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Employing Drama Techniques in the Classroom to Improve the Speaking Skills of EFL University Students

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Abstract
This study aims to investigate the effectiveness of drama techniques in improving the speaking skills of Saudi EFL students in terms of accuracy, pronunciation, vocabulary, and fluency. Therefore, the significance of the study is in its contributions to the field of second language teaching in Saudi Arabia, as well as in its potential to provide information to stakeholders such as researchers and English language teachers to explore to what extent drama techniques can have an impact on improving EFL students' speaking skills. This study employed a quasi-experimental research design with one class and two groups randomly divided equally. The research population consisted of first-year Saudi English majors, specifically all 60 female students enrolled in the speaking and listening course. One class was chosen as the experimental group (30 students) and another as the control group (30 students). The study was conducted over four weeks in the second semester of 2024. A speaking test was utilized as a research instrument. The data analysis results revealed an apparent weakness in the students' speaking accuracy, pronunciation, vocabulary, and fluency in both groups during the pre-test. However, the post-test revealed significant differences in the students' speaking accuracy, pronunciation, vocabulary, and fluency in both groups, indicating that drama techniques had a significant impact on students' speaking skills. The primary recommendation was to raise teachers' awareness of the drama techniques and activities to employ in speaking classes.

Keywords: Accuracy, drama techniques, EFL students, fluency, pronunciation, speaking skills, vocabulary

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Introduction

In recent decades, many countries have strived to increase the English proficiency of their students. Many countries aim to join the international community of trading nations where the language of business, technology, science, the arts, and communication is English (Alfarwan, 2021). Many such countries (e.g., Taiwan, Thailand, Turkey, the United Arab Emirates, and Saudi Arabia), however, are ones where English is only spoken as a Foreign Language (FL), with little local currency. Hence, the emphasis must be on achieving this goal through the educational system, where more FL instruction is supposed to be continuously revisited. However, students still encounter several difficulties with language learning. Research suggests that difficulties occur in all four language skills. Among the four language skills, speaking is one of the most difficult to acquire (Masrul & Asilestari, 2021). Speaking is a primary verbal language skill to form meaningful speech that conveys ideas, thoughts, and feelings, thus effective communication. According to Kumar (2021), speaking is one of the most often utilized yet most challenging language skills since it allows speakers to communicate their innermost ideas and aspirations to listeners. Henceforth, it is worth attention from language educators, especially in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) contexts like ours, where there is a perception that EFL learners have more language difficulties basically because of limited access to practice their English outside of class in natural settings (Uztosum & Erten, 2014). We focus on speaking in this research since it is impossible to include all language problems in one small-scale study.

Speaking links students and knowledge, both inside and outside the classroom. Students can communicate their understanding by speaking during the learning process,student-teacher interactions, and responding material. According to Suresh and Srinivasan (2014), teaching is an interactive process involving teacher-student exchanges during designated classroom activities. Moreover, part of teachers' responsibilities is to create a learning environment that encourages and allows students to improve their speaking skills. One way to improve students' speaking skills is by employing several techniques. Drama techniques are a methodology that differs from traditional education models. It has its characteristics and consists of pedagogical activities such as role-play, simulation, mime, and improvisation. In addition, it can be utilized to give students a chance to actively participate in the interaction process by using their personalities and emotional domains. Drama is a significant technique that positively impacts students' speaking skills, including accuracy, fluency, and pronunciation (e.g., Trivedi, 2013). Moreover, drama techniques foster critical thinking, self-confidence, and intellectual exploration (Anderson, 2011). Drama allows students to use a variety of vocabulary in various possible contexts, such as exposure to real-world scenarios, which is believed to foster speaking confidence and proficiency (Anton, 2006; Davies, 1990).

The study problem underscores that speaking is considered the most challenging skill for students. There is a consensus that students are not doing as expected in speaking and hence encounter many problems. Brown (2007) states that many students experience shyness and a lack of understanding about overcoming related obstacles. This is because, for instance, they had insufficient knowledge of speaking skills (pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension), which contributes to fragile confidence (Hadijah, 2014). The use of traditional techniques in the classroom by a considerable number of English language teachers is a primary cause of these speaking skills problems. Moreover, we should encourage teachers to develop diverse methods to enhance students' speaking skills, such as utilizing drama techniques in the classroom (Culham, 2003). Educational drama is a highly effective strategy that significantly

improves students' cognitive, mental, psychological, physical, kinetic, and social development (Barakat, 2023). Therefore, it is timely to examine the impact of drama techniques on speaking skills in terms of pronunciation, accuracy, vocabulary, and fluency.

