

A STUDY OF LEARNING OUTCOMES OF PEDAGOGICAL PRACTICES OF DIFFERENT GENRES OF DRAMA IN TEACHING ENGLISH AT SECONDARY LEVEL

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Abstract

This paper presents learning outcomes of pedagogical practices of different genres of drama in teaching English Literature at secondary level. It analyses pedagogical practices of drama in English Literature which are incorporated in the teaching of English at Secondary Level. It follows qualitative research methodology. It states learning outcomes of drama. The learning outcomes are carried out on the basis of pedagogical practices of teaching drama at the secondary level.

Key words: *Learning Outcomes, Pedagogical Practices, Different Genres of Drama, English Literature, Secondary Level*



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Introduction

Drama is one of the literary genres, which is an imitation of some action. It is an imitation of life in which dialogues and acting are in full consonance with real life where acting and performance occupy the first place and dance and dialogues occupy the second place. Drama is a branch of fine arts. According to some scholars the drama is a literary miracle which is written for the stage; dialogues and speeches are in the form of poem; sentiments and feelings are expressed by body and tongue.

Aristotle's defines drama simply as an imitation of an action. He links it to the mimetic impulse in human beings like children playing father and mother in a childhood play. This means that imitation is a component of life. Human beings have the desire to copy others, situations or events. However, E.M. Forster insists that drama is not just an imitation of action, but a tool for the exposure of social conditions, not just an entertainment but an instrument of political and social change.

Objectives

1. To explore pedagogical practices of different genres of drama.
2. To analyse learning outcomes of drama.
3. To find out teaching of drama English at Secondary Level.
4. To distinguish in clear terms the characteristics of the different dramatic genres.

Significance of the Study

The teacher and student of English will find the result of this study helpful in many ways.

1. It could serve as sources of further knowledge the effective teaching and learning of drama.
2. This research project will help teachers and student's development their acting and speaking speed.
3. It also hoped that this project will help the students to re-shape their speaking ability and communication skill.
4. It could help to develop students' creativity, imagination and critical thinking.
5. The research will help to develop literary enrichment and content knowledge of students.

Limitation of the Study

The research tends to make this research study to be of immense value to the teaching and learning of drama. It is comprehensive enough to take care of all secondary schools. The study is limited to drama teaching at Secondary School.

Methodology

This paper is a qualitative research paper which involves analysis of different genres of drama in English literature. It is a stimulating and deeply interpretive research approach which can examine complex human phenomena from multiple perspectives to produce rich theoretical and experiential interpretations. The analysis of different genre of drama is done by using different examples of drama. In the current context of different genre of drama are described as the interpretation and understanding of English literatures.

Pedagogical Practices by using Different Genres of Drama

Etymologically, the term genre is taken from the French language and it means type, kind, or form. In simple terms dramatic genre means type or kind of dramatic composition. Drama is grouped into distinct types, kinds or categories because there are qualities that are common to all dramatic compositions. There are also qualities that make each composition unique. It is these similarities and differences that determine each genre. In literature, a drama is the

portrayal of fictional or non-fictional events through the performance of written dialogue (either prose or poetry). Dramas can be performed on stage, on film, or the radio.

The dramatic genres include tragedy, comedy, tragi-comedy, melodrama, farce, etc

1.Tragedy

2.Comedy

3.Tragi-comedy

4.Melodrama

5.Farce

i. Tragedy

Tragedy in its oldest sense deals with human beings taking on superhuman forces, such as gods or fate. In the end the humans lose, but, because of the magnitude of their struggle, the mere effort is ennobling for the character and for the people in the audience. The ancient tragic characters were invariably kings, heroes, or demigods. The diction of the plays was poetic and formal in style. The plays were intensive in structure, with the climax following logically from the action on stage. The goal of tragedy, according to Aristotle, is catharsis, or a purgation of pity and fear in the audience. In other words, the audience should empathize completely with the protagonist, emotionally following all the turns of the character's fortunes, until, when the character is ultimately defeated, we are purged of all of the (negative) emotions we have been vicariously sharing. Greek tragedy has a set pattern or structure. It starts with the prologue. The play contains a "single integral plot" which is presented in a very short period with one setting. The action could be simple or complex and contains a reversal of fortune or discovery or both. They are very short plays and many of them are presented in trilogies. The tragic hero is drawn from princes and kings. He is a man who is not pre-eminently good, virtuous or vicious but who commits an error of judgment.

