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Using Drama Techniques for Developing EFL Speaking Skills and Reducing Speaking Anxiety among Secondary Stage Students

By

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Abstract

The aim of the present study was to investigate the effectiveness of using a drama techniques-based program in developing EFL speaking skills and reducing speaking anxiety among secondary stage students. The study used the one group pre-posttest quasi-experimental design. The participants of the study were forty first year secondary stage students who assigned into one experimental group. The participants were trained to use specific drama techniques when responding to speaking tasks and activities. The instruments of the study included an EFL speaking skills test and a speaking anxiety scale. The test and the scale were administered to the participants before and after the treatment. Data were treated statistically using SPSS (version 19). Results of the study revealed that the drama techniques-based program was found to be effective in developing EFL speaking skills and reducing speaking anxiety among first year secondary stage students.

Key words: Drama techniques, EFL speaking skills, speaking anxiety.

1. Introduction

In foreign language settings, speaking is considered one of the most important skills among the four language skills. It is necessary for effective communication in any language, particularly when speakers are not using their mother tongue. As English is universally used as a means of communication, English speaking skills should be developed along with the other skills so that these integrated skills will enhance communication achievement both with native speakers of English and other members of the international community.

Speaking a language, without any preparation, is of great importance for fluency in foreign language learning contexts. Fluency requires “performance.” To achieve fluency, a learner has to perform the language. However, speaking a foreign language in the classroom is inherently artificial. It is very difficult to involve students in artificial speaking activities. Students need lifelike situations to perform the elements of the language. They also need to feel as if they are not acting. When they are aware that they are imitating a foreigner, they become anxious.

Action is an essential part of learning a language, as it develops body language, increases motivation, and keeps students involved in the learning process. Drama techniques include action as an essential component of language learning (Gorjian, Moosavinia, & Jabripour, 2010).

Drama itself has become a teaching technique which encourages students to learn a new language in a creative and effective way. This means that drama techniques create an atmosphere where students learn in context, use their imagination, and spontaneously react. According to Schejbal (2006) drama in foreign language teaching context does not mean using a classical play or performing a theatre performance. Drama inhibits an active involvement of learners. Thus, the learners, who experience using a language in the classroom, become similar to the real-life experience.

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1.2 The Problem of the Study

Based on interviews with EFL teachers, and as a supervisor of teaching practice program, the researcher noticed that, when dealing with speaking activities, first year secondary stage students are neither fluent nor confident English speakers. They seemed to use their first language most of the time, making little or no effort at all when practicing their speaking skills. Also, they felt embarrassed and contained from speaking in front of their mates, showing annoyance, bother and no collaboration.

However, in spite of the importance of the EFL speaking skills at the secondary stage, students suffer weaknesses in their speaking performance. This can be attributed, in light of the researcher's experience, to the prevailing traditional methods of teaching speaking. Students most of the time are rarely required to say more than a few words in response to some 'display' questions raised by the teacher. Moreover, the methods adopted rarely offer students a clear explanation or instruction of what constitutes speaking and how native speakers actually speak.

Many researchers reported the poor proficiency of EFL speaking skills in the context of the Arab countries, especially in Egypt (Abdelmageed & El-Naggar, 2018; Eissa, 2019; Etomy, 2015; Ghany & Latif, 2012; Torky, 2006). They confirmed that EFL students in secondary stage schools as well as university students in Egypt face a lot of difficulties while speaking. Moreover, the researcher conducted a pilot study on first year secondary stage students. The results of the pilot study revealed that the majority of students (76%) encountered difficulties in speaking such as making pronunciation mistakes, limited grammatical knowledge, low self-confidence and a high degree of speaking anxiety.

According to Tanveer (2007) and Shabani (2013), a critical challenge of most EFL learners in language classes is speaking a foreign language. What makes speaking more challenging than other skills is that speaker needs to have a quick access to all the relevant knowledge required to produce the appropriate language in short time, whereas in other skills the learner may have enough time to match the input with the existing knowledge.

Foreign Language Anxiety (FLA) is a concept that has attracted the attention of educators and researchers for decades. It is defined as “the feeling of tension and apprehension specifically associated with second language contexts, including speaking, listening, and learning” (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1994, p. 284). FLA has been identified as an influential variable in foreign language achievement (Dornyei & Ryan, 2015; Dewaele et al., 2017; MacIntyre, 2017). It is generally believed that FLA is more intensely manifest in situations where spoken language production occurs (Dewaele, 2002; Woodrow, 2006). Moreover, speaking in front of others while delivering presentations, is thought to pose unique challenges to students learning foreign language (Liang & Kelsen, 2018).

Zheng (2008) stated that when students are supposed to complete an oral task, their anxiety level can increase. Giving oral presentations and performing in front of other students was reported to be one of the most anxiety provoking situations. Ohata (2005) and Ay (2010) also mentioned the effect of “unpreparedness” on students’ speaking anxiety. In this situation, a student reported that s/he feels weird, and prefers to keep his/her silence during whole class, and wishes not to be asked any questions.

