategies, with particular focus on the first, second, fourth, sixth, eighth, ninth, and tenth (1994).

In the post-Via world, language teachers were starting to become acquainted with drama techniques and applying them to their language teaching, yet not all agreed with him. As already mentioned, Alan Maley and Alan Duff (1978), for example, highly disagreed with the idea that drama should lead to theatre. According to them, “[dramatic activities’] value is not in what they lead up to but in what they *are*, in what they bring out *right now*” (p. 1). On this point, they were adamant.

Other contributions to the world of drama in the language classroom give way to a discussion of pragmatics in second language education and student motivation. Without ever using the term pragmatics, and piggy-backing on Via’s work, it was Maley and Duff that first attempted to define and legitimize drama in the classroom through the need for pragmatics in language learning. They attempted to show that a gap existed between traditional methods of language learning and contended that drama be the device to fill that gap. They wrote that “many of the skills

we most need when speaking a language, foreign or not, are those which are given least attention in the traditional text-book: adaptability, speed of reaction, sensitivity to tone, insight, anticipation; in short, *appropriacy*” (1978, p. 2). These days, while the term *appropriacy* would be replaced with *appropriateness*, by looking past the words of the language and focusing on their function, it places pragmatics at the forefront of L2 learning and sets the stage for authors such as Whiteson and Horovitz (2002) who focus on function in the organizational approach to their textbook, *The Play’s the Thing*. This focus on function, in relation to the sociocultural implications on language, also promotes Kumaravadivelu’s fifth and tenth macrostrategies (1994).

Maley and Duff’s views on motivation were also an advancement in the use of drama as pedagogy in the language classroom. They believed that the motivational potential of drama was inherent in it being unpredictable. Because drama “draws on the entire human resources of the class and that each technique, . . . [it] yields a different, a unique, result every time it is practiced” (p. 8). Also, they felt that because drama is a collaborative activity, the effect of students working together, interacting, and building on each other’s individual successes in order to succeed as a group, it has the ability to even the playing field in a language classroom. Even if learners come with different needs at different levels, drama can unify students and create an environment for peer-to-peer modeling, as well as “strike a balance between fluency and accuracy” (1978, p. 9 & Sam, Wan Yee, 1990), characteristics of both the communicative approach and Kumaravadivelu’s first, second, and third macrostrategies (1994).

A few years later came Susan Holden’s *Drama in Language Teaching* (1981). Like Maley and Duff’s work, Holden also attempts to fill the gaps that she has identified between traditional language teaching and the actual needs of the learners:

Another aspect of oral communication overlooked in much classroom practice is the way in which the nature of that communication changes according to the role one is playing at any

given moment. This in turn is affected by our feelings, the environment, and our relationship with the people or person we are communicating with. (p. 2)

Holden states that it is up to the teacher to provide authentic opportunities that prepare second language learners for authentic language situations in an attempt to bridge the gap between the classroom and the outside world where “learners are asked to communicate ‘totally’” (p. 7). For Holden, dramatic activities with a focus on simulation work can provide these opportunities for learners. She also warns that teachers should not try to over-protect their students, stating that such protection from the “coughs and hesitations” of real language doesn’t exist in reality. Involved in this warning is Holden’s notable attempt to define and catalog the paralinguistic features of language, which, according to her, must be learned in the same way as if they were vocabulary, in context and appropriate for the situation. At the core of Holden’s work is a strong parallel to Kumaravadivelu’s sixth, ninth, and tenth macrostrategies (1994).

