

The Effect of Drama Themed Activities on Language Listening Skills among 4-5 Years Children

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Abstract: Childhood is a critical stage for language learning and listening is an important part of language skills. This study was conducted in two parallel middle school classes in a kindergarten in Mianyang City over a period of eight weeks. The study centered on children's drama themed activities and aimed to explore how such engagement can improve young children's language skills. The study meticulously observed the effects of interactive and imaginative play in a dramatic environment on young children's listening and overall language development. These activities were designed to be immersive and engaging for children, encouraging them to actively listen, respond creatively and engage in collaborative storytelling. The researchers paid particular attention to how these activities helped children expand their vocabulary, improve articulation, and develop an understanding of complex language structures. This research contributes to the understanding of the importance of early childhood education for language development, especially through creative and expressive arts such as drama.

1. Introduction

Children's drama is the most important literary instrument for children as a form of children's literature. It is crucial in kindergarten teaching activities. The Chinese Ministry of Education's document "Guidelines for Kindergarten Education" [1]. Currently, kindergartens in China have begun to pay attention to children's drama and use it as an important instructional approach to improve children's overall talents [2]. There are many ways for children's drama to enter the kindergarten teaching field, but theme activities through children's drama are also a very effective way of inorganic children's drama. This study will look at the impact of drama-themed kid activities on listening abilities in 4- to 5-year-old kids. This project will further the general development of young children's language skills through fieldwork and analysis of activities with a children's drama theme. It will also offer important practical advice for kindergarten instruction.

2. Problem Statement

This study will provide a preliminary understanding of the current status of the development of 4–5-year-old children's listening ability; conduct an intervention of young children's drama themed educational activities in an experimental class to explore the effects of the activities on the listening ability of the experimental class; and explore educational suggestions to promote the development of 4–5-year-old children's expressive listening.

Q1: Is there an impact of identifying early childhood drama thematic education activities on the development of listening skills of middle school children?

Q2: Is there a difference in the impact of early childhood drama thematic education activities on the development of vocabulary listening skills of middle school children?

Q3: Is there a difference in the impact of early childhood drama theme-based educational activities on the development of sentence listening skills in middle school children?

3. Literature Review

Themed teaching activities have grown in importance in Chinese kindergartens in recent years. Children's drama-themed activities have also drawn the attention of many scholars who are carefully examining thematic activities. A study of the role of teachers using five drama-themed activities as an example found that the relationship between teachers and students is dialogic and creative, and that the development of such a relationship enables students to establish a peaceful relationship with teachers, generating a heart-to-heart dialogue, colliding with sparks of life-giving colours, and allowing students to grow in a loving environment [3]. This dimension places an emphasis on Chinese kindergarten ability to choose and utilise Chinese terminology properly, as well as their capacity to describe objects and convey ideas and feelings [4]. The stage children's drama paradigm, the drama application teaching paradigm, the drama creation paradigm based on dramatic expression, and the development drama paradigm are three levels at which the many paradigms that have successively arisen in Chinese preschool children's theatre education are examined [5]. Theatre for children's development allows young children to experiment, think, and represent themselves via theatrical activity in various roles on show and off, which in turn fosters the development of their skills.

Children's verbal expression is a continuous process of learning from external language input, incorporating new language content into existing language structures, and then expressing their own desires through localization and nonverbal cues [6]. Two essential components of a kid's listening abilities—using vocabulary and forming whole sentences—have a significant impact on how well a youngster can listening language by the time they are 4-5 years old. Being able to talk or explain oneself effectively is a key sign for determining whether children's listening ability has evolved in Chinese kindergartens, where it is seen as a key criteria of language competency.

4. Methodology

4.1 Quasi-experiments

Educational experiments are mainly carried out in the state of the natural environment of education and teaching, because students live in a specific classroom and school environment, and the corresponding educational phenomena will not appear without this specific social environment. Therefore, educational experiments cannot be separated from educational teaching practice activities (Pei Tianna, 2000). In this study, a 10-week educational experiment was conducted in two parallel intermediate classes in public kindergartens in Mian yang City, where experimental and

control classes were randomly selected. The researcher rationally controlled or created certain conditions according to the purpose of the study, which was to investigate whether children's drama thematic activities have an effect on the development of young children's listening skills. The study was divided into four stages: preparation stage, pre-test stage, experimental intervention stage, post-test stage, and finally data processing and analysis. Two parallel intermediate classes of 90 children aged 4-5 years were selected from a public kindergarten and all the children were randomly divided into experimental and control classes whose parents and teachers were willing to cooperate with the study.

4.2 Data Collection

The researcher will communicate with the sample kindergartens in advance, and after obtaining permission from the government department and support from the kindergartens, the researcher will spend two weeks familiarizing himself/herself with the children, selecting the subjects, preparing the experimental materials, and selecting and calibrating the measurement instruments; the measurement materials will be used to make a basic assessment of the children's expressive abilities, so all subjects will be pre-tested, and the experiment will not begin until it has been determined that there is no difference in the expressive abilities of the subjects. The quasi-experimental approach combines pre-tests and post-tests, allowing researchers to make between-group comparisons without random assignment.

5. Results and discussion

In writing the results section, the researcher used SPSS data processing software to test the pretest scores of the listening ability of the children in the experimental and control classes. The purpose of the test analysis is to find out whether there is a significant difference in the level of development of the children's expressive ability between the two groups and to carry out an independent samples t-test of the children's pretest expressive ability in the experimental and control groups. As shown in Table 1.