To sum up, problem of the present study can be stated as follows: There was a low level of speaking proficiency among first year secondary stage students and they experience high levels of foreign language anxiety while speaking. In an attempt to find a solution for this problem, the present study will use drama techniques to lower participant’s speaking anxiety and develop their speaking skills.

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1.3 Aims of the Study

The current study aimed to investigate the effectiveness of using a drama techniques-based program in developing EFL speaking skills and reducing speaking anxiety among the first year secondary stage students.

1.4 Questions of the Study

This study was an attempt to answer the following questions:

1. What is the effectiveness of using a drama techniques-based program in developing first year secondary stage students' overall EFL speaking skills?
2. What is the effectiveness of using a drama techniques-based program in reducing first year secondary stage students' speaking anxiety?

1.5 Hypotheses of the Study

Hypotheses of the present study can be stated as follows:

1. There is a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the study participants on the overall EFL speaking skills pre-posttest in favor of the post.
2. There is a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the study participants on the accuracy skills pre-posttest in favor of the post.
3. There is a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the study participants on the fluency skills pre-posttest in favor of the post.
4. There is a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the study participants on the pragmatic skills pre-posttest in favor of the post.
5. There is a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the study participants in the pre and post administrations of the speaking anxiety scale in favor of the pre administration.

1.6 Significance of the Study

The results of this study can be helpful for first year secondary stage students, teachers and course designers. It might help students develop their speaking skills and reduce speaking anxiety through the application of different drama techniques. Moreover, using drama techniques in teaching speaking, the current study suggests a modification of the teaching methods currently adopted to develop EFL speaking skills in Egyptian secondary stage schools.

1.7 Delimitations of the Study

The present study was delimited to the following:

1. Forty first year secondary stage students, Mohamed Mekawy Secondary School, Aswan Educational Administration, Aswan Governorate.
2. The EFL speaking skills (accuracy, fluency, and pragmatic skills), which are included in the English language syllabus presented to first year secondary stage students, the second semester of the academic year 2018/2019.

1.8 Definition of Terms

1.8.1 Drama Techniques

Shraiber and Yaroslavova (2016) stated that drama techniques in foreign language teaching are considered as a combination of procedures that organize learner's role-related behavior in specially designed situations promoting to develop both communicative competence and student's personality as a whole.

In the current study, drama techniques are defined operationally as the learning activities (role-play, simulation, mime, and improvisation) which first year secondary stage students use to express their own personality, feelings and ideas, when responding to specific speaking tasks, to develop their EFL speaking skills and reduce speaking anxiety.

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1.8.2 Speaking skills

Speaking is defined as "the process of building and sharing meaning through the use of verbal and non-verbal symbols into a variety of context" (Chaney and Burk, 1998, p. 13).

The researcher defines speaking skills operationally as the participants' ability to speak fluently, accurately through using specific drama techniques.

1.8.3 Speaking Anxiety

Speaking anxiety can simply be defined as the feeling of fear occurring when using the language orally (Wilson, 2006). In addition, Brown (1994) stated that speaking anxiety includes some common characteristics such as the state of apprehension, fear, tension and feelings of uneasiness when learners attempt to use language orally.

Speaking anxiety, in the present study, is a situation specific anxiety. It is that kind of anxiety that occurs every time the learner attempts to speak in English.

2. Review of Literature

2.1 Drama Techniques

Nowadays it is not an easy task to catch student interest and motivation in class, so there are a lot of means used by teachers in order to involve students to participate actively in the learning process. Within such techniques employed in language classes, there are the so-called "drama techniques and activities". Dougill (1987) distinguishes between the traditional type of drama, specifically the performance of a play, and a series of other activities such as role plays, simulations, games, songs, and so forth. He calls the former "theatre" and the latter "informal drama".

Bobkina (2015) stated that drama techniques are based on the Communicative Approach. Students are involved in pair and group activities, where they have the opportunity to dedicate more time to speaking interaction with their peers and negotiate meaning in order to be understood. The groups are constantly exchanged so that the students have the chance to know each other better and increase their confidence. The teacher does not direct the activities, but he or she acts as a facilitator of the learning process, since the student is the true protagonist and the lesson is learner-centered.

There are several studies that support the benefits of drama in foreign language learning, such as Maley and Duff (2001), Brumfit (1991), Philips (2003), and Aldavero (2008). Drama activities can provide students with an opportunity to use language to express various emotions, to solve problems, to make decisions, to socialize. Drama activities are also useful in the development of oral communication skills, and reading and writing as well. Drama activities help students to communicate in the foreign language including those with limited vocabulary.

There are plenty of reasons supporting drama activities employment in a language classroom. The first important function associated with drama is fostering speaking skills. Ulas (2008) confirmed that although drama has existed as a potential language teaching tool for hundreds of years it has only been in the last thirty years or so that its applicability as a language learning technique to improve oral skills has come to the forefront.