Another parallel to Holden’s work comes out of the awareness that speakers take on a “role” when communicating with others, found in Carol Livingstone’s *Role Play in Language Learning* (1983). As the definitive source on role-playing, Livingstone does a lot to modernize the discussion and presents a text that defines, situates, and models role-playing and its value to the teaching of pragmatics in L2 learning. She gives seven aspects of role-playing that can be transferred to authentic communication: 1) formality, 2) register (linguistic knowledge specific to unique situations such as *at a wedding* or *in an office*), 3) function, 4) attitude, 5) para-linguistic features (i.e., stress, rhythm, tone, speed, etc.), 6) extra-linguistic features (i.e., gestures, facial expressions, etc.), and 7) appropriateness. It is Livingstone’s sections on the extra-linguistic features and appropriateness of language that open up to a discussion on socio-cultural difference between a person’s first and second languages. In researching this review, Livingstone seems to be the first to make this semantic connection, which aligns well with Kumaravadivelu’s ninth and tenth

macrostrategies in their raising of cultural awareness and ensuring social relevance respectively (1994).

Livingstone (1983) goes further in her assertion that role-playing has its advantages in language learning. Three advantages that she discusses are: 1) its potential to maximize student activity, a direct correlation to Kumaravadivelu's first macrostrategy (1994), 2) a motivational advantage in the areas of content relevance and practicality, maintaining student interest, and class discipline, and 3) role-playing's ability to account for mixed ability groups, which she also relates to student motivation and discipline.

In regards to role-playing and its connection to the communicative approach to language teaching, Livingstone is cited by Wan Yee Sam (1990) and furthers her argument by directly connecting the advantages of what he has termed *role-simulation* to the strategies involved in the communicative approach in L2 learning.

Because of the contributions made by Barnes, Via, Maley and Duff, Holden, and Livingstone, drama, theatre, role-playing and simulation, in their many forms, can never be separated from the language classroom.

Contemporary Research

In the next section of this review, I would like to take a look at the more contemporary research in the field. While most of the focus is on case studies and action research, some scholars go further in their quantitative and qualitative attempts at analysis. First, I would like to briefly take a look at some of the action research reports that I found: the work of Matsuzaki (2005), Miccolli (2003), and Aita (2010). While none are supported by quantitative or qualitative analysis, I still find them valuable in that they give a good picture of some of the manifestations of drama in the L2 classroom.

Matsuzaki's work (2005) focuses on adapting what she calls the drama method in an L2 class of upper grade elementary students in Japan. While hers is not so much research as it is a lesson plan supported by research, her work does draw on the social constructivist perspective (Vygotsky's idea that learning is constructed through interactions with others) in placing drama at the center of language learning. From this she is able to construct a lesson that combines the four skills while utilizing the drama technique *hot-seating*, a form of role-playing. What Matsuzaki does give in the way of analysis and lesson evaluation are the results of a post-lesson questionnaire. She found that using drama in her classroom enhanced student motivation for learning English and lead to greater sociocultural awareness (Kumaravadivelu, 1994). As a side note, she insists that drama is also ideal in promoting peer interaction and collaboration. While interesting, I find that without proper detail, it would be impossible to replicate Matsuzaki's work and begs that further research be done in the area.

Miccoli's work (2003) is similar to Matsuzaki's in its narrow scope, yet still provides a look into research implementation in the classroom and provides feedback in the form of student's oral responses. What Miccoli presents are the results of an investigation into the value of using drama in a university classroom in Brazil. Drawing on the work of Via, among others, and implementing portfolios as a form of reflection and assessment, Miccoli encourages the use of drama for its transformative and emancipatory effects on language learning. Over the course of twice a week for 15 weeks, 37 students took part in the study and worked together toward the production of six one-act plays. In her discussion and conclusion she focuses on the transformative experiences recalled by her students, for example, she found that "the confrontation of fears, and the taking of risks, lead to an improvement in their oral skills, as a consequence of understanding the aspects that underlie oral communication, i.e., that speaking is not only about words and structure and pronunciation, but feelings, motivations, and meanings" (Miccoli, 2003). In short, language is nothing but a

sociocultural experience. Throughout Matsuzaki and Miccoli's work, there is direct correlation to many of Kumaravadivelu's macrostrategies (1994) and the communicative approach.