Tragic dramas use darker themes, such as disaster, pain, and death. Protagonists often has characteristic that leads them to their downfall. In drama, tragedy deals with the misfortunes of man. It presents a man (tragic hero) who is not too virtuous or too vicious but one who aspires for higher ideals. He tries to improve himself and the world around him. In the course of this, he makes a mistake, or commits an error of judgment. This leads to his fall. Traditionally, in classical tragedies, the hero must be of noble birth, suffer and is overwhelmed in the end. Tragedy presents injustice, evil, pain, misfortunes, paradoxes and mysterious aspects of human existence. These plays contain darker themes such as death and

disaster. Often the protagonist of the play has a tragic flaw, a trait which leads to their downfall. Tragic plays convey all emotions and have very dramatic conflicts. Tragedy was one of the two original play types of Ancient Greece. Some examples of tragedies include William Shakespeare's Hamlet.

According to modern dramatist, drama reflects the society, so they should reflect their society in the works. In the modern society, little or no attention is paid to kings, princes and their exploits so poor man who is hard working can rise to esteem. The society also encourages him to rise. He also has the capacity to fall into misfortune through an error of judgment and according to Arthur Miller, since kings and monarchs are no longer available, tragedy should be based "... on the heart and spirit of the average man". Contemporary issues and human beings should, therefore, be treated in tragedy. The important factor is that the tragic hero pursues a particular goal he believes in relentlessly to its logical conclusion even if he loses his life in the pursuit. Tragedy attempts, therefore, to ask some basic questions about human-existence like is there justice in the world.

ii. Comedy

Comedy is a deliberate presentation of events/experiences drawn from real life but not the same with real life. We use the words 'comedy' and comic to describe something that is funny in our everyday lives. These include a joke or a fantastic story that is full of nonsense or an absurd appearance that makes us giggle, smile or laugh. Comedy is not inherent in things or people but the way things/people are perceived. Generally, the plays have good endings or resolutions, so when a play ends happily, we refer to it as comedy. In most comedies, the principal characters begin in a state of opposition either to one another or to their world or both.

We should therefore not expect dramatic comedy to be the same as real life. Comedy has a range of subgenres that can be understood along a spectrum from high comedy to low comedy. High comedy, while funny, shares the most with tragedy and tends to be specific to the culture that created it. For example, comedy of manners is a form of high comedy that emphasizes an "in group's" manners, speech, dress, and tastes. Much humour is made at the expense of those who are trying unsuccessfully to enter the "in group" or those who are completely ignorant of the "in group's" tastes. This style of comedy was particularly popular in 17th century France and England among the aristocracy. Recent movies like American Pie or other movies about teenagers have much in common with comedy of

manners. Comedies are lighter in tone than ordinary works, and provide a happy conclusion. The intention of dramatists in comedies is to make their audience laugh. Hence, they use quaint circumstances, unusual characters, and witty remarks. 'Much Ado About Nothing' is the most frequently performed Shakespearian comedy in modern times. The play is romantically funny, in that love between Hero and Claudio is laughable, as they never even get a single chance to communicate on-stage until they get married.

Comedy therefore teaches through laughter, sees it as an imitation of common errors of life which is presented in the most ridiculous and scornful manner so that the spectator is anxious to avoid such errors himself. It should aim at being delightful though not necessarily by provoking laughter. We recognize comedy through its style, characterization, diction and other elements of style. The purpose of comedy is to delight, to teach and to entertain the audience through the presentation of characters, situations and ideas in a ridiculous manner. This helps to keep man close to sanity, balance and to remind him of human frailties. It helps to keep him humble and mindful of what he is rather than what he might wish himself to be.