Aldavero (2008) stated that drama activities foster students' socialization, critical thinking, problem solving and improve oral communication skills, by exploring different language styles and registers. Another benefit coming from dramatization as Phillips (2003) argued, is that shy students can "hide behind" another character still while using their personalities, so they are actively involved with these kind of activities, because this personalization makes language more meaningful and memorable than drilling or mechanical repetition can.

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According to Fleming (2006), drama benefits work through a series of paradoxes. Specifically, participants are able to:

- be emotionally involved but at the same time distant, since they know that the situation is merely fictional.
- act being serious but with no responsibility, as the fictitious context releases them from being responsible of their actions.
- be actors as well as audience.
- bring personal experiences into the fictitious context, but also create new ones within the symbolic frame of drama.

Similarly, Ulas (2008) summarizes the advantages of drama techniques through six principles:

- A student learns meaningful content better than other content.
- Learning occurs as a result of a student's interaction with his environment.
- The more sensory organs a student uses while learning, the greater the retention of the lessons.
- A student learns best by doing and experiencing.
- Effective participation is important in learning emotional conduct.
- Learning becomes easier and more permanent in educational environments where there is more than one stimulus.

2.1.1 Forms of drama activities in the foreign language class

There are a lot of drama-based activities that could be introduced either in or out of classrooms, such as:

- Drama games (ice-breakers, warm-ups, fillers, concentration games).
- Guided improvisation (a scene of a crime, a company meeting, a summer camp at night).
- Mime (a non-verbal representation of an idea or story through gesture, bodily movement and expression).

- Improvisation (helps learners to discover their own resources from which their most imaginative ideas).
- Simulation (a problem-solving activity to which the student brings his own personality, experience and opinions or an interaction activity with various categories of dialogues).
- Role-play (students either improvise or create their own character or they are given role-cards).

2.2 Speaking Skills

Speaking is the most common and important means of providing communication among human beings. The key to successful communication is speaking efficiently and articulately, as well as using effective voice projection, speaking is linked to success in life, as it occupies an important position both individually and socially (Ulas, 2008).

Speaking is one of the four macro skills necessary for effective communication in any language, particularly when speakers are not using their mother tongue. EFL speaking skills should be developed along with the other skills so that these integrated skills will enhance communication achievement both with native and non-native speakers of English. EFL learners should acquire speaking skills not only so they can pass the exam but also for public use in the outside world. Speaking is a tool for social interaction and reflects students' ability to express themselves accurately and fluently.

Al-ma'shy (2011) stated that speaking is the most commonly used skill in class because it is used as part of the teaching of other skills such as listening, reading and writing. As a result, teaching speaking skills should be considered an essential part of English language programs in schools since it is vital as a means of developing classroom interaction. According to Afshar and Rahimi (2014), speaking as one of the macro skills must be given special attention and instruction in the context of English as a foreign language. Likewise, Sanaa (2013) assured that English speaking skill is a major sign of students' success among EFL learners.

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Despite the importance of speaking skills, reluctance to participate freely in oral activities is clearly observed in students' behaviors (Cheng, 2000). Speaking problems are classified by many researchers into linguistic and affective (Humaera, 2015; Leong & Ahmadi, 2017). The linguistic problems that might prevent students from sharing in conversations include grammar mistake, lack of vocabulary, mispronunciation and mechanics related problems such as fluency and accuracy. The second category is the affective factors confidence, in addition to anxiety and shyness. Thus, speaking a foreign language appears to be difficult, challenging, and stressful for the learners.

2.2.1 Drama Techniques and Speaking Skills

Several studies have demonstrated that creative drama activities have positive contribution to the learning process and that these activities improve speaking skills. According to Makita (1995) dramatic and role-playing activities are valuable classroom techniques that encourage students to participate actively in the learning process.

Goodwin (2001) argued that drama is a particularly effective tool for pronunciation teaching because various components of communicative competence (discourse, intonation, pragmatic awareness, non-verbal communication) can be practiced in an integrated way. There are some other elements involved in acquiring oral communication skills adding efficiency to communication and drama activities facilitates the improvement of these elements.

Peregoy and Boyle (2008) confirmed that drama activities provide students with a variety of contextualized and scaffold activities that gradually involve more participation and more oral language proficiency, they are also non-threatening and a provide lot of fun. Desiatova (2009) stated that using drama activities has clear advantages for language learning. It encourages students to speak; it gives them the chance to communicate, even with limited language, using non-verbal communication, such as body movements and facial expressions.

2.3 Speaking Anxiety

Foreign language anxiety (FLA) has been discussed since 1980's by many researchers e.g. Horwitz et al. (1986) and found to be a unique factor affecting learners' oral production. Specifically, anxious foreign language learners identify speaking in the target language as the most frightening skill. It is often reported that they feel stressed when they have to take turns in the classroom to speak (Wörde, 2003).

FLA is a major element which affects performances and acquisition of EFL learners. FLA occurs more in output language abilities such as writing and speaking than in input abilities (Chiu et al., 2010). Zheng (2008) stated that when students are supposed to complete an oral task, their anxiety level can increase. Giving oral presentations and performing in front of other students was reported to be one of the most anxiety provoking situations.