The study aims to examine the status of all learners' speaking skills levels and determine how drama techniques can improve the accuracy, pronunciation, vocabulary, and fluency of Saudi EFL students' spoken English. Additionally, the study aims to provide teachers and other relevant stakeholders with practical pedagogy for drama techniques, thereby enhancing the spoken English skills of Saudi EFL students. Moreover, the study's significance lies in its contributions to second language teaching in Saudi Arabia. In the Saudi context, Alrajhi et al. (2013) found that such studies about drama techniques are necessary because most students have inferior speaking skills. Similarly, it is believed that these studies can assist EFL Saudi students in overcoming difficulties in speaking skills and verbal communication. On the one hand, the current research contributes to the existing relevant literature. It assists relevant stakeholders like researchers and EFL teachers to discover the extent to which drama techniques can enhance EFL students' speaking skills. The study aims to answer the following questions:

1. What is the general pattern of all students' speaking skills regarding pronunciation, accuracy, vocabulary, and fluency in the pre-test?
2. Is there a significant difference between the group of students who received drama techniques and the group of students who used traditional methods in terms of accuracy?
3. Is there a significant difference between the group of students who received drama methods and the group of students who used traditional methods in terms of pronunciation?
4. Is there a significant difference between the group of students who received drama techniques and the group of students who used traditional methods in terms of vocabulary?
5. Is there a significant difference between the group of students who received drama techniques and the group of students who used traditional methods in terms of fluency?

Literature Review

Drama Techniques

Drama techniques have many different definitions. Holden (1981) describes them as made-up scenarios where students can be whoever they want. On the other hand, Zyoud (2010), claimed that drama is a valuable teaching tool that links linguistic expression to ideas (p.10). Drama techniques include role-playing, simulation, improvisation, and mime. Students can use these to improve their speaking skills so they can verbally communicate satisfactorily in the English language.

Drama Techniques Activities

Drama techniques include different language teaching activities. First, role play is one of the most common communicative classroom activities for helping students practice their second language and improve their speaking abilities (Blatner, 2009; Maley & Duff, 2005; Ulas, 2008). Further, role-playing encourages enhanced second-language learning, increased student cooperation, and a relaxed, engaging, and inspiring learning environment in EFL classes (Mollazamani & Ashtiani, 2008). Second, Dougill (1987) stated that mime is a "non-verbal representation of an idea or story through gesture, bodily movement, and expression" (p. 13). Thus, students avoid tension during classroom activities by performing in their native language in front

of their peers, eliminating the need to use a foreign language (Savignon, 1983). Using this strategy in crowded EFL classes can provide an opportunity for students with limited proficiency to participate in class activities. Third, improvisation, as Wessels (1987) stated, "Improvisation taps the students' already existing command of the language and tests their communicative strategies" (p. 85). Students are free to express themselves or create their personas if the concept is presented, and they act spontaneously when an unexpected situation occurs. Fourth, simulation is described by Buckner (1999) as "an intensive, interactive experience in which the content and roles assumed by participants are designed to reflect what people encounter in specific environments" (p. 1). Moreover, Livingstone (1985) said, "Simulation need not stick so closely to real life. The essential point is that the student brings his personality, experience, and opinions to the task" (p. 1). Simulation creates an atmosphere in which students can engage in meaningful activities.

Speaking Skills

Ulas (2008) states, "Speaking is the most common and important means of communication among human beings. The key to successful communication is speaking nicely, efficiently, and articulately, as well as using effective voice projection" (p. 856). Moreover, Calle (2018) suggests that speaking requires being "linguistically competent, knowing how to produce specific points of language, such as grammar, pronunciation, or vocabulary" (p. 29). In addition, the chances of students achieving academic success and success in their daily lives will increase when they are capable of communicating in language well.