Modern scholars believe that the purpose of comedy is to correct vices therefore should not exclude any class. Satire is an important instrument in comedy, because nothing reforms majority of men like the portrayal of their faults. It is easy for people to endure being made fun of. Many people may have no objection to being considered wicked but are not willing to be considered ridiculous. The audience is thus expected to learn from the stupidity of the characters and try to avoid such pitfalls because nobody likes to be made an object of ridicule. Generally speaking, comedy adopts a different approach from that of serious drama. It presents the incongruity in people and situations. In doing this, the playwright suspends the natural laws; for instance, a man falls flat on the floor but does not really hurt himself. Comedy is usually presented as a moral satire used to attack vices like greed, hypocrisy, lust, laziness, or ignorance. The aim is to correct social ills, social injustice or to ridicule a particular human fault or social imbalance. It thrives on exaggeration of situation and character to show mankind worse than it really is. Since drama is a conscious and deliberate presentation of events/experience based mostly on real life but not the same with real life, one should, therefore, not expect comedy to be the same with real life.

iii. Melodrama

Melodrama is an exaggerated drama, which is sensational and appeals directly to the senses of the audience. It is neither comedy nor tragedy, but combines some elements of each into its

own unique form. The word melodrama is coined from melo (music) and dran (drama). It is, therefore, a play that utilizes music extensively. But the utilization of music is not the only factor in melodrama, what really makes it melodrama is its portrayal of the protagonist and the antagonist. Just like the farce, the characters are of a single dimension and simple, or may be stereotyped. It arose originally in the late 18th century, and several authors gained international fame writing melodramas by 1800. The defining elements of melodrama are an elaborate plot with many twists and turns, clearly defined hero and villain characters, and plots selected for maximum stage spectacle. Melodramas packed theatres throughout the nineteenth century; at this point in western history, cities were growing rapidly and theatres were the most popular entertainment for the growing middle and working classes in the new urban areas.

Melodramas are also important for us to understand in the twentieth century because the film industry copied melodramatic plots, characters, and use of spectacle when it began to seriously compete with theatre for the popular audience in the early twentieth century. Many of the most successful movies and television shows produced in the United States today follow the same formulas as stage melodramas.

The protagonist suffers a lot but triumphs in the end while the antagonist suffers. So, melodrama can be defined as a play that has serious action caused by a villain and a destruction of the villain which brings about a happy resolution in the play. The hero is usually involved in very dangerous circumstances, but is rescued or he disentangles himself at the last possible moment. The rescuer is usually a benevolent character who identifies himself with the good role of the protagonist. An ideal melodrama, therefore, must have a protagonist and an antagonist. The protagonist always fights the antagonist who is usually poised to destroy goodness. In the end, characters are easily identified by the audience. The protagonist is admired and the antagonist is hated. It is this identification by the audience that provides the grounds for poetic justice because the antagonist loses in the end. This explains why some critics insist that melodrama is an honest dramatic way. According to them, it is the only form of drama that expresses the truth of human condition as they are perceived most of the time. This is a condition where vice is condemned and virtue applauded or where the bad man is punished and the good man rewarded.

Like tragedy, melodrama deals with characters in critical situations. The main difference is in the point of view. Outwardly, it tries to create the illusion of real people at genuine risk or

in jeopardy but the playwright manipulates the play in such a way that it ends with a reprieve or a rescue, a reform or a triumph for the protagonist. There is always an escape from danger in the plot line. In melodrama, there is always serious excitement, suspense and thrills for the audience. The plot is built on tension and great excitement but this is transitory and lends no substantial significance to the action of the play. The plot therefore contains stories with colourful but brave characters. It creates opportunities for strong sensational scenes, powerful emotions, and strong characters that struggle against deadly odds. Sometimes they are trapped in precarious situations but they must hold on until there is help ultimately. The melodramatic hero is usually a one-dimensional figure who pursues a goal in a straightforward manner. The opposition comes from the world around him. He does not always think well before taking an action. Consequently, he gets involved in entanglements or dangerous situations which a more rational person might avoid. The characters are usually simple in mind and heart and are conditioned or influenced by their backgrounds and environment.