The action research of Sean Aita (2010) links Ema Ushioda's theories of motivation, role-playing, and the viewing of a professional theatre performance with preshow and in-performance student interaction. He cites Ushioda's article, *Language Learning at University: Exploring the Role of Motivational Thinking* (2001) in *Motivation and Second Language Acquisition* edited by Dornyei and Schmidt. Aita (2010) also presents the Theatre in Language Learning (TiLL) model for second language learners, which was developed by the Vienna English Theatre. While his is a valuable study, in that, it documents the added benefits of using plays as context in a cultural and linguistic sense and sheds light on the presence of language through drama in Austria and other parts of Europe, it is also rather self-serving, his claims grand, and his evidence lacking. He further claims that his work with the Vienna English Theatre has been a 30 year program of action research, that he is the first to recognize the TiLL model in L2 learning, and that student motivation is increased; yet, with no clear evidence to support his conclusion, I find his study not useless, but rather, lacking substance. In effect, because students only engage in three of the four skills, leaving out the one most essential to drama, speaking, the TiLL model seems nothing more than a literature class with a field trip to the theatre. That said, his connection to drama and motivational theory could prove a great area that needs further research.

Next, while I found that large-scale analytical studies are rare and only have begun recently in the field of drama as pedagogy in L2 learning, they do, however, exist (Aita, 2010; Fortney, 2010). Here, I would like to put forth the work done by Gorjian, Moosavinia, and Japripour (2010), Ryan-Scheutz and Colangelo (2004), Bang (2003), and Raquel (2011).

Gorjian, Moosavinia, and Japripour's study (2010) out of Iran involved 60 intermediate EFL students enrolled in English drama II classes. Participants were 18 to 24 years old and randomly

divided into an experimental and a control group. With the control group, the students were directed to read the literature; while the literature was presented in a traditional and explicit manner (PPP). The experimental group received the content indirectly through role-playing and dramatic activities. At the end of the course, a 30 multiple-choice question achievement test with a reliability score of .90 was administered to determine content retention. The experimental group's attitudes were also surveyed using a retrospective think-aloud technique during and after instruction. The question to be answered: "Will EFL students acquire a higher understanding of a play through traditional or performance-based approach to teaching drama" (p. 8)?

Their results showed a significant difference between the two groups' posttest scores with the experimental group scoring a mean of 9.5 points higher than that of the control group. As for the report protocol, it allowed the researchers to examine student attitudes about the classroom environment, their motivation, and how they enjoyed the activities. Overall, the feedback showed that the experimental group had much more positive attitudes toward class participation and activities, which lead to greater motivation throughout the instruction and assessment. They also showed that dramatic activities, which take focus off the one and place it on the many with group and communicative activities, there is a reduction in stress and pressure to perform. While these results seem to support the use of dramatic activities to enhance content and student performance, it also has some limitations; for example, because the study only tested for short-term retention of content, no claims can be made for long-term retention. Also, because the study focused on EFL learners as opposed to native speakers, perhaps the researchers missed a valuable opportunity to examine whether or not students' proficiency in the TL improved over the course of instruction, as is the case with the later studies discussed in this review. With this limitation, it seems, however, that the results of the study could be generalized across populations of both L2 learners and native speakers; and, in general, make a case for drama as a tool in content-based classes.

The next study comes out of the University of Notre Dame. Ryan-Scheutz and Colangelo (2004) present a case study that explores the effectiveness of full-scale, theatre production on L2 learning. The authors of the study hypothesized that “the diverse communication tasks necessary for the project, and the motivation generated by a common and public goal, make foreign language theatre production particularly conducive to learning” (p. 374) and lead to improved competence in interpersonal, interpretive, and presentational modes of communication as well as a reduction of students’ inhibitions and great confidence.

