English Language & Literature Teaching, Vol.27, No.1 Spring 2021
https://doi.org/10.35828/etak.2021.27.1.95

The Benefits of Drama-Based Activity : Focusing on Learner Autonomy*

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Sim, Juyoun & Kim, Eunhyun (2021). The benefits of drama-based activity: Focusing on learner autonomy. *English Language & Literature Teaching, 27*(1), 95-119.

Integrating drama into English language learning context has been used as an intriguing teaching strategy to engage students. This article investigates how utilizing a drama-based activity impacts on college students' language learning and autonomy in foreign language classroom. This study employed a mixed-method study. Survey questionnaires were administered, and in-depth focus group interviews were conducted. In addition, video clips of classroom presentation were collected. Overall, the findings suggest that drama-based activity played an important role of promoting L2 oral fluency. With regard to enhancing students' autonomy, the drama-based activity provided i) opportunities making students engage in meaningful negotiation with peers in which they are key agents of their learning; ii) enjoyment of learning and collaboration with their peers increasing their motivation to learn; and iii) promote interdependent learning leading to shaping autonomous learning. Some crucial implications of this study are discussed to highlight how the potential impact of drama-based activity could be optimized to increase learner autonomy. Furthermore, teachers should be aware of the significance of drama-based activity for transformative learning. It is recommended that further research should focus on teacher's awareness of the significance of learner autonomy in teaching contexts where drama-based activity was integrated into foreign language learning.

[Drama-based activity/learner autonomy/ English language learning/speaking skill]

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* This research is supported by a grant from Seoul Theological University
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I. INTRODUCTION

Drama and dramatic activities in education is not a new teaching strategy and have been used as a teaching strategy to engage learners and develop their language skills. Drama is utilized as a play-based art process where learners use fiction to deal with issues important to them and explore the world around them (Alasmari & Alshae'el, 2020). Learners are involved in the act of using imagination whereby they take roles of someone other than oneself through drama.

There have been strengths and drawbacks when integrating drama into language classrooms. Drama activities help learners become more engaged in language achievement since it facilitates their active learning and helps them experience the use of creativity and critical thinking skills (Alasmari & Alshae'el, 2020). Playing out a story can also enhance learners' self-confidence and self-esteem, lower language barriers, and reduce anxiety to speak. In addition, it helps learners experience the authentic meaning of the words and allows them to be involved in more meaningful learning. Drama also offers learners opportunities to practice the four skills of language. They are reading texts, listening to other students who recite lines, and speaking and writing scripts. It enables learners to develop their oral fluency and reach a higher proficiency level in mastering a language. Using drama is a powerful tool to ignite their desire to learn another language and foster their motivation and autonomy. Drama is fun and entertaining, through which learners can engage in a rich experience of language. In drama-based language teaching contexts, there are chances where learners take initiative in learning and responsible for their own actions, and their learning is stimulated by the social context (Carson, 2012).

Despite its importance, many teachers have been familiar with using comfortable teaching approaches and reluctant to use dramatic activities (Alasmari & Alshae'el, 2020). Other teachers may regard drama techniques as a trivial teaching method and have lack of valuing the inclusion of drama activities in language teaching. To date, many studies have focused on the impact of utilizing diverse dramatic activities on language skills in foreign language classrooms (Davies, 1990) and the importance of autonomy in language learning (Benson, 1997; Littlewood, 1999). Since acting conveys emotions which accompany meanings, students had to grasp accurate meanings and practice English repeatedly, and the repetitive practices contribute to producing positive outcomes of oral proficiency (Sung, 2008). However, only a limited body of research has investigated the impact of utilizing drama-based activities on learner autonomy (Carson, 2012; Fine & Collins, 2011; Fraser, 2012). Therefore, this research is to examine how integrating a drama-based activity, namely drama-based activity, impacts on college students' language learning and autonomy in foreign language classroom. In this study, students performed role play based on scripts and improvisation, and their play is also integrated with English presentation. The

following research questions have driven this research.

1. What is the impact of using drama on language learning?
2. How does using drama-based activity in the language classroom affect learners' autonomy?

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

1. Dramatization in English Language Teaching

Dramatization has been a useful teaching strategy in English language teaching. There have been certain advantages gained from using the dramatic features in English language teaching. According to Davies (1990), drama can help students to experience real-life situations by putting language in context. It helps to facilitate the acquisition of communicative competence leading to fluency. Drama can also be used as a stimulus for encouraging students to share ideas, developing imaginative growth, and creating written works. In regard to affective aspect, students can become more confident and motivated by employing natural usage of language in classroom combined with the physical involvement. Drama can also arouse student interest and imagination by imitating and expressing themselves if well-handled. Dramatization propels student participation, and its activities are student-centered (Malay & Duff, 1982). Like this, using drama techniques in English language teaching fosters psychological, intellectual, social, and linguistic development of learners (Gill, 2008; Kim, 2004; Richard-Amato, 1983).