There is a great deal of research focusing on speaking anxiety. Dalkiliç (2001) examined the correlational relationship between students' foreign language anxiety levels and their achievement in speaking courses. The sample included 126 Turkish freshman EFL learners and used both qualitative and quantitative data. The results of the study revealed that there was a significant relationship between students' anxiety levels and their achievement in speaking classes. Additionally, Ay (2010) found that students showed anxiety in an advanced level in productive skills.

Moreover, Balemir (2009) investigated the relationship between proficiency level and degree of foreign language speaking anxiety in a Turkish EFL context. The study revealed that Turkish EFL university students experience a moderate level of speaking anxiety in speaking classes. Furthermore, Saltan (2003) investigated EFL speaking anxiety from students' and teachers' perspectives. The results of her study indicated that although students experience a certain degree of EFL speaking anxiety, its intensity is not that high.

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Tianjian (2010) also investigated the speaking anxiety of Chinese EFL learners as well as the relationships of speaking anxiety with other domains, including trait anxiety, unwillingness to communicate, language achievement, speaking self-efficacy, language class risk-taking, and language class sociability. The results of the study indicated that over 50% of the students reported undergoing moderate or high levels of speaking anxiety. Moreover, this affective problem did not differ significantly over gender, but differed significantly over proficiency groups. Mutual impacts were also found to occur between language achievement and speaking anxiety.

In summary, after reviewing many studies that investigated speaking anxiety (Wörde, 2003; Ohata, 2005; Woodrow, 2006; Awan et al., 2010.; Dalkılıç, 2013; Park & Lee, 2005), there are many reasons for why EFL learners experience speaking anxiety, such as fear of public speaking, communicating orally, immature vocabulary, fear of making pronunciation mistakes, limited grammatical knowledge, taking an oral test, native speaker effect, and error correction style of the teacher.

2.3.1 Drama Techniques and Speaking Anxiety

Even though the history of drama dates back thousands of years, the use of drama in language classrooms has played a small, but consistent role in language teaching. Hamilton and Mcleod (1993) claimed that the use of drama techniques fits naturally into the nature of language and language learning. Zerey (2008) and Galante (2012) emphasized that among all the positive effects of drama in ELT, improvement of speaking has a very special place.

With the intention of finding a remedy for speaking anxiety, researchers, like Miccoli (2003), Wood Shand (2008), Zerey (2008), Gorjian et al. (2010), Galante (2012), have tried drama techniques in FL classrooms. Based on this research, it can be implied that drama changes attitudes and beliefs of students about learning a foreign language as well as speaking it in public or in FL classroom atmosphere. Drama techniques psychologically and physically affect students' language abilities and students' self-confidence and motivation increase. However, their anxiety level, which plays a major role in communicative skills in FL classes, decreases because drama techniques keep students active in the learning situations.

As the use of drama techniques for speaking skills is relatively recent, and there are no studies on the issue in the Egyptian context, the current study investigates the effect of a drama techniques-based program on developing EFL speaking skills and reducing speaking anxiety among first year secondary stage students.

3. Methodology

The present study used the one group pre-post quasi-experimental design. This group was tested before and after implementing the experiment.

3.1. Participants

The participants of the present study were forty first year secondary stage students, Mohamed Mekawy Secondary School, Aswan Educational Administration, Aswan Governorate.

3.2 Instruments and Materials

The researcher prepared and used the following instruments in order to fulfill the aims of the present study:-

3.2.1 The EFL Speaking Skills List

The current study concerned with the speaking skills which are included in English language syllabus presented to first year secondary stage students, the second semester of the academic year 2018/2019. See (Appendix 1).

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3.2.2 The EFL Speaking Skills Test

3.2.2.1 Test Description

The EFL speaking skills test (Appendix 2), aimed to test the students' performance on the intended EFL speaking skills the study is concerned with. The test consists of two parts; in part (A), students are requested to respond orally to the offered situations (What would you say in the following situations). In part (B), students choose one of the offered topics to talk about. To answer the questions correctly, students have to pronounce vowel/consonant correctly, produce correct stress pattern, use appropriate vocabulary to convey meaning, use grammatical structure properly, pronounce utterances fluently and avoid unnecessary repetition and hesitation, let listeners understand, clearly communicate knowledge of the topic presented, express opinions with reasons, give advice, and make a polite request. The speaking skills test was piloted by administering it to 38 first year secondary stage students (they were not included in the study group), in order to determine the following:

- The suitability of the test for the participants.
- The simplicity/difficulty of the test items.
- The clarity of the test instructions.

3.2.2.2 Test Validity and Reliability

The test was given to EFL jurors to judge its validity. The EFL jurors agreed that the test is valid and measures the intended EFL speaking skills. In addition, the validity coefficient of the EFL speaking skills test was calculated using the square root of the reliability coefficient. Based on that, the test validity coefficient was (.83) which is considered acceptable. Thus, the test is valid and can measure participants' EFL speaking skills before and after intervention. Moreover, the test-retest method was used to estimate the test reliability. The students were first tested on the 21st of February 2019. Two weeks later, they were retested. The correlation coefficient was (0.76).