Melodrama contains most of the serious conflicts and crises of daily life. In melodrama, we are resigned as we realize that our failures are not our fault but caused by others and our victories are as a result of help from other people. It is a serious play because most of the time, they rely on strong story lines but lacks the essential magnitude in character and the action is usually over exaggerated.

iv. Tragic-comedy

Tragic-comedy is a play that mixes both comic and tragic elements in equal proportion of each. It therefore elicits both tragic and comic emotions. We have seen that tragedy is a serious play that ends on a sad note, while comedy ends happily. In traditional tragedy, playwrights are not allowed to bring in any comic action. As time went on, even from the Elizabethan period, comic characters were included in tragic plays. This is called comic relief. It is a twentieth century name given to plays that combine aspects of comedy and tragedy to make essentially serious points. It was applied retroactively to Shakespeare's late plays and seemed to capture the funny yet profoundly sad state of Beckett's characters in "Theatre of the Absurd" as well. In the 2000's, we are more likely to use the word drama to describe plays, movies, and television shows which are essentially serious but may have funny characters or episodes. In fact, serious writers today are likely to infuse some humour into their plays, allowing us to defuse our anxiety while watching difficult events on stage.

'Kushner's Angel's in America is an excellent example of a drama that allows audiences at least as much laughter as anxiety over the very serious topic of AIDS.

v. Farce

Farce which is referred to as comedy of situation, is a humorous play on a trivial theme usually one that is familiar to the audience. The themes that are treated in farce include mistaken identity; elaborate misunderstanding, switched costume (men in women's clothes) heroes forced under tables, misheard instructions, discoveries, disappearances and many such situations. Farce is not considered an intellectual drama because it does not appeal to the mind. It deals with physical situations and does not explore any serious idea. It presents physical activities that grow out of situations like the presence of something when something is not expected or the absence of something when something is expected. Farce does not treat serious social issues. Sometimes, it does not tell a full story or present a logical plot. A good example is somebody walking and slipping on a banana peel and falling in an exaggerated manner. It presents mainly mechanical actions to show that human life is mechanical, aggressive, and coincidental.

The Common Elements of Different Genres of Drama

1. Content/Theme

Theme is the main idea in a play that permeates its entire. Themes are identified through the dialogue, actions and manifestations in the actions of the major characters as they interact with other characters in the play. The interpersonal relationships of the characters help to highlight and advance that particular idea. Themes in drama include corruption, love, revenge, and many others. The theme is the message which the playwright wants to send across to his audience and a play could have more than one theme. The playwright could draw his germinal idea from an incident or event in his contemporary society. It could also be drawn from history, legend, myth or folklore but the important factor is that there is a message he sends to the audience. The playwright is said to be the conscience of his society, a teacher and an entertainer. He therefore strives to educate, inform and entertain his audience. This explains why he presents his theme through an interesting story and chooses the most appropriate dramatic form.

For example, Bernard Shaw decides to dramatize the themes of love and war through comedy, while Shakespeare presents his theme of revenge through tragedy. The theme of the story is what gives it significance because without a recognizable and definable theme, a story will be

trite and pointless. Consciously or unconsciously, every playwright has his theme in mind in choosing the style to adopt. A play could be complex and it might be difficult to give the theme or the central idea in one word. Finally, theme is the controlling idea in a play which the reader extracts consciously as he reads the text. It could be literal or symbolic. It is that idea or message which the playwright wants to share with or convey to his audience. In most cases, the theme emerges after the exploration of the entire play. Some plays have more than one theme.

2. Subject Matter

The subject matter is the topic of discussion in the play. It is easier to get the subject matter from the title of the play. Theme is the central idea of the play while the subject matter is the object of discussion from which the theme is extracted. It means therefore that the theme is subsumed in the subject matter. In *The Lion and the Jewel*, for instance, the subject matter is the fame of Sidi (the Jewel) a Weng and beautiful girl and her seduction by the Bale (the Lion) who is sixty two years old. From this example, we conclude that the subject matter is indeed the object of discussion which other events and incidents in a text or work help to highlight. This is the statement the play makes about the social world. Each playwright treats any of these human problems from his own perspective to give it a touch of originality and uniqueness.