For the study, 11 L2 learners were followed as they auditioned, were cast, and participated in an Italian theatre production over a 10-week period. Participants had various levels of L2 proficiency, which allowed the researchers to examine whether the experience was particularly effective for any specific level. Once chosen, the participants were assigned to cast or crew roles. They were actors, stage managers, or designers of sets, lighting, sound, costumes, or makeup and fulfilled these roles surrounded by other native speakers. Immersed in the L2, they then went through the full process of play production including text analysis, preproduction, rehearsals, and performance. Based on the results of oral and written preproduction and postproduction tests completed by cast and crew, as well as observations made by the researchers, the researchers found that there was a general trend of improvement in oral proficiency, reading comprehension, knowledge of language structures and idioms, and writing proficiency. Along with the formal assessment, students were also asked to complete a perceptions survey, which showed that students generally agreed on the positive benefits of theatre in L2 learning.

In examining the data, it does seem that there was a combination of improved accuracy, fluidity, and confidence in L2 communication between the participants. Most notable may be the two areas that showed the most improvement: knowledge of cultural gestures and the use of vocabulary in speaking. It became apparent to the researchers that the physical and dynamic nature

of theatre played a part in these improvements. Also, the fact that students were not directly learning the L2 but rather using it as a tool in an authentic environment to achieve a goal could have been the reason behind improved vocabulary use.

While I find it a valuable pilot study there were, however, some limitations and problems with the study. First, while students did show a general improvement in the four skills, the results were not broken down to show which students showed the most improvement. It is my belief that the students who were cast as actors, who would have had the most interaction with the script, would have shown the most improvement in reading and perhaps writing; yet, because their oral communication focused on memorization of prewritten text, their speaking fluency and listening may not have improved. Thus, a better analysis of how a participant's role affected their L2 learning should have been present in the study. I also feel that more attention should have been given to student motivation. While attitudes of the students were admittedly positive throughout the process, no correlation was made between this type of motivation and the motivation to learn the L2—the students had fun, their skills improved, yet no correlation was shown. In general, I feel that this study is reproducible and should be done on a larger scale with consideration of its limitations.

Bang, in 2003, aimed to investigate how drama activities in the EFL classroom would improve college students' communicative ability in their L2 at Myongji University in Korea. The study was both quantitative and qualitative. Four research questions were posed: 1) Do drama activities in the L2 classroom lead to improvement in a learners communicative ability?; 2) What is the nature of classroom interaction between participants in drama activities?; 3) What are the students' attitudes towards their classroom experience?; and 4) How do the students perceive themselves in such an environment? Data was collected through pre- and post- oral proficiency tests as well as interviews and class observation.

Over the course of a semester, students, 12 male and 8 female of varying English proficiencies, were instructed in English through the use of dramatic activities. Results from the pre- and post- oral proficiency tests showed that there were improvements in speech clarity, amount of communication units, and production rate. The results of the quantitative analysis were the most interesting in that they showed that the students produced 94 individual attitudes towards drama activities, both positive and negative; which for this literature review, is the only time a study has suggested that drama activities can have a negative effect on motivation. Of the positive attitudes, 30% were cognitive, 26% affective, 24% sociocultural, and 20% linguistic. Of the negative attitudes, cognitive issues were also highest with 43%. According to Bang (2003), salient negative responses to drama-oriented activities were of three kinds: students were discouraged by other student's progress, skepticism in the benefits of 'playing' (p. 29), and lack of teacher feedback.

Bang's study is useful in that it provides a balanced feedback on not only the effectiveness of drama on L2 learning but also the attitudes and perceptions of the students in such classes.

Just this year, in the most recent study of my review, Michelle R. Raquel takes for granted the nature of drama to have a positive impact on L2 learning in various contexts. For this literature review, I submit Raquel's work as an example of where I think this field is heading. No longer do teachers question the value of communicative tasks in the language classroom, no longer do they segregate drama to a stage; teachers today, instead, know that language learning cannot be separated from the learning of pragmatics, and they are comfortable with role-playing and other dramatic activities to get across both linguistic and sociolinguistic concepts (Aita, 2010; Fortney, 2010; Raquel, 2011). Raquel (2011) quotes Vygotsky and puts forth that "from a psychological perspective, language is a psychological and cultural tool that mediates thinking and learning through social interactions with others in an environment" (p. 94). From this, the motivation for her study lies in the idea that in each unique 'environment,' a learner's sociocultural background will

act differently with the impact of a full theatre production on their L2 learning. It is this sociocultural component that is the focus of Raquel's work. She argues that because sociocultural factors have an impact on language learning in Hong Kong where she works, sociocultural factors could also have a significant impact on the use of drama as pedagogy in the L2 learning as well. For her study, she set out to answer two questions: 1) What sociocultural factors shape the experience of English theatre productions in Hong Kong as a language learning environment?; and 2) Are theatre productions good language learning environments in Hong Kong?

