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IMPROVING EFL SPEAKING SKILLS WITH DRAMA TECHNIQUES: A SYSTEMATIC REVIEW

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ABSTRACT

Improving speaking skills and focusing on fluency and accuracy while speaking in the English as a foreign language classroom have been an important priority of recent research. Drama techniques have been an active part and tool in this aim since the 1980s, following the milestone publication of Alan Maley and Alan Duff on using drama techniques in teaching EFL appeared. The aim of this paper is to investigate the availability of contemporary research findings and theoretical knowledge on the usage of drama techniques in EFL for the purpose of improving EFL speaking skills. Based on a systematic review, articles and research papers available at two scientific platforms, namely ResearchGate.net and Academia.edu are compared and contrasted.

KEYWORDS

drama techniques, speaking skills, research articles, systematic review, EFL

INTRODUCTION

Drama techniques have been used successfully in teaching EFL since the 1980s, after the publication of Drama Techniques in Language Learning in 1978 by Alan Maley and Alan Duff. The book is often referred to as a highly influential text, a classic in foreign language teaching and was revised and published several times. A revised edition was released in 1982 and a new, third edition came out in 2005. Scholars and educators were inspired by the ideas presented in the book and were encouraged to implement drama techniques (e.g. mirroring, miming, frozen image, improvisation) during teaching.

With the arrival of innovative approaches and methods as well as the increasing significance of neuroscience in foreign language learning, special attention has been paid to the incorporation of drama in improving speaking skills in the EFL classroom. More and more studies focus on the benefits of drama and report on the efficiency of its practical implementation in various contexts.

The main aim of this study is to explore how the publications of two selected databases present research findings related to drama techniques used in EFL classes to develop speaking skills. The databases used in the study are ResearchGate.net[40] and Academia.edu[41]. These have been selected because of their accessibility and open-access articles. The two databases are widely

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[40] ResearchGate.net database available at: https://www.researchgate.net (last accessed: 29 Sept 2025)

[41] Academia.edu database available at: https://www.academia.edu (last accessed: 29 Sept 2025)

used among scholars and students in Slovakia because they provide fast and free access to scientific articles. The main goal of the systematic review conducted during this study was to examine the nature of studies presented by the investigated articles, the target groups the studies were working with, the type of methods applied and the presented findings.

Drama techniques in EFL: A systematic review

The study focuses only on articles that were written in English language (or are available in English language in the two selected databases) and contain experimental and empirical research rather than theoretical. The focus is on articles that, in addition to the previous criteria, discuss how drama techniques can be used to promote speaking skills within EFL classes. Based on the focus of our study, the following key words were used in the search of articles to reduce their number and make the analysis more focused: drama techniques, English, speaking skills. To maintain relevance to current research, articles reporting studies conducted over the past two decades were prioritised, i. e. The comparison of the selected articles was carried out based on a thematic analysis considering their methodological quality as well.
While investigating the articles found in the two databases, the study focused on the following topics: the educational level and number of the participants, geographical location of the study conducted in the articles, research methodology, (qualitative, quantitative or mixed-method), possible research measuring instruments and their findings presented in the article. At the beginning of the study, the following research questions have been formulated:

RQ1: Are there any differences between the selected articles in the two databases regarding amount and quality?

RQ2: Are there any differences between the research methods and the participants of the studies presented in the articles in the two databases?

RQ3: How much do the results of the studies presented in the articles examined in the two databases differ?

Description of the selected articles

The study focused on two different databases: ResearchGate.net and Academia.edu. Altogether 34 articles were selected based on the previously mentioned criteria (key words, language, topics and research focus), 29 articles from ResearchGate.net and 5 articles from Academia.edu. The reasons for the large difference between the number of the selected articles are that the searches performed on the website of ResearchGate.net showed a much more systematic and clearer picture and order of articles based on the selected criteria, and evidently there was a higher number of relevant articles uploaded there than on Academia.edu. When selecting articles, it was necessary to pay attention to the fact that the titles of the articles were sometimes misleading, they did not always fit into the selected criteria, even though the key words and the language were previously set in the search programme. Based on the set criteria, articles were filtered so that only those were included in the research that are in English language (or are available in English language as well), deal with the application of drama techniques in experimental classroom research and focus on enhancing speaking skills. The search yielded more than 10 000 results, with relevant articles appearing on the first 10+ pages. The same relevant articles appeared several times on the following pages in the case of Academia.edu, together with articles that deal only with the theory of enhancing speaking skills with drama techniques and non-relevant articles (the second part is also true for the search on

ResearchGate.net website). The selected articles are listed in Table 1 and follow each other in the same order they were listed by the searches on the websites. All the articles were given a code (RG to articles found on ResearchGate and a number, and AE to articles found on Academia.edu and a number), which are listed in Table1, and will be used further during this study. Table 1 provides a summary of the details relevant to this study.