3. Characterization

Characters are the persons in a dramatic work. The playwright endows them with moral and dispositional qualities which are expressed in their words and actions. The reasons for the character's action, his speech, his temperament constitute his motivation. In textual analysis, one could evaluate the character through the stage direction where some playwrights have some comments on the character's disposition, his age, his physical attributes, his mode of dressing and other information that could be found there. The next thing is to evaluate his interactions with other characters through which we discover whether he is a flat or round character. A flat character remains unchanged in his outlook and dispositions from the beginning to the end but a round character could undergo a gradual or radical change which is brought about by events in the play. It is difficult to predict the actions of a round character because he is usually very close to real human beings. Anything if written about a character must be contained in the text. We should therefore not infer, guess or suggest a characteristic moral disposition or physical attribute that cannot be identified in the text. For instance, we

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can rightly say that Baroka in *The Lion and the Jewel* is a crafty rogue who excels in self-indulgence.

4. Setting

Setting is the place or the time where or when the action of the play takes place. Setting could be a tribe, a village, a town or a country depending on the disposition of the playwright. In some plays like *Oedipus Rex*, *Arms and the Man*, *Hamlet* and many others, the playwrights mention specific towns/countries like Thebes, Bulgaria, and Denmark. However, in some other plays like *The Marriage of Anansewa*, *The Lion and the Jewel*, and *The Song of a Goat*, the setting of each play is identified through the names of characters or other landmarks. Setting in terms of time, period, or locale can be mentioned; implied or alluded to in the text.

5. Language

Language seems to be the most essential technique in the analysis of any dramatic text. It is through language that the playwright communicates his ideas; so, he manipulates it to suit his intention. Language could be in form of speech, gestures or other bodily signs/symbols. Dramatic language is not just an ordinary language because the playwright is compelled to incorporate descriptions about setting, character and the overall presentation of the story through the characters. The language must therefore be very economical, vivid and expressive.

The example of condensed language in *Hamlet* is Polonius' advice to his son, Laertes: "Neither a borrower nor a lender be /for loan often loses itself and friendland borrowing dull that edge of husbandly". So, in dramatic language, the dramatist must think in terms of the characteristics of the characters, their speeches, their actions and the environment in which they operate and incorporate them in language. This is important because unlike in prose, the dramatist relies only on dialogue to explore characters, describe incident, and create environment, atmosphere and mood. This is the reason why he pays attention to the diction. Diction is the choice or selection of the words which forms the dialogue through which the playwright communicates his ideas to his audience. The diction could be simple or difficult. A play that has very simple diction invariably will have a simple and direct language so is said to be accessible to a wider audience. This is because more people will read and understand it. Also, when it is presented on stage, people will understand the story and absorb the message with ease. In a play with simple diction, the playwright uses familiar and simple words. On the other hand, some plays are difficult to understand. They are usually filled with

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unfamiliar words, terms, and symbols. Such plays are said to be obscure and the playwright is said to be writing for a select audience. This is because many people will find it difficult to understand and appreciate the play.

i. Imagery

A playwright could employ literal or connotative language in his work. A literal language gives a direct meaning of the words while a connotative language gives more than one meaning to the word. The language here determines how we mentally visualize the object or situation. This is called imagery. It also shows the playwright's attitude towards a particular character or situation. The image of a character and his mode of dressing as described in a stage-direction helps us, to a large extent, to evaluate the character's disposition, personality, and the attitude of the playwright towards that character.

ii. Symbolism

In everyday life, we come across symbols and even use them at times. Symbols are objects or things that communicate meaning or messages without using words for example, a cross or a bible symbolizes Christianity. It could be a character, an object, or an incident which represents an idea, a person, a quality, a profession or situation. Symbolism is an artistic device through which the playwright uses factual language in a way that it deviates from its simple function of describing or recording but used to stand for or represent something else not directly named. This means, therefore, that in a play, we could have symbolic action, symbolic object and symbolic character.

iii. Irony

A playwright uses irony to add flavour to his story. The types are verbal irony, dramatic irony and situational irony. Verbal Irony is the simplest and commonest type of irony. It is a figure of speech where the word is the opposite of what is meant; for example, when he is a giant or the tallest man refers to a very short man. Dramatic Irony is a contrast between what the character says or does and what the reader knows as the truth. If a speech is meant to be understood in one way by a certain character in a play but the audience understands it in a different way, the scenario becomes a dramatic irony. In other words, a character is under a delusion of a certain fact which has been overtaken by an intervening circumstance. In Situational Irony, the expectation does not come out in the way it is anticipated. It is a situation of appearance versus reality. The action of a character here is at variance with the consequences or result of the action.