Speaking skills include general aspects such as critical information and definitions, while specific elements include terms, pronunciation, vocabulary, accuracy, and fluency, which are essential for effective speaking. According to Bailey (2006) and Cazden (2001), the four components of speaking proficiency should be understood by students, with vocabulary acquisition being one of the most crucial components. Connected to the vocabulary, Hornby et al. (2010) state that pronunciation is the pattern of a speaker's speech, the way the words are pronounced, and the way they speak a language. Furthermore, Amma (2005) and Juvova et al. (2015) define speaking fluency as a learner's ability to speak fluently without hesitating or extended thought intervals. Moreover, accuracy refers to speaking without errors (Housen & Kuiken, 2009). Therefore, the current study focused on examining essential items such as vocabulary, pronunciation, fluency, and accuracy.

The Impact of Employing Drama Techniques on Students' Speaking Skills

Drama in the EFL classroom can alleviate tension, allowing students to express their ideas and gain confidence. Bousselault (2010) suggested that drama is a valuable language teaching technique, promoting meaningful conversations and vocabulary acquisition. Studies indicate that drama instruction can enhance students' speaking skills by improving vocabulary, accuracy, pronunciation, and fluency.

Marfuah and Patmasari (2020) examined how drama techniques improved students' fluency, speaking proficiency, and comprehension with 260 senior high school students using a pre-and post-test. The results showed that the experimental and control classes did not show significant differences in pre-test speaking accuracy, fluency, or comprehension. After the drama techniques were implemented, students' speaking skills in the experimental group, which included accuracy, fluency, and comprehension, significantly improved. Furthermore, Dawoud et al. (2024) investigate using drama techniques in schools to enhance English speaking skills and understand

how sixth-grade students perceive drama techniques in the Palestinian curriculum. They conducted the study for nine weeks. They collected the data through thematic analysis and semi-structured interviews. Based on the study's results, students exhibited positive feelings, preferred drama techniques, and improved their speaking skills.

In fact, during drama activities, students improve their speaking skills and qualities such as teamwork, creativity, and confidence. According to Mugiraneza et al. (2024), drama activities improve students' speaking skills, including accuracy, fluency, and pronunciation, enabling them to communicate more effectively and efficiently. In addition, they stimulate students' imaginations and provide a safe and supportive environment in which they can explore issues and experiences. Nguyen (2023) investigated how drama activities affected speaking skills. In this quasi-experimental study, sixty eleventh-grade students from Can Tho City participated in the mixed method approach, focusing on vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, fluency, and discourse management. The results showed drama activities in speaking classes improved students' speaking performance, and their perception of drama activities was favorable. Moreover, Akyüz and Tani's (2020) study examined the impact of drama activities on students' speaking skills and language acquisition. The study involved 21 first-year university students. Data were collected through a pre-intermediate speaking test and questionnaire. The relevant findings showed that drama activities positively impacted students' speaking skills, such as vocabulary, pronunciation, and fluency. Alasmari and Alshae (2020) found that drama impacted English learning by sixth-grade female students in Sakaka City, Saudi Arabia. They used a mixed-method approach. The results showed that drama activities in language classrooms enhance language acquisition by enhancing communicative skills and increasing engagement with the learning process.

Drama activities in speaking classes helped students develop confidence, enjoyment, acting skills, vocabulary, and teamwork (Manurung, 2018). This is in line with a wide array of other relevant research studies and students at different levels of education, which support the benefit of drama techniques instruction on improving students' speaking skills. For instance, Kumar et al. (2022) conducted a qualitative study on the impact of drama techniques instruction on 30 university EFL students. The results showed a significant positive effect on students' acquisition of fluent speaking skills, besides the speaking skills mentioned above. In other words, drama techniques give students authentic scenarios in which they can participate mentally, physically, and emotionally. This demonstrates how using drama techniques can improve the students' vocabulary level, pronunciation, accuracy, and other pertinent aspects of their speaking skills. Therefore, we can hypothesize that using drama techniques with students to teach speaking will yield similar results. According to Djafar and Yunus (2023), drama techniques can help students express themselves fluently and accurately in English classes. They examined the speaking skills of eleventh-grade students at SMA Negeri six-Gowa using pre-experimental methods and speaking tests. After the introduction of drama techniques, the students' speaking skills scores, which were 48.32 out of 100 on the pre-test, increased to 68.18 on the post-test. Moreover, Altwissi's (2022) study found that drama techniques improved sixth-grade students' English language skills. There was a positive correlation between drama teaching and improved English language speaking results among 70 experimental and control groups.