Table1

Code	**Article info**	**Participants, place of research**	**Data collection**
RG1	Mugirenza, E. – Habintwali, A. – Kanyambo, J.D. – Niyibizi, E.: How Drama Enhances English-Speaking Skills: The Role of Drama in Teaching English-Speaking Skills in Selected Secondary Schools in Kigali City, Rwanda, 2024, African Journal of Empirical Research 5(2): 746-772, DOI: 10.51867/ajernet.5.2.66	100 students, 4 teachers Secondary schools, Rwanda	Questionnaire, interviews, control and target group
RG 2	Makhija, N.- Patil, A.: An Interview to Explore the Importance and Integration of DBP (Drama-based Pedagogy) in Enhancing the English-Speaking Skills of the Undergraduate Students, 2025, The Creative Launcher 10(3): 92-111, DOI: 10.53032/tcl.2025.10.3.11	30 undergraduate students, University, India	Students' response, interview, qualitative and quantitative data
RG 3	Almutairi, A.G. – Alfarwan, S.: Employing Drama Techniques in the Classroom to Improve the Speaking Skills of EFL University Students, 2024, Arab World English Journal 15(4): 311-327, DOI: 10.24093/awej/vol15no4.20	60 students, University, Saudi Arabia	Quasi-experimental research design, one class two groups
RG 4	Dawoud, L. – Hasim, Z. – Rashid, M.S.: Exploring, students perspectives ont he use of drama techniques in EFL speaking lessons, 2024, Malaysian Online Journal of Educational Sciences (MOJES) 12(1): 29-37, DOI: 10.22452/mojes.vol12no1.3	Sixth graders Elementary school, Palestine	semi-structured interviews after intervention period
RG 5	Rahmattullah, A.N. – Amarullah, A.K. – Syamdianita, S. – Sjamsir, H.: Pre-Service EFL Students' Perceptions of Scripted vs. Improvisational Drama Play in Enhancing Spontaneous Speaking Fluency, 2025, Borneo Educatioanl Journal (Borju) 7(2): 236-254, DOI: 10.24903/bej.v7i2.2031	Pre-service EFL students University, Indonesia	qualitative phenomenological approach, semi-structured interviews and journals
RG 6	Roviyanti, E. – Harpain, H.: Examining English Speaking Challenges and Evaluating the Effectiveness of Drama in Enhancing Speaking Skill, 2024, Jurnal Multidisiplin Indonesia 2(3): 1-9,DOI: 10.62007/joumi.v2i3.356	20 students, 11th grade Secondary school, Indonesia	mixed method, quantitative pre- and post-test, qualitative interviews

RG 7	Sánchez Paguay, J.A. – Abad, E.G.L.: The Review on Acting Techniques as an Approach to Improve English Oral Skills, 2025, Revista Veritas de Difusao Científica 6(1): 2188-2216, DOI: 10.61616/rvdc.v6i1.507	4 teachers Ecuador	Qualitative research, in-depth interviews
RG 8	Dawoud, L. – Hasim, Z. – Rashid, M.: Effect of drama techniques on EFL speaking fluency and accuracy, 2023, Journal of Southwest Jiaotong University 58(6):332-347, DOI: 10.35741/issn.0258-2724.58.6.29	143 students, sixth grade Elementary school, Palestine	non-equivalent quasi-experimental investigation, two experimental groups and two control groups, tests plus oral test
RG 9	Kwiecien- Niedziela, E. – Polok, K. – Malá, E.: Drama Techniques as Correlators of the Level of English Language Speaking Anxiety,2020, Integration of Education 24(1): 98-110, DOI: 10.15507/1991-9468.098.024.202001.098-110	17 students Primary school, Poland	1 research group, questionnaire
RG 10	Tweissi, A. – Maaytah, R.Y.: The Effect of Using Educational Drama on Developing Speaking Skill of the Sixth Graders in the English Language, 2022, Academic Research International 4(1): 10-21, DOI: 10.17220/tuara.2022.01.02	70 students, sixth grade Elementary school, Jordan	quasi-excremental approach, oral pre- and post-test, students' attitude questionnaire, experimental and control group
RG 11	Islam, M.R.: Use of Drama to Enhance Speaking Skills of English as a Second Language (ESL) Learners, 2023, Sudurpaschim Spectrum 1(1): 92-106,DOI:10.3126/sudurpaschim.v1i1.63390	5 BA students, 2 teachers University, Bangladesh	semi-structured interviews with teachers and students
RG 12	Alshareef, F.: The Effectiveness of Using the Educational Drama strategy in Developing Speaking Skills in English Language among the First Year Intermediate Students, 2020	120 students, first year intermediate level Secondary school, Saudi Arabia	Quasi-experimental method, experimental and control groups, observation sheets for measuring oral performance
RG 13	Wongsa, M. – Son, J-B: Enhancing Thai secondary school students' English speaking skills, attitudes and motivation with drama-based activities and Facebook, 2020, Innovation in Language Learning and	2 teachers, 40 students, twelfth grade	Mixed method, quantitative and qualitative data, English speaking, attitude and