Dramatic activities are diverse, such as improvisation, simulation, role play, scripted plays, and mime (Chukueggu, 2012). Much research has focused on the effects of dramatic activities on language learning. Mwangi, Nyagah, Kibui, and Odundo (2015) explored the effects of dramatization on English language learning in Kenyan secondary school. The study revealed that dramatization enhanced learners' speaking skills and promoted self-learning, peer learning, and group interaction. The learners explained that dramatization was entertaining, motivating, enjoyable, and creative, and they enjoyed learning English and appreciated the role of play as facilitating their oral skills. The teachers also expressed that dramatic activities enhanced students' content retention and promoted listening, writing, reading, and speaking skills. In this study, drama was an educational promoter for fostering social, intellectual, and linguistic development in the learners. Gomaz (2010) undertook a research to examine the effects of using drama on ESL learners' oral skills including pronunciation and fluency. The study compared the differences between the control group where the teacher lectured and used routine drills to teach students and the

intervention group where the teacher adopted drama techniques and students took on an active role to perform. The result of this study showed that drama could be useful for conveying meanings and helping students engage actively in enhancing students' oral skills.

Domestic studies have also addressed the impact of drama activities on English language learning. Kim (2004) explored the effects of drama-based tasks on students' oral proficiency and their social development. In this study, students displayed that drama-oriented tasks were helpful for enhancing their speaking and social skills. Sung (2008) also pointed out that since acting requires understanding of meanings, students had to grasp accurate meanings and practice English repeatedly. Through repetitive practices, students gained confidence of speaking in English. Kim (2020) integrated a blended learning model in order to examine the impact of using drama on practical English proficiency of college students. The result of this study showed that using drama integrated with a blended learning model played a significant role in enhancing students' oral proficiency and their interest in language learning.

Some studies have addressed the effect of employing dramatic activities as affective considerations. Gill (2008) studied a course which employed skits in order to teach college students in language classrooms. This course was to help non-native speakers of English enhance their oral skills. Among the students, many Asian learners were shy, quiet, introverted, lacked motivation and confidence, and avoided taking risks for fear of making errors. However, drama could be an effective way of addressing the issues. While participating in the work, learners' embarrassment and uncertainty was alleviated. In contrast to the traditional language teaching focusing on routine exercises with little purpose, an experiential learning using drama techniques could help learners see meanings in learning and be more motivated in acquiring the target language. Atas (2015) also examined the effects of drama techniques on speaking anxiety in English language learners. This study was conducted in secondary school settings in Turkey. The result of this study revealed that dramatization significantly lowered students' speaking anxiety. One of the outcomes of the drama application was that students felt more comfortable among friends, neither anxious, nor embarrassed. In addition, after the drama, students became more self-confident in speaking English. In the study, speaking anxiety levels of learners were significantly reduced after the drama application. One of the reasons is that drama where emotion and movement are integrated has the power for liberating linguistic abilities, especially speaking skills.

2. Learner Autonomy

Autonomy is defined as the ability to take responsibility for one's own learning, and autonomous learners are responsible for planning, selecting materials, monitoring their

own learning process, and assessing their outcomes (Dickinson, 1987; Holec, 1981). Little (1991) emphasized that to be autonomous learners, they need to develop a capacity for detachment, critical reflection, decision making, and independent action. Benson (2011) also described autonomy as the capacity to take control of one's own learning and three aspects comprising autonomy as learning management, cognitive processes, and learning contents.

There have been studies addressing the issue of autonomy in language learning and teaching. Benson (1997) described versions of autonomy in language education: technical, psychological, and political ways of representing the idea of autonomy. In technical perspective, autonomy emphasizes learning skills and strategies. In terms of psychological view, learner autonomy focuses on learners' attitudes and cognitive abilities. In a political perspective, it points out the empowerment of learners by providing them more power to control over the content and processes of their learning. Littlewood (1999) also proposed two levels of autonomy in language education: proactive and reactive one. Proactive autonomy emphasizes learners' individuality and creates their own directions. On the other hand, reactive autonomy does not set up directions, but enables learners to use resources autonomously in order to achieve their goal. According to Littlewood (1999), reactive autonomy seems to be more suited to East Asian cultural context rather than proactive autonomy, but learners in East Asian contexts can also be expected to develop both kinds of autonomy.