Learning Outcomes of Practices of Different Genres of Drama

Drama has multiple uses in education. It addresses and activates bodily-kinesthetics, visual-spatial, linguistic-verbal, musical, interpersonal, and intrapersonal learning resulting in significantly increased student engagement and enjoyment. It also facilitates the development of empathy and critical thinking skills as situations are reflected upon and discussed. Moreover, practices in drama enrich the teaching and learning of English.

Knowledge, skill and values are reflected in the following learning outcomes

- Experiment with the Fundamentals of Drama to explore ideas, thoughts and feelings, and to generate perspectives on the situations, roles and relationships suggested by the stimuli for performance possibilities.
- Interpret and identify the significant situations, roles and relationships and other aspects of the Fundamentals of Drama in the extracts of scripts
- Apply the Fundamentals of Drama during role-playing, improvising, devising and playbuilding to generate and develop ideas suggested by stimuli and script (e.g., establish individual roles and explore relationships between them through planned, improvised and rehearsed dramatic actions
- Explain the relationship between the significant aspects of the Fundamentals of Drama present in the dramatic actions
- Recognise opportunities to apply suitable elements of Vocal Expression (i.e., tone, emphasis, pace, pause and pitch) and Physical Expression (i.e., gestures, movement and facial expressions) through internalisation of characters
- Recognise opportunities where Performance Support (e.g., simple sets, props and costumes) may be used to complement overall meaning of the performance
- Demonstrate the suitable use of Vocal and Physical Expressions and Performance Support to clearly convey role(s), character(s) and intended meaning of the performance
- Appreciate a variety of drama performances that: - are set and written in different contexts (e.g., social, cultural, historical and geographical); - are of different performance forms; and - explore varied issues related to the human condition
- Examine the effectiveness of the performances in the application of the Fundamentals of Drama and relevant Areas of Study to deliver the intended meanings

- Apply knowledge and understanding when making, performing and responding to drama
- Explore performance texts, understanding their social, cultural and historical context including the theatrical conventions of the period in which they were created
- Develop a range of theatrical skills and apply them to create performance
- Work collaboratively to generate, develop and communicate ideas
- Develop as creative, effective, independent and reflective students who are able to make informed choices in process and performance
- Contribute as an individual to a theatrical performance
- Reflect on and evaluate their own work and that of others
- Develop an awareness and understanding of the roles and processes undertaken in contemporary professional theatre practice

Findings of the Study

The findings of study show that pedagogical practices by using different genres of drama are mostly used in secondary level. Students are exposed to different genres of drama in the classroom. Collaboration, communication, creativity, critical thinking, problem-solving and study skills are in particular nurtured through its delivery of different genres of prose.

Educational Implications and conclusion

Drama is an exploration and expression of the human condition as people convey personal, social and cultural meanings through it. It is also a social art form that engages the physical, social, cognitive, affective and aesthetic domains in the meaning-making process as participants collectively engage in stories about human beings: our past, our present and our potential future. The pedagogical practices of different genres of drama versatile impact on students at secondary level. Drama also enhances students' ability to observe, appreciate, empathise, analyse, synthesise, emphasise and generate dramatic material from the intricate relationships between people, between people and ideas, and between people and their environments. Different genres of Drama facilitate the creation and communication of ideas, thoughts and feelings through dramatic presentations that are meaningful to themselves and the intended audience. In today's world, personal, social and cultural issues are complex and interconnected. Drama will develop students' critical and inventive thinking as they work in groups to develop and confidently present a performance that can entertain, educate and

encourage the audience to dialogue on relevant issues. Such a process will help our students develop into confident persons, concerned citizens, self-directed learners and active contributors when they work independently or in groups.

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