

drama is considered an effective strategy that gives students the ability to comprehend the text easily, there emerges a need for gaining a better access to the means whereby it can be utilized and improved as a strategy in the reading classes. Also, while having a drama activity, students interact with others, decode the things others say and do. Drama provides assistance with literacy. Furthermore, Studies in this regard have concluded that drama could help students develop their speaking, listening, as well as reading abilities. Further research highlights that acquisition of vocabulary likewise improves by means of drama.

So, when students engage in activities of interactive drama, they experience learning about themselves as human beings in addition to being readers (Miller, 1996:24). They in a —live literary work, or an art by depicting themselves as characters in the story and by means of sorting out difficulties, it would enable them to get more insight within themselves, their fellow students, and the events they experience (Miller, 1996:27). It can be said that drama not only help students read the text and what is in it. but also enables them to live in the text, a process whereby better retention and comprehension would be created.

Moreover, drama develops the students' verbal interpretation (Hoyt, 1992:213) for the positive achievement of integrating reading and drama. Kelner & Flynn (2006 : 17) suggest a five step plan for a reading comprehension lesson with arts-integrated drama of high-quality; objectives ought to be stated and explained clearly in both reading comprehension and drama, acting tools or activities of skill building, a drama strategy covers the two groups of definite objectives, a reflection activity for the drama in a way that provides students with the opportunity to work with what they have learned and an assessment for the perspective of drama and reading comprehension.

2. Objectives of the study

1. Investigating the effect of teaching English language using drama activities to develop fifth preparatory male students' reading comprehension.
2. Investigating the relationship between students' achievement of the control group (those who study using the traditional method of teaching) and the achievement of the experimental group (those who study using dramatic activities).

3. Hypothesis of the Study

It is hypothesized that there is no statistically significant difference between the mean scores obtained by the students of the experimental group(those who study using dramatic activities) and the achievement of the control group (those who study using the prescribed method) .

4. Limitations of the Study

1. The sample under study is all the students of the fifth preparatory students in Al-Najaf Governorate.
2. The second course of the academic year (2016/2017).
3. The book "English for Iraq" for fifth preparatory students.

5. Definitions of the Basic Terms

1. **Effect:** Longman(2010:190) states that it's a measure of the strength of one variable or it's the relationship between two or more variables.
2. **Dramatic activity:** Wagner (1988: 5) emphasizes through which students may come to understand human interactions, empathize with other people and internalize alternative points of view.
3. **Enhancing :** Richard (2010 : 198) Points out that enhancing is the learner's ability to answer the test questions constructed to measure reading comprehension.
4. **Reading comprehension:** Dutcher (1990:168) illustrates process through which the dynamic in knowledge, the information inferred by the written language, and the reading situation context.

6. Review of Related Literature

The researcher used three types of activities: (Scripted play, Role play and Simulation) :

6.1 Scripted Play:

Script writing is defined by Davis (1984:258) as an activity whereby students write words of their own, sometimes actions, in order to dramatize. Students could write what they are going to say, the move and their cues, and other elements of the scene-setting. This could be simple and plain as a chat or longer like a long play. Prior to their writing of their script, students can perform it. Scriptwriting could be written individually, in a group of pairs, or more. Scriptwriting helps students concentrate on register, pairs of adjacency, vocabulary in use, and in fluency. A script can be further edited or re-drafted to concentrate on the process of writing. The additional benefit of that is for the students to be capable of performing their script after it is finished. An easier way for them to engage in learning a new vocabulary is to get them make very brief scenes where they can dramatize particular concepts. Besides practicing recently learned vocabulary, they can concentrate on particular grammar structures. In the same way, students would be able to write scripts for the purpose of scenes that concentrate on particular pronunciation matters. According to Porcaro (2001:68), role-play scriptwriting poses an opportunity to participate with the other elementary linguistic skills of EFL speaking, reading, and listening instruction while primarily being a writing exercise. It creates an opportunity of thoughtful manifestation and imagination exercise; it integrates effectively in all the basic linguistic skills; it also includes participation of all the students as well as being quite entertaining and informative.