Yang (1998) also explained some roles of teachers in order to promote autonomy in language learning: helping language learners understand language learning strategies, providing them with some degree of freedom in learning, teaching them how to set goals and evaluate progress, giving more opportunities for interaction among themselves and with their teacher, and enabling them to experience autonomy in learning. To promote learner autonomy in language learning, three basic pedagogical principles have been emphasized: learner involvement, reflection, and appropriate use of target language (Najeeb, 2012). Firstly, learners take responsibility for the learning process. Secondly, learners think reflectively and critically when they plan, monitor, and evaluate their learning. Thirdly, learners use the target language as the medium of language learning. Lyddon (2011) also proposed four constructs of autonomy, which are motivation, learning strategies, self-monitoring, and community building. Autonomy is closely related to motivation and affected by interdependence in social contexts and learning communities (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011).

Drama activities in language learning have been recognized as a means of promoting learner autonomy (Carson, 2012; Fine & Collins, 2011; Fraser, 2012). When working with drama, students were motivated and engaged in the activity with enjoyment and appeared to take charge of their own learning and promote creativity and autonomy (Fine & Collins,

2014). Drama activities could provide chances for autonomous language use within the contexts that are motivating. Teachers assume the stance of fellow facilitator, asking students to autonomously share their own reactions to the contexts of a textbook and reconstruct the contents of the textbook to rewrite it as a short drama. In their research, drama performance activities were flexibly designed to promote learner autonomy by considering learners' unique styles and needs. Teachers in class provided learners with script writing options and script content options, and providing them opportunities to share the students' own ideas about the scene and characters, which can help to promote their ownership in their performances. Drama-based activities provide a more interdependent learning environment which fosters motivation and autonomy for language practice.

III. RESEARCH DESIGN

This study employed a qualitative study design for over a 15-week period. To respond to the given research question, survey questionnaires were administered and focus group interviews were conducted to participant students. In addition, video clips of classroom presentation were also collected. Using the data collected, this study examined what the benefits and impacts of drama-based activity are on students' oral production and their autonomy.

1. Research Process

The study was conducted over a semester period of sixteen weeks at a university in southern province in Korea. Over the students' group presentation using dramatization, there were teacher feedback sessions with students: these involved teacher electronic comments on students' scripts for their drama section, each group conferences (face-to-face feedback), and informal talks with students. The study began with observing whole process of drama-based presentation: from brainstorming to the final products. The survey questionnaire was administered after finishing presentation to analyze students' learning outcomes through drama-based activity and expectations to the further English class. Non-participant observation during the presentation was conducted. After the course, some students voluntarily participated in focus group interviews. Based on the in-depth focus group interviews and survey questionnaire with students after the presentation and observation throughout the semester, the researchers hoped to investigate the extent to which the drama-based English class affected students' speaking skills and their autonomous learning. For practical purposes, video recording of presentations and audio recordings of focus group interviews were conducted. The following table provides the

procedure adopted for data collection.

TABLE 1

The Data Collection Process

Time	Data Collected
Week 1~ Week 5 ~ (preliminary stage)	Introduction; Getting to know each other; simple dramatic activity with textbook given; practicing writing comments on peer work; doing research.
Week 6~ Week 7 (intermediate stage)	Reading aloud; writing a script; practicing research
Week 8	Mid-term test
Week 9	Presentation topics were given; Brainstorming started
Week 10	Brainstorming & structuring presentation
Week 11	Teacher feedback on students' drama script
Week 12	Teacher's written feedback & students' revision task
Week 13	Conference with students for revised draft & students' revision task
Week 14	Rehearsing drama; Teacher feedback on students' rehearsal;
Week 15	Making UCC (students)
Week 16 (production)	Presentation (final product) Survey questionnaires; focus group in-depth interview

2. Participants and Sampling

The teacher-researchers taught 120 students ranged from basic to intermediate English class. However, the participants of survey questionnaire were 90 students (mostly first year students) and twelve students volunteered to participate in two in-depth focus group interviews after their presentation regardless of their English levels.

The class met for four hours per week over sixteen weeks. Students were required to make a drama-based group presentation as a part of their final exam and the topics of the presentation were given based on the textbook students were learning, *Qskills for success 3: Reading and Writing*. The researchers were able to collect students' video clips of their presentation.

TABLE 2

Information of Interviewee

Students	Gender	Grade	Major	Self-reported level
S1	F	1	Ethics Education	Beginner
S2	M	1	Engineering	Beginner
S3	M	1	Engineering	Beginner
S4	M	1	Engineering	Beginner
S5	F	3	Engineering	Intermediate
S6	F	1	Ethics Education	Beginner
S7	M	2	Agriculture	Beginner
S8	M	1	Agriculture	Beginner
S9	M	2	Engineering	Intermediate
S10	M	1	Engineering	Beginner
S11	M	1	Agriculture	Intermediate
S12	F	1	Engineering	Beginner

3. Context

The aim of this course was to enhance students' speaking skills and give them a chance to practice speaking. Most of students self reported their language proficiency level in the survey questionnaire: most of students reported they were in the beginner level in speaking, while many of the students responded that their listening skills were average or good. The class was conducted only in English because of the school policy of *'Teaching English through English'*.