Drama techniques enhance speaking skills in many studies. Careful execution of instruction based on drama techniques is crucial. For instance, the time students spend in the classroom during drama instruction is essential for achieving more realistic results. Rosyada et al. (2014) found no discernible impact of classroom drama techniques on students' speaking skills.

The short duration of three 45-minute sessions led to this outcome. Similarly, Conejeros and de Zarate Fernandez (2009) employed drama for two 45-minute sessions, but they found no discernible improvement in speaking skills. Therefore, as we will see later, we have considered these factors when conducting this study.

The analysis of relevant literature on drama techniques reveals a gap in previous studies in Saudi Arabia, which focused on general speaking skills rather than specific areas such as pronunciation, accuracy, vocabulary, and fluency. In particular, numerous research studies indicate that this gap becomes more evident in EFL contexts like ours (e.g., Manurung, 2018; Kumar et al., 2022). Furthermore, the current study will bridge this gap and help EFL Saudi students overcome challenges in their speaking skills regarding accuracy, pronunciation, vocabulary, and fluency. In addition, the researcher acknowledges that no prior research has been conducted in the current study context, which could potentially uncover possible dilemmas and offer practical solutions when necessary.

Methods

This is a quasi-experimental study in which two or more groups are compared or controlled to answer specific research questions using a pre-post test instrument. Richards and Schmidt (2013) stated that many quantitative educational studies are conducted using quasi-experimental designs because of the intricacies of teaching and learning in classrooms. The researcher chose this methodology because the data is quantitative, and the information found in the field has properties that can be represented by numbers and treated in that way, using drama techniques.

Participants

The study was conducted during the second semester of the academic year 2024. It involved all 60 level one female students studying for their bachelor's degrees in English language major at Majmaah University, in Majmaah governorate, a relatively new university in a small governorate located almost 200 kilometers from Riyadh, the capital of Saudi Arabia. The duration of the bachelor's degree program is four years, divided into eight levels, and each level is a semester of 16 weeks. The participants' ages ranged between 19 and 20 years old. This study used a purposive sample because the participants had taken the Listening and Speaking One course (ENG 112). The course aims to enable students to comprehend and produce spoken English. It also has the most significant number of students, which is satisfactory for a reseach like ours.

Research Instruments

The researcher employed a speaking pre-test and post-test adapted from Torrico (2015). The test consists of a pre-test and a post-test (see Appendix A). Two EFL teaching experts approved the modifications the researcher made to fit the study objectives. The pre-test is composed of conversations about holidays, food, and shopping. Three sample questions make up the test. The post-test consists of two samples: storytelling and discussion topics. The four criteria for evaluating scores for the test were accuracy, pronunciation, vocabulary, and fluency, the targeted aspects of this study.

Speaking Evaluation Rubric

To assess the students' speaking skills, the researcher used a speaking evaluation rubric adopted by Torrico (2015). The speaking evaluation rubric scores are: "Needs Improvement: 0–4, Satisfactory: 5–6, Good: 7-8, Excellent: 9–10". Additionally, the researcher adjusted four proficiency categories, accuracy, pronunciation, vocabulary, and fluency, to align with the study's objectives. An applied linguist expert cross-checked this modification and approved it for the current study. (See Appendix B). Moreover, a sample of six tests of the students' speaking performance was recorded and rated by the researcher and another volunteer EFL teacher expert with solid background knowledge in speaking assessment who scored them independently using the above rubric. They achieved 82% agreement, which is an acceptable level of inter-rater reliability. They then discussed their discrepancies and reached a deal.

Research Procedures

The ethical approval and all relevant official requirements have approved this study. In addition, participants were assured that their personal information would not be used for any other purpose than for research purposes. The procedure in this study took place over four weeks. Moreover, the study involved administering a pre-test to all students before and after the experiment. Once the study was completed, post-testing was done to compare results between those who received drama instruction and those who did not. (See Appendix A.) The average time for students was about 8 minutes, on the pre-test and post-test. The pre-test and the post-test both took place over two days. The speaking test criteria rubric was the basis for the student's evaluation (see Appendix B).