6.2 Role play

Role-play usually includes students playing roles of imaginary people in a situation which is also imaginary. Byrne (1986: 119-22) designates some of the ways that provide a framework for the role-play practice. Dialogues of open-endings provide a frame for commencing the role-play with the students free to choose how to further develop these dialogues. Another way is the mapped dialogues that give students a kind of chart that tells them which functions they have to use in their interaction. With the 'functional' cues for each and every speaker on separate cards, a gap of information is created.

The sequence of events is outlined by scenarios without using the given words. The incidents can be presented by a series of pictures. The key point is that these events should be about everyday real situations, let it be a scene in a restaurant or cafe. With this role playing type, the students work in groups and have to determine the appropriate moment for talking, whether or not with modifying the scenarios, or working out what they believe is really said, and how to do the role-play. Furthermore, the students will have to choose the characters or who exactly they are, how they look, where they are going, and also be familiar with the setting (Byrne 1986: 120-22).

6.3 Simulation

A simulation is an activity whereby learners discuss a particular problem (or a series of problems) within a definite setting. In such activities, the students could be playing themselves or it might be someone else. Simulation activities are considered interaction activities with different categories of dialogues. One category could be social situations and dialogues such as greetings, invitations, introductions, compliments, complaints...etc. Exercises of simulation social situations with the suitable social ties; for instance, students could practise refusing a request for a date. If the students do not employ the accepted conventions of giving an excuse like "I'm really sorry, but I'm busy", it is still vital that they are mindful of these conventions and etiquettes. Another type for simulated interaction is tasks that are community oriented, in which students learn the practice of dealing with organizations such as DHSS and how to do shopping, or buying a ticket at the station etc. This category of simulation assists students' communicative participation in the society and at least, it helps them in the task of important information collection. In fact, any type of activity involves problem-solving where there is a request for giving permission. And problem negotiation and solving can establish the basis of simulation exercises. Byrne (1986: 125-128) sets the following example. A social club is experiencing financial difficulties, therefore, the owner has to decide whether or not to close the club down. An emergency meeting is held to sort out the problem.

First, the setting could be presented by making background information available through texts to

be listened to or read in the community. Next, the participants' roles can be defined with a number of students acting official roles like club secretary or chairman, but the majority perform as members of the public or attendants of the club. The students work in pairs or small groups to look into the background information in detail and get prepared for the simulation exercises. The students could, at some point, work in three clusters: 1) the club committee; 2) the public; 3) and those students who take the listening roles of the reporters whose job is taking notes for articles and reports for later. All three groups have to share any extra information before going to the simulation. After this simulation, feedback could be presented. (Ibid:133).

7. The Role of Drama in Teaching and Learning English

Drama plays an essential role in the English teaching programs of most countries whose native language is not English. However, there are plenty of issues that language teachers come across in the area of instructing the English language through literature. First of all, there is a small number of appropriate classroom pedagogical materials that could be utilized by language teachers. Second, the lack of preparation in literature teaching area in TEFL programs. Third, the absence of distinct objectives that define the role of drama in the EFL teaching. Numerous instructors attempt to apply literature in the classroom, yet they need training and background in that specific field (Smith & Herring, 1993:123).

7.1 Problems with English Language Teaching

Teaching English language as a foreign language is considered a general issue, so researchers have been investigated problems of the teaching process and all its aspects. Some researchers have already disputed the claim that one of the essential reasons to do second language acquisition research is to make second language teaching easier (Larsen-Freeman, Long, 1969:102, & Pica, 2012:338). Generally, learning strategies is defined as the special ideas or behaviours that teachers use to help learners understand, learn, or gain new information (Ganbarzehi, O'Mally

2014:385). Also, Lightbown (2012:385) points out that although researchers in general assume that many investigations in second language acquisition bore fruit for language teaching, the applications of such strategies have to be done judiciously. She claims that research informs teachers what to instruct, and say that the ways of teaching had already been figured out.