Students were given three presentation topics extracted from the textbook (see Appendix 1) from the 9th week (after mid-term) and required to make a group presentation for their final exam.

The whole course was designed into three stages: preliminary, intermediate, and production. This course design was based on the study of Miccoli (2003). During first five weeks, the following activities were focused: getting to know each other, role plays, writing (modifying) a script based on the textbook, writing comments on peers' work, and searching topic-related information. In the intermediate stage, students learned more about reading aloud, not just reading a given text but saying with voice variation. Students were also asked to write a longer scenario with group members. They also started to learn how to do research information they want. Most of Korean students use Korean portal engine such as 'Naver' or 'Daum' when getting information and then they try to translate Korean into English; however, the teacher-researcher asked them to google in English from the beginning to get exposure to authentic English environment. Students felt very unfamiliar with this. After mid-term exam, students were faced final stage – production stage. At this point, final stage was divided into several processes from choosing presentation topic, brainstorming, to group presentation (See the table 1).

4. Sources of Data and Data Analysis

1) Focus Group Interviews

After the presentation as for a final examination, twelve students participated in two focus group interview sessions. The aims of these interviews were to explore the issues raised in the research questions about impact of dramatization-based activities on students' speaking skills, and autonomous learning.

Since many studies (e.g., Benson, 2006; Carson, 2012; Fine & Collins, 2010; Haugh, 2006) showed that drama activities in learning English improves students' speaking skill growth, as well as development of autonomy, in this sense, the qualitative interviews allowed the researchers to explore the respondents' perspectives (Patton, 2002) that could not be obtained from questionnaires such as their feelings, intentions, and thoughts. All focus group interviews were fully recorded and transcribed.

2) Questionnaire

The survey questionnaire contained both closed and open-ended questions, aiming at two different purposes: (i) to self report the students' English proficiency levels, their learning background of English, expectations and needs from the course; (ii) to explore the students' drama activities experiences, actual academic benefits they obtained through drama-based presentation, and practical suggestions after the course.

5-point Likert scale was used in the study (Dörnyei, 2001) and the questionnaires were developed based on Little, Ridley, and Ushioda's study (2012). In addition, open-ended questions were adopted in order to procure students' individual and detailed impressions about the drama-based activity.

3) Data Analysis

A data-driven inductive approach was used in this study. Consequently, the impact outcome of drama-based activity on learner autonomy emerged from two sources: (i) teachers' observation and interview data; what participant students themselves say about impact; and (ii) the survey questionnaire; what students perceive the drama-based activity in English class.

The researchers confirmed and developed patterns, themes, categories emerged inductively from analysis of students' interview data (Patton, 1987). More specifically, both survey questionnaire and interview data were used to generate themes of general experience of drama-based activity, while only in-depth focus-group interview data was

used for analyzing learner autonomy since autonomy is neither objectively measurable nor observable.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section structures the findings and discussion into two main parts: (i) general analysis of students' drama-based language learning experience; ii) the impact of drama-based activity on learner autonomy.

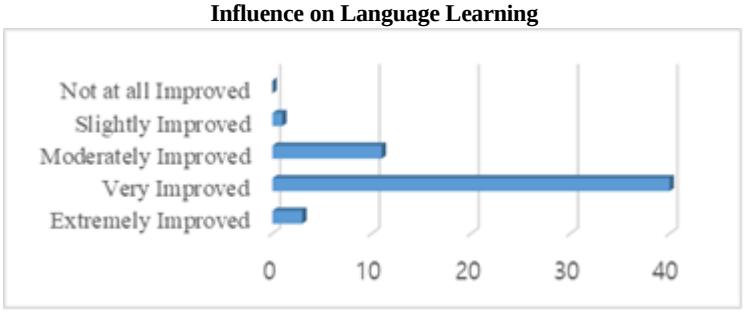
1. Overview of Drama-based Learning Experience

1) Overall Evaluation Regarding Drama-based Activity

Regarding the degree of the influence of drama-based activity on language learning, forty three students (78%) among fifty five responded that through drama-based activity, their language skills have been extremely or very improved. As Figure 1 shows, only twelve students replied that their language skills have been moderately or slightly improved. No one denied the positive influence of drama-based activity on language learning.