The total number of sessions were 8, each taking 50 minutes, twice a week. The course teacher received explanations for all activities beforehand. The teacher introduced the researcher to the targeted students. The researcher greeted the students and discussed the study's objectives, randomly dividing the 60 students into two groups. The experimental group had 30 students who received drama techniques instruction. In the control group, 30 students received instruction using the traditional teaching methods outlined in their textbooks. Before the sessions started, the researcher designed a welcome card and a small gift and gave them to the experimental group of students. The experimental group received explanations of all the pertinent drama activities included in the presentation.

During February 2024, the first week consists of the first and second sessions. The first session began with applying drama techniques, starting with a role-play activity involving two topics. A job interview is the first topic covered, in which two students present scenarios to the class and exchange roles as if they were at a job interview. In the second session, the students exchange roles and perform scenarios based on the second topic, student and teacher roles.

The second week consists of the third and fourth sessions. The third session featured a simulation activity. Additionally, each of the two students was in a group. The simulation activity consisted of two topics. First, the two students discuss Corona and the events 2020, exchanging news as if they were news announcers. They received a camera and a microphone to enhance the naturalness of the role. The second topic in the fourth session is bringing actual objects from home. They are assigned roles as buyers and sellers of these objects. Students play the roles of seller and buyer. The objects included cosmetics, fragrances, clothes, and food.

The third week consists of the fifth and sixth sessions. The fifth session featured an improvisation activity where the students reenacted the events that occurred Jenny and her mother. Furthermore, each of the two students was placed in a group. The story begins with Jenny and her mother walking to the park during their vacation. When they walk, they stop and are surprised. She asked them to complete it, and they invented many events, including that Jenny and her mother witnessed a traffic accident. They also concocted the story of a lost and crying child unable to locate his family and the discovery of a wallet containing a lot of money in the park. In the sixth session, the researcher divided the students into six groups, each containing five students, for the second improvisation activity. The activity revolved around a group of people, with the students assuming the role of company employees on strike for higher pay. Students cited reasons such as the high cost of living, while others expressed about the long work hours and inadequate salary.

The fourth week consists of the seventh and eighth sessions. In the seventh session, the researcher presented a mime activity consisting of movement and feeling cards designed by the researcher. The researcher divided the students into six groups for the mime activity. In each group, there is a leader representing what is on the movement cards. In the eighth session, participants engaged in a mime activity using the feeling cards. The presentation of the cards was similar to that of the movement card. Following that, the teacher and the students received thanks for their participation. They also received a thank-you card and a small gift. The researcher designed the card.

Data Analysis

The data analysis was conducted using the statistical analysis program SPSS 26. Moreover, descriptive statistics were used to analyze pre-test results to understand the overall pattern of students' speaking skills in regarding pronunciation, accuracy, vocabulary, and fluency. Additionally, the study utilized an independent T-test to compare speaking skills in accuracy, pronunciation, vocabulary, and fluency between the control and experimental groups.

Validity and Reliability

The validity of the instruments' pre-test and post-test was derived from Torrico (2015) and proved effective. To test validity and reliability, the researcher used Alpha Cronbach in Table One.

Table 1. *Validity and reliability*

Reliability	Validity
0.978	0.957

Table One reveals that the experiment's items and axes exhibit high stability, as demonstrated by Cronbach's alpha stability coefficient. The total validity coefficient was 0.957, indicating high stability and closeness to the correct value. The experiment's reliability coefficient, calculated as the square root of the validity coefficient, stands at 0.978, surpassing the threshold of 0.5, thereby signifying high reliability. Therefore, the experiment has a high degree of reliability.

Findings

Descriptive Statistics

The pre-test revealed the general pattern of speaking skills in terms of pronunciation, accuracy, vocabulary, and fluency for all students.