8. What Do We Mean by Drama?

There are some ways by which drama could be defined. It might be seen as a blanket term that covers "a wide range of oral activities that have an element of creativity " (Hubbard et al 1986: 317). Holden (1982 :48) considers drama as any kind of activity whereby learners are prompted either to describe themselves or to describe someone else in an image. In other words, "drama is concerned with the world of 'let's pretend'; it asks the learner to project himself imaginatively into another situation, outside the classroom, or into the skin and personality of another person" . The students sometimes do this solely or with a group of classmates. They may act in a guideline of organizational and linguistic scheme. In other words , the students construct an interaction with others and react likewise to what they might do or say, benefiting from their own personal storage of language repertoire for the purpose of communicating in an expressive manner.

9. Previous Studies:

Güngör, Arzu (2008) studied the effects of drama and traditional methods on primary school students' use of reading, and on their perceptions of the drama method. pre- and post-tests were designed to examine the experimental and control group. The drama technique was used in the experimental group and traditional teaching methods in the control group. The research was conducted on 5th grade students (experiment=28, control=26) of a Turkish language/art course at a state elementary school in Izmir, Turkey. The data analysis indicates that the drama method is more effective than traditional methods with regard to strategy use. There is no significant difference between the groups in terms of attitudes towards reading. In addition, it has been determined that students in the experimental group have positive perceptions of the drama method.

Al-Khasawna & Al-agul (2012) investigated the use of dramatic activities for enhancing reading comprehension on primary school students where a pre and post-test were applied on two equivalent groups of students, (31) student each. The results showed that there is a statistically significant difference between the frequencies in the three interlocutors, discrimination of sound, clarity of the pre and post-test for the post-test is due to the usage of the dramatic activities program. The results of this study can be considered as guidance to teachers because using drama in teaching is a modern way for students to comprehend. This study encourages researchers to do more of these studies and to help students improve their reading comprehension in other stages of school.

Tajareh, M.J. and Oroji, M.R. (2017) investigated reading comprehension learning among EFL young learners through the techniques of drama. The objective of the study was to determine to what extent drama activities could develop reading comprehension ability of Iranian EFL young learners. The methodology was quasi-experimental and the population of the research was 102 eighth-grade female students from Shohadaye Enghelab high school in the year 2015-2016, among whom, 44 participants were finally chosen. They were randomly assigned into two groups (control group and experimental group). In experimental group students underwent drama activities in reading classes; however, in the control group, students were taught reading comprehension in the traditional way. Having assigned them into the control and experimental groups, the researcher ran a Pre-test and a Post-test. In order to evaluate the results, an independent T-test was administered. The results proved that the application of drama techniques can have a great impact on Iranian EFL young learners' comprehension ability

Zyoud (2012) used drama activities and techniques to foster teaching English as a foreign language in a theoretical perspective. Drama can foster language skills such as speaking, writing, reading and listening by creating a suitable context. Drama is a powerful teaching tool that requires all the students to be active in the class period. Drama can also involve the means for connecting the students' emotions and cognition as it enables students to take risks with language and experience the connection between thought and action. Through drama a class will address, practice and integrate reading, writing, speaking and listening. Drama also maintains and foster students, motivation by providing an atmosphere which is full of fun and enriches the learners' experience of the language.

In conclusion, we can affirm that many different studies have investigated drama as a method to teach a foreign language. Although most of the studies are not closely linked to my study, all of them have provided me with important information, which has been useful in order to develop my study and specially in designing methodologies .

10. Methodology

10.1 The Design of the Study

This study makes use of an experimental design to investigate the effectiveness of dramatic activities to develop reading comprehension skills of the study sample.

10.2 The Study Sample

In this study, the sample consists of sixty eight students of two classes of fifth grade preparatory male school in Najaf governorate / Al-Abasyah district during the academic year 2016 / 2017 . One class is randomly assigned to be the experimental group. This class consists of thirty –four students and they were taught reading comprehension by means of dramatic activities. The other class is assigned to be the control group.