3.2.2.3 Scoring the EFL Speaking Skills Test

The researcher prepared an EFL Speaking skills rubric (Appendix 3) to score the EFL Speaking skills test used in the present study.

3.2.2.4 The Speaking Skills Rubric

The rubric prepared by the researcher to score participants' speaking skills after taking the test. The speaking skills rubric consists of three parts. Part one is devoted to accuracy skills, part two is devoted to fluency skills, and part three dealt with pragmatic skills. Five levels of performance were described on a five-point rating scale (arranged from 1 to 5). The highest performance level was represented by "5", while the lowest performance level was represented by "1".

To ensure the validity of the speaking skills rubric, it was submitted to a panel of EFL jurors and experts. The jurors were asked to comment on the suitability of each level of performance to each speaking skill. The scoring rubric was modified according to the jurors' comments and suggestions. For the final form of the scoring rubric, see (Appendix 3).

3.2.3 The Speaking Anxiety Scale (Appendix 4)

The speaking anxiety scale, used in the present study, was prepared by the researcher in light of Horwitz, Horwitz, & Cope's (1986) Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS). The researcher chose the 16 items, which are directly related to foreign language speaking anxiety, among the 33 items of FLCAS Horwitz's scale. These item features are on a 5-point response scale (A- Always true of me; B- Usually true of me; C- Somewhat true of me; D- Usually not true of me; E- Never true of me).

The speaking anxiety scale was used before the implementation of the drama techniques-based program to measure the level of the participants' foreign language speaking anxiety. Moreover, it was used after the implementation of the program in order to investigate the effectiveness of the drama techniques based program in reducing the participants' speaking anxiety.

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3.2.3.1 Validity

To achieve the content validity of the foreign language speaking anxiety scale in its preliminary form, it was submitted to a panel of EFL jurors and experts. They were asked to judge the scale face validity in terms of clarity of its items and suitability for the participants' level. All jury members indicated that the speaking anxiety scale was clear and suitable for the participants of the present study and valid for measuring their speaking anxiety.

3.2.3.2 Reliability

The test re-test method was used to determine the reliability of the foreign language speaking anxiety scale. The scale was administered to a group of first year secondary stage students (N=38). Then it was administered to the same group again after two weeks. The Pearson correlation between the two administrations was (.73). This means that the foreign language speaking anxiety scale is a reliable tool to measure the participants' foreign language speaking anxiety.

3.2.3.3 Scoring the Speaking Anxiety Scale

Under the guidance of the researcher, the participants were asked to complete the scale and choose one of the options 'always true of me'; 'usually true of me'; 'somewhat true of me'; 'usually not true of me'; 'never true of me' in response to each of the sixteen statements. These options are scored out of five points for 'always true of me' to one point for 'never true of me'. The student who chooses 'always true of me' with all statements will receive a score of five for each of the sixteen statements. Such a student will receive a total score of eighty, the maximum score possible. A student who chooses 'usually true of me' to all statements, will receive a score of four for each statement or a total score of sixty-four and so on. The high the student's score is, the high is his speaking anxiety.

3.2.4 The Drama Techniques-Based Program

The aim of the program was to help first year secondary stage students develop their EFL speaking skills and reduce speaking anxiety. The drama techniques-based program was implemented in the second semester of the academic year 2018-2019. It lasted for 2 months and consisted of twelve sessions; each of which took 2 hours. The first session was devoted to the introduction of the program for the first year secondary stage students. The remaining sessions were instructional sessions through which the students were trained to follow and apply different drama techniques (e.g. role-play, simulation, mime, and improvisation) to develop their EFL speaking skills and reduce their speaking anxiety. For the final form of the drama techniques-based program used in the present study, see appendix (5).

4. Results of the Study

The results of the current study are presented in light of the hypotheses of the study using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 19. The results are stated as follows:

4.1. Hypotheses (1)

The first hypothesis states that “There is a statistically significant difference between the mean score of the study participants on the overall EFL speaking skills pre-posttest in favor of the post”. The following table presents students’ mean scores, standard deviations, t-value and level of significance in the overall speaking skills pre-posttest.

Table (1): The t-value, mean scores, standard deviations, and level of significance in the overall EFL speaking skills pre-posttest.

| Skill | Measurement | N | Mean | S.D | T- Value | D.F | Sig. |
|-----------------------------|-------------|----|-------|------|----------|-----|------|
| Overall EFL speaking skills | Pre | 40 | 23.40 | 2.26 | 33.68 | 39 | 0.05 |
| | Post | 40 | 42.80 | 2.64 | | | |

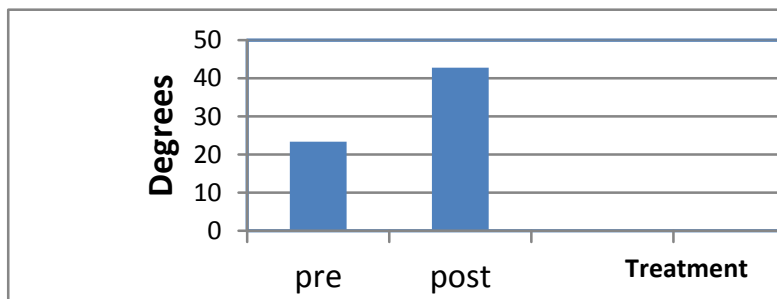
As table (1) indicates, the mean score of the study participants in the overall EFL speaking skills posttest is higher than their mean score in the pre-test, where “t-value” is (33.68) which is significant at the (0.05) level of significance. Consequently, the first hypothesis was confirmed.