FIGURE 1

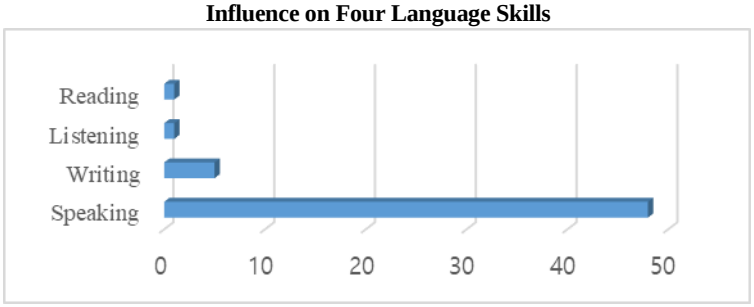
Influence on Language Learning



Regarding the questionnaire about the skill which has been improved the most among four language skills, forty eight (87%) students pointed out that through drama-based activities, their speaking skill has been improved the most compared to other skills as Figure 2 displays. Drama-based activity had a positive impact on promoting speaking skill.

FIGURE 2

Influence on Four Language Skills



To analyze the reason for the effects of dramatic activity for speaking skills, the researchers would like to refer to the statement of Hanauer. He (2012, p. 106) emphasized the importance of "living, thinking, experiencing and feeling person at the center of the language learning process" and "make language learning a personally contextualized, meaningful activity for the learner" (cited in Littlewood, 2014, p. 358). Other authors such as Maley and Duff (1978) also proposed that linking language and drama is one of the effective ways to improve communicative competence. Indeed, students were put in the situation where they should personally contextualize the content and use English while making drama-based presentation.

One of the promising strategy for promoting L2 oral fluency and pronunciation is to use drama in EFL program (Galante & Thomson, 2017). During the focus group interviews, some students appreciated the role of drama in encouraging communication and acquisition of oral skills. Providing chances to speak for students through drama-based language teaching played an important role of promoting learners' speaking skills.

> Other English classes are oriented towards reading and listening, but in this class, it was good to have opportunities to speak. (S4)

> It was good to enhance speaking skills in this class. (S3)

Through drama, students especially engaged in practicing real-life, authentic language in the classroom. Drama played the role of bridging the gap between dialogues on written script and natural usage (Davies, 1990). It could help students to use language in context and experience in real-life situations.

> When we act, we can learn language in context. English for college scholastic ability test focuses on context-reduced vocabulary. But in this class, through acting, I could

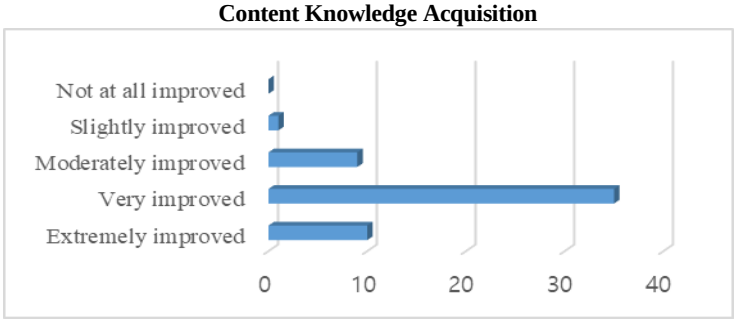
learn to use of words appropriate for the context. (S2)

It helped me a lot, to speak in front of other people. In other words, using language suited for the context. Thinking about language appropriate for context helps me a lot. (S3)

Concerning with the question whether drama-based activity has an impact on acquiring content knowledge in Figure 3, forty five (81%) students replied that was very or extremely helpful for them to acquire content knowledge.

FIGURE 3

Content Knowledge Acquisition



Twenty four (43%) students selected group collaboration as the crucial factor as to the most influential factor on improving content knowledge acquisition. Knowledge construction can be facilitated through interacting with other students in collaborative activities (Vygotsky, 1962). Thirteen students selected learners' research as the most important factor, and 9 students considered background knowledge about contents as the most essential aspect in improving the content knowledge acquisition as Figure 4 shows.

FIGURE 4

Influential Factors on Content Knowledge Acquisition



Around 46% of the respondents revealed that the best of part of drama-based activity is their experience of English presentation, and 29% of them selected group collaboration as the best part of it as Figure 5 shows. Presenting in English and collaboration with peers were the strongest aspects in drama-based activity.

FIGURE 5

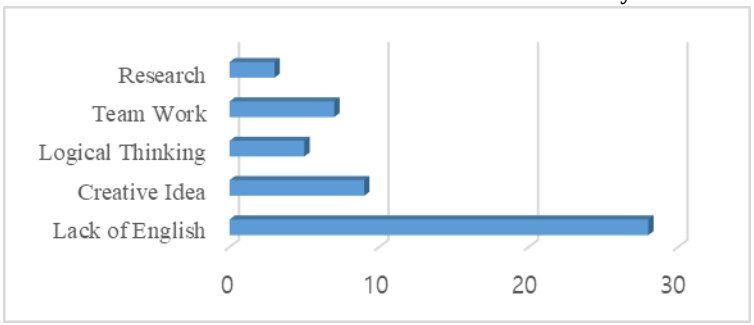
The Best Part of Drama Based Activity



However, ironically, more than half of the respondents revealed that the most difficult part in drama-based activity was their lack of English. Even though presenting in English was their favorite part of drama-based activity, the respondents still seemed to feel difficulties in delivering content knowledge in English. Figure 6 reveals the result of the responses to the questionnaire.