Table (1) the sample of the study

Group	Total
Experimental	34
Control	34

10.3 Equivalence of the two Groups

Both groups are equalized by controlling some variables that would affect the accuracy of the results of the experiment. These variables are as follows:

10.3.1 Age of the students

The students' ages were calculated per months . They were calculated from the day of their birth until the day of the experiment , (3 /5/ 2017) . When the researcher carried out the T-test equation for two independent samples he has found out that there is an insignificant difference between the age of both groups because the computed T- value is (1.843) at (0.05) level of significance and under (66) degrees of freedom, the tabulated T-value is (1.671) .

Table (2) The t-test Statistics for the Students' Age

Group	N	Mean	Std	df	t-Value	
					calculated	Table
Control	34	200.61	5.29	66	0.30	2
Experimental	34	201	4.91			

10.3.2 Students' scores

The mean of the scores of the experimental group is (75.764) and that of the control group is (73.411) . The tabulated T –value is (1.671) whereas the calculated T – value is (0.659) at (0.05) level of significance and under (66) degrees of freedom.

Table (3) T-test Statistics of the Students' scores

Variable	Group	No	M	SD	DF	t-value	
						Calculated	Table
The first course Examination	EG	34	75.764	13.658	66	0.659	1.671
	CG	34	73.411	15.719			

10.3.3 Educational achievement of parents

The researcher divided educational achievement of parents into five levels as follows :

- 1- Illiterate
- 2- Primary
- 3- Intermediate
- 4- Preparatory
- 5- Bachelor / MA / PHD

Table (4) Frequencies and Chi-square Value for Father's Education

Group	No.	Illiterate	Primary	Intermediate	Secondary	Ph.D.	B.A., M.A., M.Sc.	Chi-value	
								Computed	Tabulated
EG	34	2	4	6	11	11	4	1.89	9.48
CG	34	2	6	9	8	9			
Total	68	4	10	16	21	17			

10.4 Controlling Extraneous Factors

There are several variables that needs to be controlled

1. History: The history is controlled because there is no paramount events happened during the period of applying the experiment and the total period of the experiment is too short.
2. Maturity: Since this study lasted two months only and the period was not too long to affect the student's responses , the variable of maturity was controlled .
3. Mortality: this variable is controlled since all the subjects of control and experimental groups attended the classes throughout the experiment.

4. Differential Selection or Selection Bias: This variable was achieved by selecting the study sample and its groups randomly
5. Teaching materials: The researcher selected the texts that are related to the study from different sections of the text book and the activity book of the fifth grade preparatory stage

10.5 Instruction

The actual beginning of the experiment was on the fifth of March / 2017 . It ended on the fifth of June / 2017 , where it lasted two months. For technical reasons and in order to control the variables of experiment , the researcher himself taught the subjects of both groups .

10.5.1 Control Group

The researcher has adopted the steps which are followed in the teacher's book fifth preparatory in teaching the control group .The steps are as follows:

1. Reviewing vocabulary .
2. Reading and completing an essay .
3. Listening for specific information and pronunciation .
4. Writing an essay .

10.5.2 The Experimental Group

The experimental group was taught by means of dramatic activities where the researcher gave them a detailed explanation about dramatic activities and what will happen next lessons . A lesson plan was prepared by the researcher and validated by a jury. Dramatic activities consist of seven types (**Tortello**, 2004:218) . The researcher has adopted the first three types such as(Scripted play, Role play and Simulation) only.

10.6 The Achievement Test

An achievement test is similar to a progress test in that they determine what a student has learned with regard to stated course outcomes . They are usually administered at mid –and end –point of the semester or the academic year .

The researcher has conducted reading comprehension achievement tests and he uses these tests as pre and post –tests . He gives these tests to a control group as well as an experimental one . The pre –test is used in order to compare it's results with post –test and then measure the extent to which students have benefited from using dramatic activities .