Table 2. *The distribution of pre-test results of the study*

Questions		Agreement				Mean	Percent of Skills	Level of Skills
		Need improvement	Satisfactory	Good	Excellent			
Accuracy	F	24	31	5	0	1.68	42.0%	Need improvement
	%	40	51.7	8.3	0			
Pronunciation	F	26	31	3	0	1.62	40.5%	Need improvement
	%	43.3	51.7	5	0			
Vocabulary	F	24	31	5	0	1.68	42.0%	Need improvement
	%	40	51.7	8.3	0			
Fluency	F	27	28	5	0	1.63	40.8%	Need improvement
	%	45	46.7	8.3	0			

The pre-test results in Table Two indicate that students need to improve their speaking skills, as evidenced by the percentages of accuracy, pronunciation, vocabulary, and fluency. First, regarding accuracy, 24 students needed improvement, 31 students got satisfactory, five students got good, and 0 students got excellent. The accuracy percentage is 42%. Second, regarding pronunciation, 26 students needed improvement, 31 students got satisfactory, three students got good, and 0 students got excellent. The pronunciation percentage is 40.5%. Third, regarding vocabulary, 24 students needed improvement, 31 students got satisfactory, five students got good, and 0 students got excellent. The vocabulary percentage is 42%. Fourth, regarding fluency, 27 students needed improvement, 28 students got satisfactory, five students got good, and 0 students got excellent. The fluency percentage is 40.8%. Based on the above results in terms of accuracy, pronunciation, vocabulary, and fluency, the percentages are less than 50%. Hence, this tells us that the students' speaking level has not received satisfactory input instruction, besides poor practice in and outside the classroom.

Independent Sample T-tests

The objective of the post-test was to demonstrate the variations in speaking abilities, including accuracy, pronunciation, vocabulary, and fluency, between the control group and the experimental group. The study utilized independent sample T-tests, resulting in the following findings:

Table 3. *Independent sample T-tests between the mean of accuracy, pronunciation, vocabulary, and fluency for two groups of the post-test*

Speaking skills	Sample	Mean Difference	SD Difference	T.test	P.value
Accuracy	Control group	-0.16	0.85	-6.25	0.000
	Experimental group	1.56	1.08		
Pronunciation	Control group	0.04	0.53	-8.30	0.000
	Experimental group	1.80	0.91		
Vocabulary	Control group	0.12	0.73	-8.29	0.000
	Experimental group	1.80	0.71		
Fluency	Control group	0.08	0.76	-5.40	0.000
	Experimental group	1.44	1.00		

From the above Table Three, it is found that there is a significant difference in speaking skills in terms of accuracy, pronunciation, vocabulary, and fluency between the control group and the experimental group. To illustrate thoroughly, first, there is a significant difference between the experimental group (M = 1.56, SD = 1.08) and the control group (M = 0.16, SD = 0.85), t = (6.25), because the P. value is (0.000) <0.05, in accuracy. Similarly, the significant difference extends to pronunciation between the experimental group (M =1.80, SD =0.91) and the control group (M =0.04, SD =0.53), t = (-8.30), because the P. value is (0.000) <0.05. In addition, the result showed a significant difference between the experimental group (M =1.80, SD =0.71) and the control group (M =0.12, SD =0.73), t = (-8.29), because the P. value is (0.000) <0.05. in vocabulary. Also, there is a significant difference between the experimental group (M =1.44, SD =1.00) and the control group (M =0.08, SD =0.76), t = (-5.40), because the P value is (0.000) <0.05. in fluency. Due to the use of drama techniques, the experimental group's speaking level was higher, the students' speaking skills have improved regarding pronunciation, accuracy, vocabulary, and fluency.

Discussion

This section's discussion includes the first question and other related questions. The first question*: What is the general pattern of all students' speaking skills in terms of pronunciation, accuracy, vocabulary, and fluency in the pre-test?*

The pre-test results revealed insufficient vocabulary, pronunciation, accuracy, and fluency in the students' general speaking patterns.Their low scores, significantly below the mid-scale 50, indicate a deficient speaking threshold level. Several reasons were highlighted, for instance, a lack of practice observed inside the classroom. This suggests the need for more techniques and activities relevant to speaking level improvement. Furthermore, there may be insufficient English practice in EFL contexts, such as Majmaah governorate (small town), the current context of this study, where there is little room for English language use. According to Hammad (2013), Saudi college girls' speaking skills are negatively impacted by their weak English skills, lack of opportunities for listening and speaking, and a lack of use of strategies like role-play and debate. These findings align with earlier research conducted by (Marfuah & Patmasari, 2020).