FIGURE 6

The Most Difficult Part in Drama Based Activity



2) Drama and Learner Autonomy

Through in-depth interview data, this section describes to the extent which drama-based

presentation affected students' autonomous learning. In particular, the data showed three main characteristics of autonomous learners: (i) learners are key agents of their learning; (ii) enjoyment of learning could increase their motivation to learn; and (iii) collaboration with their peers promotes autonomy.

(1) Learner Empowerment

Drama activities have "many strategies to help learners develop enquiry skills to encourage negotiation, understanding, and creativity" (Zhang, Hwang, Tseng, & Chen, 2019, p. 717). The drama-based activity in this study provided opportunities making students engage in meaningful negotiation with peers in which students felt responsible for their learning as a key agent in the class, this ultimately leading to promote student-centered and autonomous learning. One interviewee defined a learner responsibility for his/her learning as follows:

> Being responsible for our learning means participating in class as much as possible. (S4)

All groups were given a chance to choose their presentation topic among three topics given. Most of interviewees showed positive responses about selecting their presentation topic by themselves because it encouraged them to take initiatives and to bring their personal subject-matter knowledge into their presentation. Students said:

> It was not a one-way process to choose a presentation topic. Three topics were given to us and the teacher said "you can choose what you feel interested rather than already-chosen topic by a teacher". We were able to have a chance to think and share with other group members. All of group members gave their own ideas; in fact, this process encouraged collaborative learning and self-directed atmosphere. (S2)

> The process of choosing a topic made us active and voluntary participation in the class. Since we chose a topic through lots of group discussions, we were responsible for our drama-based presentation. If a topic was given by a teacher without reflecting our ideas, students who were not interested in the topic would not participate in group work. (S7)

These responses seemed to help students engage in motivational and initiative working, which facilitate a sense of responsibility to learners. This is consistent with Fine and

Colins' (2011) view in that learners enjoyed being given a choice of activities because choice made them feel involved and also responsible.

The following statement of Legenhausen (1999) supports the relationship between students' choice of their learning and autonomy well. In his research, the Danish children have been exposed to a different kind of classroom culture that promotes "autonomous learning, where they pursue activities of their own choice and according to their own needs and interests" (Legenhausen, 1999, p. 181, cited in Ushioda, 2011, p. 11).

Further analysis of the interview data showed that while some learners will be more independent in their learning, a few of the learners less preferred of selecting their presentation topic by themselves. One student said:

> I am not sure that this activity is meaningful. I am worried about getting through the course because we spend much time on deciding what to do in group discussion. Of course, it is ok…but I think top-down process is sometimes more beneficial than bottom-up decision. (S8)

As Benson (2006) stated, it might be true that Asian students feel uncomfortable with a group-oriented, self-directed approaches because 'autonomy' emphasizes the value of "active participation and individualism" (p. 25). Nevertheless, the majority thought that being given choice helped them to be more responsible for their study and more autonomous learner and one-way process of teaching found in traditional teaching method likely lowered students' initiatives. This eventually would contribute to a decrease in learner autonomy.

(2) Learner Enjoyment

A long-term and continuous L2 learning can take place when the learning context offers "in addition to cognitively adequate instructional practices, sufficient pleasure and inspiration to construct a motivating classroom climate" (Dörnyei, 2007, p.719). Furthermore, Dörnyei and Csizer (1998) emphasized the importance of creating "a pleasant, relaxed atmosphere in the classroom where students feel comfortable in the class" in the Ten Commandments for motivating language learners (p.215). This enjoyable context will enable them to express their opinions without stress and will undoubtedly encourage their active learning as well as their emotional development.

> Drama-based presentation is very new to me! At first, it was a big burden, but I came to enjoy working together with group members in dramatization. It was very

> beneficial in terms that this activity enabled me to extend my content knowledge and made me very attentive in the class. In other classes, in fact, I lost my concentration after finishing my presentation. However, I actively participated in other groups' presentation in this class, asking questions (in English, wow). If I felt bored in this project, I would be a very passive recipient as usual. (S1)

As the interview quote shows, this active participation in the day-to-day learning processes will develop their personal autonomy and successful foreign language learning (Benson, 2006).