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The results of the first hypothesis revealed that there was a statistically significant difference between the mean score of the study participants on the overall EFL speaking skills pre-posttest in favor of the post. As indicated in table (1), the study participants showed more development in their overall EFL speaking skills in the post assessment than in the pre assessment. This proved and confirmed the first hypothesis statistically. This development as indicated in Figure (1) can be related to the administration of the drama techniques-based program.

Figure (1): The mean scores of the study participants in the overall EFL speaking skills pre-post test



The effect size of the drama techniques-based program is indicated in the following table:

Table (2): The effect size of the drama techniques-based program on the overall EFL speaking skills.

| Skill | t-value | μ^2 value | d-value | Effect size |
|-----------------------------|---------|---------------|---------|-------------|
| Overall EFL speaking skills | 33.68 | 0.96 | 5.32 | Large |

As indicated in table (2), the development of the study participants' overall EFL speaking skills can be related to the use of the drama techniques -based program which is found to be effective in developing students' EFL speaking skills.

4.2. Hypotheses (2)

The second hypothesis states that “There is a statistically significant difference between the mean score of the study participants on the accuracy skills pre-posttest in favor of the post”. The following table presents students’ mean scores, standard deviations, t-value and level of significance in the accuracy skills pre-posttest.

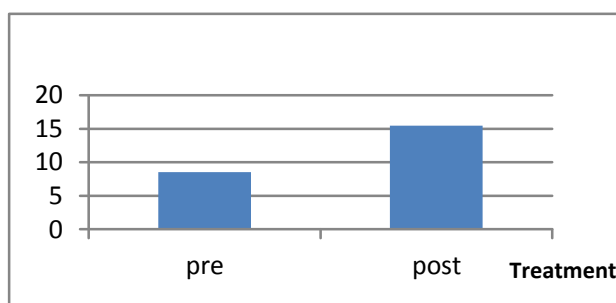
Table (3): The t-value, mean scores, standard deviations, and level of significance in the accuracy skills pre-posttest.

| Skill | Measurement | N | Mean | S.D | T- Value | D.F | Sig. |
|----------|-------------|----|-------|------|----------|-----|------|
| Accuracy | Pre | 40 | 8.52 | 1.64 | 18.94 | 39 | 0.05 |
| | Post | 40 | 15.47 | 1.60 | | | |

As table (3) indicates, the mean score of the study participants in the accuracy skills posttest is higher than their mean scores in the pre-test, where “t-value” is (18.94) which is significant at the (0.05) level of significance. Consequently, the second hypothesis was confirmed.

The results of the second hypothesis indicated that there was a statistically significant difference between the mean score of the study participants on the accuracy skills pre-posttest in favor of the post. Table (3) indicated that t-value was significant at 0.05 level. This proved and supported the second hypothesis statistically. Figure (2) illuminates these results:

Figure (2): The mean scores of the study participants in the accuracy skills pre-post test



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The present study focused on developing first year secondary stage students' accuracy skills through the incorporation of the drama techniques-based program. The first year secondary stage students began to pronounce vowel/consonant correctly, produce correct stress pattern, use appropriate vocabulary to convey meaning, and use grammatical structure properly. As a result, the post assessment has indicated that the first year secondary stage students' accuracy skills were developed due to the influence of the drama techniques-based program as illustrated in the following table:

Table (4): The effect size of the drama techniques-based program on accuracy skills.

| Skill | t-value | μ^2 value | d-value | Effect size |
|----------|---------|---------------|---------|-------------|
| Accuracy | 18.94 | 0.90 | 2.99 | Large |

4.3. Hypotheses (3)

The third hypothesis states that "There is a statistically significant difference between the mean score of the study participants on the fluency skills pre-posttest in favor of the post". The following table presents students' mean scores, standard deviations, t-value and level of significance in the fluency skills pre-posttest.