On the other hand, to answer the related questions. The second question: *Is there a significant difference between the group of students who received drama techniques and the group of students who used traditional methods in terms of accuracy?* The third question*: Is there a significant difference between the group of students who received drama methods and the group of students who used traditional methods in terms of pronunciation?*The fourth question*: Is there a significant difference between the group of students who received drama techniques and the group of students who used traditional methods in terms of vocabulary?* The fifth question*: Is there a significant difference between the group of students who received drama techniques and the group of students who used traditional methods in terms of fluency?*

The results of the post-test using the independent sample T-tests demonstrate that the experimental and control groups differed statistically significantly because the P value is 0.000 < 0.05. This indicates that the experimental group has dramatically improved their speaking skills, including accuracy, pronunciation, vocabulary, and fluency, compared to the control group. Drama integration into the classroom has been very beneficial for students. Therefore, students can convey their experiences through drama, a result of teamwork and initiative. Drama techniques gave students a setting in which they could practice speaking effectively (Schejbal, 2006). In addition,

drama encouraged a natural integration of language proficiency and interaction in the classroom, as proposed by Maley and Duff (2005). Drama techniques, a potent teaching tool, foster active learning and participation by enabling students to explore diverse scenarios and environments. As stated by Vila-Abadal (2009), teaching through drama is becoming increasingly popular in educational settings. Drama techniques activities, including role-playing, mimes, simulations, and improvisation, are effective in enhancing speaking skills. Moreover, drama techniques motivate students to engage in a more productive learning environment through group interaction (Via, 1976; Smith, 1984; Wessels, 1991). In line with several quasi-experimental studies that showed similar findings (e.g., Altweissi, 2022; Zahri & Asilestari, 2022; Djafar & Yunus, 2023), the drama techniques improve students' speaking skills. This corroborates Ulas's (2008) observation that these drama techniques give language learners of second languages opportunities to practice speaking English within meaningful dialogue. Drama techniques provide students with the opportunity to increase their speaking practice and enhance their ability to express themselves more effectively. On the contrary, other studies (e.g., Conejeros & de Zarate Fernandez, 2009; Rosyada et al., 2014) showed a different result, that there were no significant differences between the two groups, basically due to the short duration of drama techniques employment in classroom experiments, as was admitted in such results.

The current study focuses on speaking skills, specifically accuracy, pronunciation, vocabulary, and fluency. The study compares the students' levels before and after the experimental period. Additionally, the significant differences observed between the two groups indicated the effectiveness of drama techniques. Ballantyne and Packer (1997) recommend using drama as a teaching method because it motivates students to actively participate in learning the target language and creates a welcoming, fun learning environment within the classroom.

Conclusion

The current study examined the impact of drama techniques on improving EFL students' speaking skills in terms of accuracy, pronunciation, vocabulary, and fluency. Drama techniques play a significant role in students' speaking skills. The findings revealed that the students generally had weak speaking skills, which led to a low level of verbal communication in English. However, drama techniques improved Saudi EFL students' speaking skills in terms of accuracy, pronunciation, vocabulary, and fluency. The study found that drama significantly impacted Saudi EFL students' speaking skills, revealing significant differences in accuracy, pronunciation, vocabulary, and fluency through pre-test and post-test speaking tests. The findings of the study support and confirm that drama techniques are helpful and practical in helping improve EFL students' speaking skills. Additionally, the EFL classroom used drama techniques to foster a welcoming and enjoyable atmosphere. This is because drama activities, such as role-play, simulation, mime, and improvisation, made students share their thoughts and feelings when they worked together and weren't shy or afraid of speaking.

Implications

The pre-test results showed that students' general speaking patterns need improvement. To address this, course designers can spare some valuable space for speaking activities that improve students’ speaking skills. For instance, they can create as realistic a setting as possible for students to practice, and teachers in turn should make the most of activities such as role-playing, simulation, improvisation, and mime with their students to improve their speaking skills in terms of

vocabulary, pronunciation, accuracy, and fluency. Furthermore, drama activities proved to significantly enhance students' vocabulary, pronunciation, and fluency (Akyüz & Tani, 2020).