> I think this activity was very useful for improving critical thinking ability and independent learning skill. I really enjoyed self-directed learning in this class. I felt like this was a western style class, not like Korean typical class. In other classes, we usually memorize and take a test. However, in this class, we need to think, research, share ideas with members, write a script for presentation, presented, and finally got questions and feedback from a teacher and peers. This process is very self-directed and made me motivate study hard. (S4)

Many researchers (e.g., Daskalovskaa, Gudevab, & Ivanovskaa, 2012; Fraser, 2012; Harmer, 2001; Ur, 1996) argued that learner's interest and enjoyment can enhance learners' motivation. In particular, Harmer (2001) addressed that "one way of increasing learners' motivation to learn the language is by using a variety of interesting topics and activities in order to keep learners engaged and interested in what they are doing in the classroom" (p. 54). Ur (1996) also pointed out that "it is in the arousing of interest, perhaps, that teachers invest most effort, and get most immediate and noticeable pay-off in terms of learner motivation" (p. 280). Furthermore, Maley and Duff (1982) stated that students' "enjoyment comes from imaginative personal involvement, not from the sense of having successfully carried out someone else's instructions" (p. 13).

The following interview data of the study are completely in line with the claims of various researchers considering the importance of learner enjoyment to increase motivation. One of students commented:

> I found the class interesting. I used to lose concentration easily in other classes. While making UCC, we laughed a lot and had many NG scenes, which led us to practice English more. At first, many of group members were very inattentive and passive, but many came to be changed to be active through self-directed class. (S3)

This increased motivation plays a key role in shaping learner autonomy and self-motivation is considered as a crucial factor in autonomy (Dörnyei, 2001; Ushioda, 1996). According to Kao and O'Neill (1988), drama encourages self-confidence and reduces learner anxiety. This reduced anxiety makes learners to take risks or participate in activities Krashen (1981, cited in Carson, 2012). Compared to traditional teaching methods such as teacher-directed class, drama-based activities are much more motivating and fun; thus, it leads to learners' active participation and retention (Pryor, 2018). Indeed, the drama-based presentation in the study seemed to be a transformative way of drawing learners into enjoyment or interest unlike other traditional language learning method, providing an opportunity for students to share their ideas, strengths, and subject-matter knowledge as well as to get involved learners within the context of English class. The following interview quote illustrates this well:

> If the teacher taught English in a traditional mode such as emphasis on explicit knowledge of grammatical rules, I wouldn't find the drama-based presentation interesting at all. Instead, she made us do research and explore information related to the presentation topic by ourselves. This was very unfamiliar to me at first, but as time went, the knowledge obtained from the process of drama-based presentation last long. Finally, we acted it out in English. (S10)

3) Learner Interdependence

Researchers (Hsueh, 2008; Larsen-Freeman & Long, 1991, cited in Fine & Collins, 2010) emphasized how integrating drama activity into an EFL curriculum helps establish an autonomous and social-relatedness environment. Socially situated processes such as peer relations influence in shaping individual motivation. In this respect, "social relatedness" (Deci, 1996) is considered a crucial factor to motivate learners (Kohonen, 2001). Asked to reflect on what was the most valuable learning of drama-based presentation, many interviewees commented the importance of collaboration during group work:

> I think group work was very useful. My group members helped each other from A to Z. We had to collaborate each other because the topic was very difficult to catch up by individual. We had our own roles and could have lots of synergies when working together. Actually, we spent lots of time and energy on preparing presentation, but our group members were voluntarily participated in the group work. (S2)

As illustrated by the comment, “the social unit of the classroom is clearly instrumental in developing and supporting the motivation of the individual”. (Ushioda, 2003, p. 93) This is line up with Deci (1996) in that motivation itself needs to come *“from within”*. In addition, peer-related interpersonal relation is regarded as crucial to increase autonomous learning. In other words, a collective resource and social support become individual motivation. The teacher-researchers had been concerned that students might see group work as a chance for only having fun; however, most of students responded that they found the advantages of working together with their peers on a presentation. For example:

> The task given to the group was not easy; however, all group members did their roles well…and if I had to do by myself, I couldn’t have survived in the class. (S1)

> Actually, my all group members – six people - were studying different majors. The topic we chose was about IOT. Someone who was majored in science took the responsibility for content part; another one was in charge of language part etc. All group members took the initiative in developing their roles. It was a great experience to cooperate with members, which enabled us to work autonomously. The teacher didn’t give us one-way knowledge and we discussed everything together. (S11)

However, concerns were arisen from other learners. One student commented:

> Actually, my group…team work was not very collaborative. We were too different […]. There is a risk that even though I want to join another group we have no choice since the group was decided randomly. This is group presentation, so team collaboration is very important. (S2)

Despite different preference of group work from learner to learner, it becomes clear that the nature of group dynamic was an instrumental factor in determining whether learners became autonomous. Some students showed negative attitudes towards group work, but there was a common tendency for most students to encourage the development of learner autonomy through drama-based presentation.