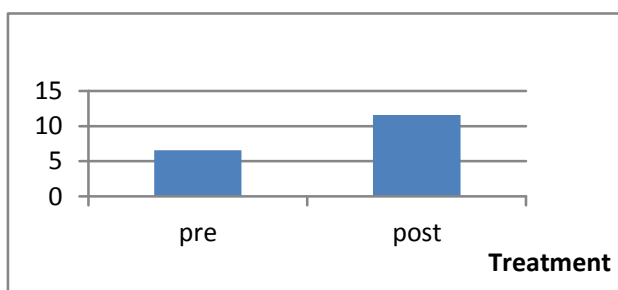
Table (5): The t-value, mean scores, standard deviations, and level of significance in the fluency skills pre-posttest.

| Skill | Measurement | N | Mean | S.D | T- Value | D.F | Sig. |
|---------|-------------|----|-------|------|----------|-----|------|
| Fluency | Pre | 40 | 6.57 | 1.39 | 17.86 | 39 | 0.05 |
| | Post | 40 | 11.55 | 1.23 | | | |

As table (5) indicates, the mean score of the study participants in the fluency skills posttest is higher than their mean score in the pre-test, where "t-value" is (17.86) which is significant at the (0.05) level of significance. Consequently, the third hypothesis was confirmed.

The results of the third hypothesis revealed that there was a statistically significant difference between the mean score of the study participants on the fluency skills pre-posttest in favor of the post. Table (5) indicated that t-value was significant at 0.05 level. This proved and supported the third hypothesis statistically. Figure (3) illuminates these results:

Figure (3): The mean scores of the study participants in the fluency skills pre-post test



The present study focused on developing first year secondary stage students' fluency skills through the incorporation of the drama techniques- based program. The first year secondary stage students began to pronounce utterances fluently and avoid unnecessary repetition and hesitation, let listeners understand, and clearly communicate knowledge of the topic presented. As a result, the post assessment has indicated that the first year secondary stage students' fluency skills were developed due to the influence of the drama techniques-based program as illustrated in the following table:

Table (6): The effect size of the drama techniques-based program on the fluency skills.

| Skill | t-value | μ_2 value | d-value | Effect size |
|---------|---------|---------------|---------|-------------|
| Fluency | 17.86 | 0.89 | 2.82 | Large |

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4.4. Hypotheses (4)

The fourth hypothesis states that “There is a statistically significant difference between the mean score of the study participants on the pragmatic skills pre-posttest in favor of the post”. The following table presents students’ mean scores, standard deviations, t-value and level of significance in the pragmatic skills pre-posttest.

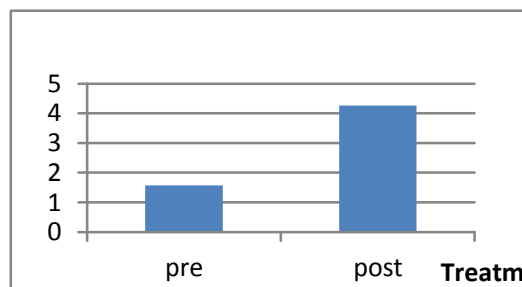
Table (7): The t-value, mean scores, standard deviations, and level of significance in the pragmatic skills pre-posttest.

| Skill | Measurement | N | Mean | S.D | T- Value | D.F | Sig. |
|------------------|-------------|----|-------|------|----------|-----|------|
| Pragmatic skills | Pre | 40 | 8.30 | 1.45 | 21.09 | 39 | 0.05 |
| | Post | 40 | 15.77 | 1.38 | | | |

As table (7) indicates, the mean score of the study group on the pragmatic skills posttest is higher than their mean score on the pre-test, where “t-value” is (21.09) which is significant at the (0.05) level of significance. Consequently, the fourth hypothesis was confirmed.

The results of the fourth hypothesis revealed that there was a statistically significant difference between the mean score of the study participants on the pragmatic skills pre-posttest in favor of the post. Table (7) indicated that t-value was significant at 0.05 level. This proved and supported the fourth hypothesis statistically. Figure (4) represents these results:

Figure (4): The mean scores of the study participants in the pragmatic skills pre-posttest.



The present study focused on developing first year secondary stage students' pragmatic skills through the incorporation of the drama techniques-based program. The first year secondary stage students began to express their opinions with reasons, make a polite request, make a suggestion, and give advice. As a result, the post assessment has indicated that the first year secondary stage students' pragmatic skills were developed due to the influence of the drama techniques-based program as illustrated in the following table:

Table (8): The effect size of the drama techniques-based program on the pragmatic skills.

| Skill | t-value | μ^2 value | d-value | Effect size |
|------------------|---------|---------------|---------|-------------|
| Pragmatic skills | 21.09 | 0.91 | 3.33 | Large |

4.5. Hypotheses (5)

The fifth hypothesis states that "There is a statistically significant difference between the mean score of the study participants in the pre and post administrations of the speaking anxiety scale in favor of the pre administration". The following table presents students' mean scores, standard deviations, t-value and level of significance in the pre and post administrations of the speaking anxiety scale.