Raquel's study (2011) involved 42 participants. They were Hong Kong university students and held diverse roles in the production from actor to crew. The production took seven months of preparation and rehearsals were held twice a week for three hours each while the crew also met at the same times. Assessment was done through reflective journals together with pre- and post-production interviews and questionnaires. For Raquel, the pre-production interviews showed correlation with established profiles of Hong Kong learners found in past research. Coupled with the post-production assessment, her work showed that the conditions and activities in the full theatre production environment offered students several opportunities: 1) the opportunity to develop oral skills of pronunciation, stress, and intonation (Miccoli, 2003); 2) the opportunity to realize connections between language and thought and become aware of paralinguistic skills neglected in their education background (Maley & Duff, 2005); and 3) the opportunity to learn in an authentic environment (Ryan-Scheutz & Colangelo, 2004). Results showed little evidence that the student's sociocultural environment played a part in their L2 learning through participation in a theater production and begs to that further research be done. Her conclusion highlights some of the limitations and problems with her work. She notes that the director has a monumental impact on the dynamics of a theatre production and that in such an L2 learning environment, a director would need be sensitive to the needs of L2 learners, and her research did not account for this variable.

Also, because only six participants out of the original 42 kept journals throughout the process, most of the quantitative analysis was based on the questionnaires only. She suggests that while valuable, the effectiveness of journals in the collection of data would be more valuable if a greater number were surveyed.

Overall, Raquel work is valuable because it places sociocultural context at the heart of drama, and even though not supported by her finding, I agree with her postulation that the sociocultural backgrounds of L2 learners do affect how they react to drama as pedagogy in L2 learning. I believe that the future of the field lies in looking at different sociocultural contexts and their bearing on the use of drama as a language-learning tool. Few argue that drama is valuable, many are unsure of how it fits into their classrooms.

Conclusion

Through this literature review, we have consistently seen consensus in the idea that drama, as a tool in L2 learning, gives students a virtual experience in functioning in extended, realistic discourse in the target language, learners are able to learn not only appropriate language use, but real communicative processes as well. Such activities as a whole stress the importance of providing language learners with more opportunities to interact directly with the target language, and to acquire it by using it rather than to learn it through studying it. Also, it has shown to be compatible with the communicative language approach as well as Kumaravadivelu's post-method macrostrategies for L2 teaching. It is the multidimensional aspects of the L2 classroom that begs for such a multidimensional approach to teaching; and it is drama that meets every requirement. Drama, with the early confusion surrounding its nature and debate over whether it should be confined to the classroom or allowed to flow onto a stage, is, ready to treated as a staple in L2 pedagogy. I will leave you with this:

Language teachers sometimes behave like the owners of large estates, putting up high walls round their territory and signs saying ‘No Trespassing.’ Drama is like the naughty child who climbs the high walls and ignores the ‘No Trespassing’ sign. It does not allow us to define our territory so exclusively—it forces us to take as our starting point *life* not language. [It] may involve music, history, painting, mathematics, skiing, photography, cooking—anything. It does not respect subject barriers.

The language teacher will be wise to take advantage of this to enliven his work. Once his students have discovered that there is another world, much closer and more real than that of the [the textbook], the problem of ‘how to keep their interest’ will gradually disappear. And, strangest of all, this other world does not need to be conjured up with expensive equipment—all that is needed is a roomful of human beings. (Maley & Duff, 1980)

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