The post-test results indicated that the experimental group made more progress than the control group. As a result, by appropriately incorporating drama techniques into classroom teaching, students would learn and have fun. Similarly, EFL teachers are recommended to use drama techniques in the classroom. Furthermore, there are some general recommendations for students on how to improve their speaking skills, such as the Cambly application, which is an online platform where adults can converse with native English speakers while practicing and learning the language. According to Alshammary (2020), Cambly has a positive effect on speaking proficiency because it provides an enjoyable environment, promotes motivation, eases anxiety, provides practice opportunities, and enables individuals to feel more comfortable and confident in their abilities.

Limitations and Recommendations

This study sheds some light on the student's general level of speaking skills and the effect of drama techniques activities. However, there were some limitations, as occurs with any study. For instance, it was a gender-restricted study with only females. Besides, it was limited to 60 female students of level one from Majmaah University's English department in 2024. This is because the education system in the study context is gender-restricted, and the researcher could not teach male students. However, one possible way to overcome this barrier is to rely on a male teacher to do the work of male students, if possible. Future research would benefit from gender-related studies, such as comparing male and female students' speaking skills. This can show exciting and valuable results that can help EFL teachers understand both genders' ways of learning and developing speaking skills. In addition, the study was a single-method test. However, this was due to time constraints and the graduate program timeline. Nevertheless, the results obtained were believed to be exciting and insightful, achieving the study objectives. Yet, it would be more insightful to examine students' perceptions through questionnaires and interviews to support study test results.

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Appendices
Appendix A
Pre-tests and Post-tests

Pre-tests

"Sample 1"
"Having a conversation: Holidays"
"• Tell me what kind of activities you enjoy doing on holiday. Where did you go on holiday last year?"
"• What did you do and see on your holiday?"
"• Have you got any holiday plans for the summer?"
"• Will you go with your family or with friends?"
"• Would you rather go to the beach or to the countryside?"
"• Have you ever been camping? Was it fun?"
"• Do you like sightseeing and visiting monuments?"
"• Have you ever been abroad? Where to?"
"• Which country would you like to visit? Why?"

"Sample 2"
"Having a conversation: Food"
"• What's your favorite food? How is it made? What's it made of?"
"• Can you cook? What's your specialty?"
"• Who cooks at home? Do you ever cook for your family?"
"• I would like to eat some traditional Spanish food. What do you recommend?"
"• Have you ever eaten food from another country? Tell me about it."
"• How often do you go to restaurants?"
"• Do you think young people eat too much fast food?"
"• Would you watch programs about cooking on TV?"
"• Do you think cooking should be taught at school? Why/not?"

"Sample 3"
"• Having a conversation: Shopping."
"• Do you enjoy shopping?"
"• What sort of things do you buy?"
"• Where do you do most of your shopping? in a market, a shopping center, or in small shops?"
"• Who is responsible for shopping for food in your family? Do you ever help with the food shopping?"
"• Tell me about the most expensive thing you have bought."
"• I would like to buy some new clothes. Which shops would you recommend?"
"• Internet shopping is very popular now. Have you ever bought anything online?"
"• When is the best time to go shopping?"
"• Would you like to work in a shop? Why/not?"

Post-tests

"Sample 1"
"Storytelling tasks"
"Choose one story to tell:"
"Tell me about a holiday you had."
"Tell me about a difficult journey you had."
"Tell me about a perfect day you've had."
"Tell me about a special event in your life."

"Sample 2"
"Discussion topics"
"Choose one topic to discuss about."
"You should mention pros and cons, or advantages and disadvantages:"
"Young people under 15 shouldn't use mobile phones."
"Young people should start working earlier, for example while they are studying."
"Cultural places, such as museums and monuments, should be for free for students."

Appendix B
Speaking Evaluation Rubric

Table 4. *Speaking Evaluation Rubric*

Evaluation Criteria	"Needs Improvement 0-4"	"Satisfactory 5-6"	"Good 7-8"	"Excellent 9-10"
Accuracy				
Pronunciation				
Vocabulary				
Fluency				

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