Table (9): The t-value, mean scores, standard deviations, and level of significance in the pre and post administrations of the speaking anxiety scale.

| Scale | Measurement | N | Mean | S.D | T- Value | D.F | Sig. |
|----------------------------|-------------|----|-------|------|----------|-----|------|
| The Speaking Anxiety Scale | Pre | 40 | 63.22 | 2.98 | 39.14 | 39 | 0.05 |
| | Post | 40 | 31.05 | 4.46 | | | |

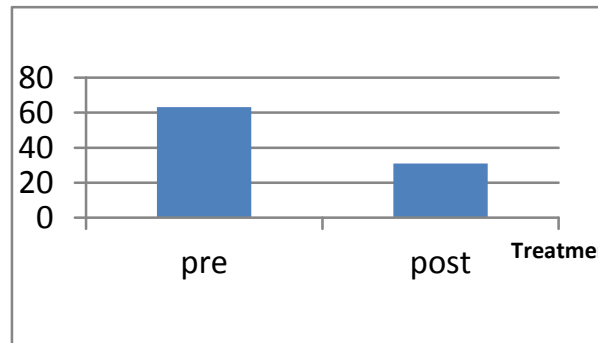
Table (9) shows that the mean score of the study sample in the pre administration of the speaking anxiety scale is higher than their mean score in the post administration of the same scale, where "t-value" is (39.14) which is significant at the (0.05) level of significance. Based on that, the fifth hypothesis was confirmed.

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The results of the fifth hypothesis revealed that there was a statistically significant difference between the mean score of the study participants in the pre and post administrations of the speaking anxiety scale in favor of the pre administration. Table (9) showed that t-value is significant at (0.05) level. Thus, the fifth hypothesis was confirmed and supported statistically. Figure (5) represents these results:

Figure (5): The mean scores of the study participants in the pre and post administrations of the speaking anxiety scale



The present study focused on reducing the first year secondary stage students' speaking anxiety through the offered speaking activities, tasks, and exercises in the drama techniques-based program. These activities motivated each student to speak accurately and fluently. Moreover, the participants were trained to apply different drama techniques such as role-play, simulation, mime, and improvisation. As a result, the post assessment has indicated that the first year secondary stage students' speaking anxiety was reduced due to the influence of the drama techniques-based program. The following table presents the effect size of the drama techniques-based program on the study participants' speaking anxiety:

Table (10): The effect size of the drama techniques-based program on the study participants' speaking anxiety.

| Scale | t-value | μ^2 value | d-value | Effect size |
|----------------------------|---------|---------------|---------|-------------|
| The Speaking Anxiety Scale | 39.14 | 0.97 | 6.18 | Large |

5. Discussion

The primary purpose of the present study was to develop EFL speaking skills and reduce speaking anxiety among first year secondary stage students through using the drama techniques-based program. The program used different drama techniques (role-play, simulation, mime, and improvisation) and included various speaking activities and tasks that were introduced to the study participants. The results of the present study showed that the drama techniques-based program has improved the study participants' EFL speaking skills and reduced speaking anxiety among them. These improvements can be due to the effectiveness of using the drama techniques-based program, the appropriateness of the drama techniques used and the speaking activities and tasks offered through the sessions, to the study participants.

Using drama is effective to improve the students' speaking skills. The use of drama techniques is helpful to build an independent learning in a speaking class because it has structures of learning which maximize students' involvement and cooperation in speaking both individually and in groups. So, students are motivated to join the speaking activities actively. Moreover, drama techniques encourage students to interact with others so that they can accomplish the task given. Group learning in the drama techniques gives some benefits for both students in the speaking activities. For students, group learning is effective to improve their independence and group cooperation in learning speaking. Through practice and sharing ideas, students are assigned to think actively, seriously, and critically in speaking.

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6. Conclusion

The current study investigated the effectiveness of using a drama techniques-based program in developing EFL speaking skills and reducing speaking anxiety among first year secondary stage students. Results indicated that the students' EFL speaking skills were developed, and their speaking anxiety level was reduced, as a result of studying the drama techniques-based program. The results of the current study show that drama techniques may be regarded as a means to help students acquire and develop linguistic competences. They can create memorable and practice-oriented learning experiences that improve learners' language competence. Therefore, drama should not be regarded as merely an enjoyable out-of-class activity but as a teaching method that involves the learners into meaningful productive activity. In drama the students learn by doing, thus foreign language is acquired subconsciously and students become more confident in their use of English by experiencing the language in operation.

7. Recommendations of the Study

In light of the results of the present study, the following recommendations are suggested:

1. EFL speaking skills e.g. accuracy, fluency, and pragmatic skills should be given more attention when designing English language programs.
2. Speaking anxiety should be given more attention when designing English language programs.
3. Training English language teachers on the use of drama techniques in teaching EFL speaking to their students.

4. Training EFL students on the use of drama techniques to develop their EFL speaking skills.
5. Training EFL students on the use of drama techniques to reduce their speaking anxiety.
6. EFL teachers should clarify the importance of EFL speaking skills to their students. In addition, they should illustrate the importance of drama techniques as they offer chances to keep up with the recent TEFL approaches.

8. Suggestions for Further Research

Within the delimitations and results of the present study, the following points are suggested for further research:

- Investigating the effect of a drama techniques-based program on developing EFL speaking skills among primary stage students.
- Investigating the effect of a drama techniques-based program on developing EFL speaking skills among preparatory stage students.
- Finding out the effect of a drama techniques-based program on developing other language skills (listening, reading, and writing).
- Investigating the effect of a drama techniques-based program on developing students' attitudes towards EFL speaking.

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