	Teaching 16(3): 41-52, DOI: 10.1080/17501229.2020.1853134	Secondary school, Thailand	motivation test battery questionnaires, classroom observation, interviews
RG 14	Syahria, N.: The application of drama taping technique in a speaking class to enhance the students' fluency, 2018, Jurnal Ilmiah Bahasa dan Sastra 8: 235- 245.	32 students University, Indonesia	descriptive quantitative method, questionnaire method
RG 15	Faliyanti, E. – Firdaus, N. H.: Comparative study of using drama and simulation techniques toward students' speaking ability, 2017, UAD TEFL International Conference 1: 208-217, DOI: 10.12928/utic.v1.169.2017	37 students University, Indonesia	systematic random sampling design and pre-test and post-test control group design
RG 16	Kumar, T. – Oasim, A. – Mansur, S. – Shah, A. H.: Improving EFL students' speaking proficiency and self-confidence using drama technique: An action research, 2022, Cypriot Journal of Educational Sciences 17(2): 382-383, DOI: 10.18844/cjes.v17i2.6813	30 students University, Saudi Arabia	action research methodology within a qualitative research framework, observation, interview, audio-video recordings, and researcher diary
RG 17	Sirisrimangkorn, L.- Suwanthep, J.: The Effects of Integrated Drama-Based Role Play and Student Teams Achievement Division (STAD) on Students' Speaking Skills and Affective Involvement, 2013, Scenario A journal for performative teaching learning research VII(2): 64-78, DOI: 10.33178/scenario.7.2.5	80 students University, Thailand	16 weeks, experimental and control group, quantitative (t-test) and qualitative (content analysis) methods
RG 18	Privas- Brétauté, V.: Drama Activities in a French Undergraduate Business School to Manage Speaking Anxiety in English, 2019, Scenario A journal for performative teaching learning research VIII(2): 157-170, DOI: 10.33178/scenario.13.2.10	27 students Business school, France	Lesson plans, photos and videos- qualitative data
RG 19	Shafiei, S.: The Impact of Integrating Drama Techniques and Public Speaking Skills on Students' Confidence and Performance Quality: Consecutive Interpreting in Focus, 2022, New Voices in Translation Studies.	50 students University, Iran	quasi-experimental design, consecutive interpreting test

			and a Personal Report of Confidence as a Speaker (PRCS) test in experimental and control groups as pre-tests, post-tests
RG 20	Lizasoain, A. – Ortiz de Zárate, A.: Efficiency and effectiveness of drama techniques in the English classroom, 2009, XXIV Encuentro Internacional de la Asociación de Jóvenes Lingüistas, Barcelona, Spain, DOI: 10.13140/2.1.2249.5681	36 students, eighth and twelfth grade, Secondary school, Chile	Experimental and control groups, post-and pre-tests
RG 21	Alqomoul, M.D.: Effectiveness of Using Process Drama for Improving English Speaking Skill and Self-concept for Seventh Grade Students, 2025, World Journal of Educational Research 12(3): 70-87, DOI: 10.22158/wjer.v12n3p70	62 students, seventh grade, Elementary school, Jordan	Experimental and control group, lesson plans, tests, questionnaire, quantitative analysis
RG 22	Luo, S. – Ismail, L. – Ahmad, N.K. – Guo, Q.: Effects of Process Drama on English Speaking Competence among Undergraduate EFL Learners in China, 2025, World Journal of English Language 15(4): 111-119, DOI: 10.5430/wjel.v15n4p111	84 students University, China	Experimental and control group, pre- and post-tests evaluating speaking competence, quantitative analysis
RG 23	An, L.T.: Teachers' perceptions of the roleplaying technique in teaching English speaking skills to non-English major students, 2025, Ho Chi Minh City Open University Journal of Science- social Sciences 15(4): 3-13, DOI: 10.46223/HCMCOUJS.soci.en.15.4.2295.2025	12 students (10 respondents to the questionnaire, 2 in the interviews) University, Vietnam	Semi-structured interviews- qualitative data, questionnaire- quantitative data
RG 24	Azzahra, F. – Hayati, R.: Exploring Students' Perceptions Toward Drama Project in Enhancing Their Speaking Ability in English Education Study Program, 2025, JIIP- Jurnal Ilmiah Ilmu Pendidikan 8(5): 4641-4647, DOI: 10.54371/jiip.v8i5.7796	10 students University, Indonesia	Qualitative research- semi-structured interviews