V. CONCLUSION

Studies exploring the connection between dramatic performance activities and language learner autonomy have shown that “drama-based activity and the development of learner

autonomy are inextricably linked" (Fraser, 2010, p. 1).

This study has shown that students derived clear benefits from experiencing drama-based activity. Considering general learning style of Asian students, there might have been some impedimental elements to do drama-based activities such as hesitation of active participation or group-oriented learning. Nevertheless, it has been demonstrated that most students in the study valued their English drama-based activity in terms of lots of opportunities to practice speaking and development of emotional sphere. In particular, the benefits in self-motivation and learner autonomy are crucial educational achievements. At the same time, the students experienced a sense of liberation, responsibility, and interests during the class, and their own discoveries with peers motivated them to strive for greater self-initiatives in speaking and autonomy in the class.

Despite the benefits of drama-based activity, it is still challenging for teachers to include dramatic performance in the class. As for the reason, it might be worth mentioning that the teacher-researcher, at first, felt unwilling to encourage drama-based presentation, for fear that "bottom-stream or letting go[1] will result in chaos in the class as described in Fine and Collins (2010). There is a common misconception about autonomy: one of the biggest misconceptions is that, as Fine and Collins (ibid, p. 71) stated, "encouraging autonomy implies letting go in the sense of relinquishing all control in the classroom". In this respect, teachers need to consider the balance between encouragement of students' self-initiatives and constructive criticism to maximize autonomous class. Teachers should be also aware that teachers' main role is that of helpful facilitators offering guidance and support in accordance with students' individual differences and their needs. Finally, for the teachers who are looking for a way to improve students' language skills and motivate them, the researchers would like to recommend to experience drama-based activity in English class, since "the classroom might be a place where conditions can be created by contrivance to make language real and learning more effective" (Widdowson, 2003, p. 144, cited in Fraser, 2012, p. 1).

Considering that there has been little research on the interrelation between drama-based activity and autonomy in Korean educational contexts, it is recommended that further research should focus on teacher's awareness of the importance of learner autonomy on the positive impacts of drama-based activity on student's autonomous learning since teacher can effect learner motivation (Pekkanliegel, 2009).

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[1] these terms are borrowed from Fine & Collins (2010, p.122).

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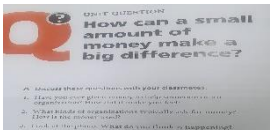
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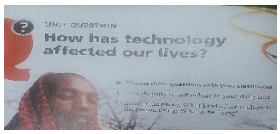
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APPENDIX A

Presentation Topics

1. How has technology affected our lives?
2. Make an advertisement!
3. How can a small amount of money (or small behavior) make a big difference?







APPENDIX B

Survey Questionnaire

1. What is a positive aspect of a drama-based activity in general English class?
   ① Obtaining topic-related knowledge by connecting content with drama activity
   ② Improving English ability through a chance of being exposed to English
   ③ Collaborating with strong students and weak students
   ④ Leading to participation of all students and their each role
   ⑤ Others

2. Do you think your English ability has been improved through drama-based presentation?

Very improved	Improved	Moderately improved	Slightly improved	Not at all improved

2-1. If improved, which part of English have been improved most?

	Most improved	Improved	Moderately improved	Slightly improved	Not at all improved
Reading					

Writing (e.g., through writing a script)					
Listening					
Speaking (e.g., through English presentation or drama activity)					
Vocabulary					

3. Do you think your content (topic-related) knowledge has been improved through drama-based presentation?

Very improved	Improved	Moderately improved	Slightly improved	Not at all improved

3-1. If so, which factors do contribute to the improvement of content knowledge?

① Choose in order.
② Background knowledge
③ Interaction with peers (or peer collaboration)
④ Repetitive practice
⑤ Research
⑥ Vocabulary
Others

_____

4. Do you think there are difficulties of English presentation?

① Yes ② No

5. If so, what do you think the reason? Choose in order.

① Research ② Teamwork
③ Logical thinking ④ Creative ideas
⑤ Lack of English

6. What is the best part in drama-based learning?
   ① Group collaboration
   ② Research
   ③ Learning from other groups
   ④ Acquiring content knowledge
   ⑤ Experiencing English presentation

7. Are there any changes about English learning through experiencing drama-based presentation compared to presentation you used to make?

   _____

8. Are there any changes about your attitudes (such as motivation, self-directed learning, confidence etc) about English learning through experiencing drama-based presentation?

   _____

Examples in: English
Applicable Languages: English
Applicable Levels: Tertiary

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Received: January 25, 2021
Reviewed: February 26, 2021
Revised version received: March 9, 2021