Table 1: T-Test Post Scores Of Children's listening Ability

Independent t test				
	Groups (Mean ±Std. Deviation)		t	p
	Experimental Group (n=45)	Control Group (n=45)		
listening Skill	48.16 ±6.37	39.50 ±7.21	8.349	0.000****
* p<0.1 ** p<0.05 *** p<0.01 **** p<0.001				

Based on the independent t-test results provided, we can draw the following conclusions: There is a significant difference in the post-test scores regarding listening skills between the experimental and control groups ($t = 8.349$, $p < 0.001$ ****). This indicates that the mean oral skills score of the experimental group (48.16 ± 6.37) was significantly higher than the mean score of the control group (39.50 ± 7.21). This result indicates that the treatment or intervention received by the experimental group seems to have a positive impact on the improvement of listening skills. This difference is highly statistically significant as the p-value is less than 0.001, which means that we can say with a high degree of confidence that the improvement in the experimental group is not due to purely random differences. The findings of this study emphasize the effectiveness of the intervention received by the experimental group in improving listening skills.

Table 2: T-Test Post Scores of Children's Vocabulary listening

Independent t test				
	Groups (Mean±Std. Deviation)		t	p
	Experimental Group (n=45)	Control Group (n=45)		
Vocabulary listening	21.88±3.92	16.46±3.50	3.688	0.000****
* p<0.1 ** p<0.05 *** p<0.01 **** p<0.001				

From Table 2, it can be seen that regarding the statistical analysis of the spoken vocabulary scores on the posttest, there was a significant difference between the experimental and control groups ($t = 3.688$, $p < 0.001$ ****). This indicates that the mean score of the experimental group (21.88 ± 3.92) was significantly higher than the mean score of the control group (16.46 ± 3.50). The results show that the treatment or intervention received by the experimental group had a positive impact in improving vocabulary and listening skills. This difference is highly statistically significant because the p-value is less than 0.001, which means that the improvement in the experimental group was not caused by random differences. The mean post-test vocabulary listening score of the experimental group was 21.88 while the mean of the control group was 16.46.

Table 3: T-Test Post Scores of Children's Sentence listening

Independent t test				
	Groups (Mean±Std. Deviation)		t	p
	Experimental Group (n=45)	Control Group (n=45)		
Sentence listening	22.28±4.79	17.04±3.49	5.470	0.000****
* p<0.1 ** p<0.05 *** p<0.01 **** p<0.001				

Table 3 shows that the mean score of the experimental group after the sentence listening test was 22.28 while the mean score of the control group was 17.04. The mean score of the experimental group was significantly higher than that of the control group, which indicated that the experimental group performed better in sentence listening. The standard deviation for the experimental group was 4.79 compared to 3.49 for the control group. The larger standard deviation implies that the scores in the experimental group were more dispersed, i.e., some of the participants performed well while others performed relatively poorly in terms of sentence listening ability.

6. Conclusion

Over the course of eight weeks, children's drama-themed activities were used in this study. The children learn thematic activities including traditional festivals, environmental preservation, and other issues during the course of these eight weeks. For the experimental group, there were eight children's drama themed activities, and for the control group, there were eight conventional language activities. Every theme activity complied with the guidelines provided by the Chinese Ministry of Education. Language proficiency questions from the pretest and post-test were used to get the necessary data. Based on Piaget's constructionist theory, drama education theory, and zone of nearest development theory, the researchers created an intervention.

6.1 Pedagogical Implications of the Study

In terms of children's listening ability, the results of the study showed that the experimental group who participated in children's theater-themed educational activities demonstrated a significant advantage in the post-experimental vocabulary listening test. Their mean vocabulary

listening scores were significantly higher than those of the control group who did not participate in this educational activity. This difference was highly statistically significant, which means that the children's theater themed educational activity helped to expand the children's vocabulary and at the same time improved their spoken language skills. This indicates that the children in the experimental group showed a significant advantage in vocabulary listening skills. Sentence-listening also showed a significant difference in the 4-5 year old children's ability to speak both words and sentences, indicating that the children's theater theme activity had an impact on multiple elements of the 4-5 year old children's language skills and had the advantage of achieving a breakthrough in their skills in a shorter period of time.

6.2 Theoretical Implications for the Study

The "zone of nearest development" notion put forward by Vygotsky has significant effects on how children grow. Children may learn in a fun and beneficial way with programmed centered around children's theatre. Children may enjoy linguistic expression and allow their imaginations free freedom by engaging with the characters and stories. Children are more likely to join and engage in language activities when they have a pleasant emotional experience along with language acquisition. They are eager to actively engage instead of being averse to learning, which is crucial for fostering motivation and an interest in lifelong learning. Children's drama-themed activities offer a distinctive learning environment where social contact and teamwork foster children's imagination and creativity in addition to fostering language development. The Drama Theory A strong basis for the creation of kid-friendly drama-themed activities is provided by education. By insisting the fundamental ideas of the theory, we may design interesting and successful learning opportunities for kids. Children are encouraged to actively engage in the learning process through the emphasis on active learning in drama education. Engaging children in interactive exercises, role-plays, and debates encourages active engagement and maximizes the impact of the activities. Youngsters who actively participate in language learn more about listening, listening, and comprehending.

6.3 Recommendations for Future Research

Future studies can investigate in further detail the mechanisms by which linguistic capacity is impacted by children's theatre theme activities, as well as the elements that influence them. To obtain a more thorough understanding of the role of drama-themed activities in shaping language proficiency, it could be beneficial to investigate, for instance, the differences in the effects of various types of drama activities, children of different ages, and drama activities in different sociocultural contexts.

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