10.6.1 The Description of the Pre – test

The pre –test consists of two questions , each of which contains two sections . The first section includes a passage , most of its words are taken from student's book . This section provides ten comprehension points and the students job is to answer them briefly . The second section is (True/false) question.

The second question also contains two sections . The first one is a passage taken from the text with five multiple choice questions that should be answered by the students . The second section is a five completion question related to the same passage.

10.6.2 Validity and Reliability of The Test

Validity refers to how well a test measures what it is supposed to measure. The researcher has designed a test and submitted it to a jury of fifteen specialists in the field of methodology and linguistics for the purpose of ensuring its face validity and in order to make sure that the items of the test are suitable to the students' level. Their comments were valuable and they had vital modifications to some items . All their modifications have been taken into consideration . Most of the test items are taken from the text book, so they have a high level of content validity.

According to Brown (2010 : 27) a test will be reliable if it brings the same scores when given to the same students and scored by different scorers. The researcher follows the interrater method in order to determine the reliability of the test in his study . The researcher follows the 'inter-rater' method to measure the reliability of the test items . After applying this method , the researcher has got reliability coefficient of (0.90).

10.6.3 Pilot study

This step may enable the researcher to uncover some of the problems before starting the experiment. Some of these problems are (money and time) (Louis, etal , 2007 : 58). The pilot study results have been statistically analyzed to ensure the discrimination power and the difficulty level of items. The results of the pilot study show that the test needs 35 -40 minutes to be answered .

10.6.4 Scoring scheme

The scoring scheme is a basis on which the researcher thoroughly depends to interpret the outcomes. A precise scoring scheme must be adopted for reliability and objectivity purposes (Louis and Lawrence. 2010: 65). The pre –test consists of one passage followed by four questions . The first question consists of ten items , one mark was given for each correct item and zero for each incorrect one . The second question also consists of ten items (True / False) , one mark was given to the correct item and zero for the incorrect one . The total scores of this question is (20) . The third question consists of five multiple choice items. The same distribution order was adopted in the above two questions , whereas one mark was given to the correct item and zero for the incorrect one . Finally , the last question is a(completion item) that has a five gaps and each gap was given one mark if it was correct , but if it was incorrect it was given zero . The highest score for the pre –test is (30) and the lowest is (zero) . Being presented to the jury members , the validity of distributing the marks are validated .

10.6.5 Item Facility and Item Discrimination:

Item facility indicates the difficulty or ease of the exam items for a certain number of examiners . It simply represents the percentage of the students who answer the items of the test correctly . The exam has an acceptable item facility when it ranges from 0.15 to 0.85 . (Brown. 2010 : 70-1). After scoring, the researcher found that all the items of the test are appropriate in terms of difficulty because they are between (0.40) and (0.75) .

With regard to the element of difficulty the students ' scores are organized from high to low . The researcher found that the whole items are of a good power discrimination because their discrimination levels are more than 40%.

10.6.6 The Pre-and –post-tests Final Administration

The control and experimental groups were pre-tested on the 6th of March 2017. The purpose of the pre –test is to make comparison between the students ' scores in pre-test with students ' scores in post –test for both groups .

Students of both groups were post-tested on the 3rd of May 2017 . The researcher followed the same procedures in conducting pre and post –test , which are : validity , reliability , pilot study , scoring scheme , item difficulty and item discrimination .

It is important to mention that the post-test also was seen by a jury of fifteen specialists in linguistics and TEFL methodology.

10.7 Statistical Tools

The following statistical tools are used to calculate the data:

1. T-test for two independent samples
2. Chi-square
3. Item facility
4. Item discrimination
5. Pearson Correlation
6. One sample T- test

11. Discussion of the Results

After completing the experiment and in order to make sure that using Dramatic Activities is a helpful way to improve the students ' understanding in reading comprehension and test its null hypothesis, the data of pre –test and post –test are statistically analyzed . All the steps of analysis are undertaken to make decision whether there is any significant difference between the groups in the pre –

test and post –test .

11.1 Comparison of the Experimental and Control Groups in the Post-test Scores

The results of the post-test of both groups show that the mean scores of control and experimental groups in the post –test are (15.79) and (18.94) consecutively. There is a clear indication that the achievement of the experimental group is better than that of the control one . Through using the T –test formula for two independent samples ,the researcher wants to see whether the difference between the two groups is significant or not . As a result, applying this formula turns out that the calculated T –value of the post test is (3.12) whereas the tabulated T – value is (2) . This shows that there is a significant difference between the two groups at (0.05) level of significance and under (66) degree of freedom , and this also shows that the null hypothesis of the study which states that " There is a significant difference between the achievement of control group (those who study using the traditional method of teaching) and the achievement of the experimental group (those who study using dramatic activities) " is accepted .

11.2 Comparison of the Pre –test and Post –test Scores of the Experimental Group

When the scores of the Pre –test and Post –test are analyzed , it appears that the mean scores are (14.11) and (19) consecutively . The one sample T–test formula is used for the second time in order to determine whether there is any significant difference between the pre –test and Post –test scores . The computed T- test is found to be (4.72) whereas the tabulated one is (2) . This is a clear indication of a significant difference between the Pre –test and Post –test scores at (0.05) level of significance and under (66) degree of freedom . This means that the Post –test scores is much better than the Pre –test ones.

Depending on the results of the study , there has been a significant difference between the two groups (control and experimental) .

Building upon the scores of the post –test , the mean scores of the experimental group is (16.91) whereas the mean scores of the control group is (14.88) . This indicates that the students' achievement of the experimental group is better than that of the control group .

It can be concluded that Dramatic Activities used in teaching 5th preparatory students of the experimental group is considered more effective , successful and favourable than the traditional method way .

Depending on the mean scores obtained from the post –test , it is found that the development of reading comprehension skill depends entirely on using teaching techniques that are interested and effective in order to enhance the students' understanding of the lesson .

The researcher starts with warming up in order to stimulate students to start a new lesson and also for the purpose of reviewing the previous lesson information,then he starts using one of the Dramatic Activities followed by him (Scripted Play , Role play , Simulation) . Dramatic Activities are very effective as a teaching technique because they put the student in a real situation so the student will be at the highest level of his concentration and attention. This is why the mean scores of the post –test of the experimental group is (19) and the mean scores of the pre –test of the experimental group is (14.11) .

12. Conclusions

Based on the results obtained from this work , the researcher found the following conclusions :

- 1- It has been proved that the use of Dramatic Activities is an effective technique in teaching reading comprehension skills in Iraqi preparatory schools .
- 2- The use of Dramatic Activities technique stimulates students to learn English because it is fun and exciting.
- 3- Dramatic Activities technique develops other skills like (listening and speaking) . In addition, this technique increases the students' knowledge of vocabulary.
- 4- Another benefit of this technique (Dramatic Activities) is that it enhances the communication skills of students because it depends on the principle of learning through daily life situations.
- 5- Dramatic Activities technique is considered successful of saving class time if compared to a

prescribed method .

6- It enhances the conceptual knowledge and understanding of the students as it appears in their performance in the post –test .

13. Recommendations

Depending on the results of the present study , it can be recommended that :

- 1- English language teachers in the preparatory stage have to follow new and varied techniques in order to help students gain a better understanding of the target material .
- 2- English language teachers should follow the technique of Dramatic Activities in their lessons because it also improves their language skills.
- 3- English teachers should be in touch with the development courses during the service so that they can communicate with the new teaching methods.
- 4- Students in English departments should be trained to use a variety of teaching techniques to be good teachers in the future and in order to develop all their language skills.
- 5- English curriculum designers are recommended to use the Dramatic Activities at all stages of teaching English, especially at the preparatory stage.
- 6- Students should be encouraged to use Dramatic Activities in learning other skills like (speaking and listening)

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