RG 25	Zahri, I.J. – Asilestari, P.: The Effect of Using Drama Technique Towards Students' Speaking Skills, 2022, EDUPEDIA 6(2): 86-94, DOI: 10.24269/ed.v6i2.1340	57 students, tenth grade Secondary school, Indonesia	Experimental and control group, sampling technique, speaking skills test, quantitative data analysis
RG 26	Ovalle, J.B. – Díaz, M.F.C.: Drama Techniques as Contributors to Third graders' English Oral Skills Development, 2024, Ciencia Latina Revista Científica Multidisciplinar 8(5): 8283-8310.	12 students, third grade Elementary school, Colombia	Field notes, semi-structured interviews
RG 27	Akyüz, A. – Tanis, A.: Effects of Drama Activities on EFL Students' Speaking Skills, 2020.	21 students University, Turkey	Qualitative and quantitative analysis, test, attitude questionnaire, semi-structured interviews
RG 28	Kamengko, D.F.: Empowering EFL Students' Oral Proficiency: The Impact of Role-Playing in Enhancing Speaking Skills, 2024, ELT Worldwide Journal of English Language, Teaching 11(2): 419-429, DOI: 10.26858/eltww.v11i2.64640	32 students, grade 9 Junior college, Indonesia	Spoken test, pre- and post-test, quantitative analysis
RG 29	Norona, C.A.M. – Coutinho dos Santos, J. – Ramirez-Avila, M.R.: Peer Assessment Effect in Speaking Skills by means of CLT-Drama activities-in EFL B1.2 Students, 2023, Kronos 4(1): 9-19, DOI: 10.29166/kronos.v4i1.4316	16 students, adults Different programmes, Ecuador	Pre-test and post-test, peer-assessment intervention, field test, survey
AE1	Göktürk, O. - Çalışkan, M. – Öztürk, M.S.: The Effects of Creative Drama Activities on Developing English Speaking Skills, 2020, Journal of Inquiry Based Activities (JIBA) / Araştırma Temelli Etkinlik Dergisi (ATED) 10(1): 1-17.	21 students, sixth and seventh grade, Primary school, Turkey	10 weeks, data collection tools: speaking exam, speaking rubric, the Scale of Attitudes towards English Course, research diary, lesson plans, pre- and post-tests
AE2	Brouillette, L.: Advancing the Speaking and Listening Skills of K-2 English Language Learners Through Creative Drama, 2012, TESOL Journal 3(1): 138-145, DOI: https://doi.org/10.1002/TESJ.8	24 teachers Elementary school, San Diego	Lesson plans, interviews, observations

AE3	Dervishaj, A.T.: Drama Techniques Best Serve to Enhance the Learning of a Foreign Language, 2015, ANGLISTICUM. Journal of the Association-Institute for English Language and American Studies 4: 8–14.	- University, Albania	experimental classes, asking questions, after lesson meetings, students writing-in-role, reflective writing, formal and informal feedback, test results, research journal
AE4	Kao, S.M. - Carkin, G. – Hsu, L.: A holistic English classroom through drama: Applied drama techniques, process drama, and readers' theatre, 2009, Proceedings of the 26th International Conference on English Teaching and Learning in the R.O.C., 399-405. Taipei: Crane Publishing.	32 students University, China	3-week intensive course, evaluated by GEPT Intermediate level test before and after the course as the pre- and post-study evaluation
AE5	Demircioglu, S.: Teaching English vocabulary to young learners via drama, 2010, Procedia Social and Behavioral Sciences 2 (2010) 439–44, DOI: https://doi.org/10.1016/J.SBSPRO.2010.03.039	50 students, third grade Elementary school, Turkey	Experimental and control group, lesson plans, quantitative data analysis

A thematic analysis: findings

The study was based on a systematic review and the thematic analysis of the research articles found in the databases of ResearchGate.net and Academia.edu. As mentioned before, the following thematical considerations were examined: the educational level and the number of participants of the conducted study presented in the given article, geographical location of the study, research methodology and measuring instruments (if indicated in the article), findings and conclusions. All 34 articles were investigated and the similarities and differences between the selected articles were examined

The educational level a study focuses on as well as the number of participants involved help to understand to whom the research results apply and clearly indicate differences between difference educational and potential language levels (e.g. what is true for university students may not be true for high school students). Some of the investigated articles focused not only on school students but teachers as well. Information about teachers helps to understand the study more deeply. Some articles name or label school types and educational levels differently, this is why differing terms are used in our list. Some articles use the country-specific code to label the grades; however, we have matched these with their Slovak equivalent. Two articles did not indicate the exact number of participants or the type of the school (Table 1: RG 7, AE 3). The selected 29 articles from ResearchGate.net focus on different educational levels:

primary/elementary school (6), secondary school/high school (6), university (13), business school (1), junior college (1), different programmes (1). The selected 5 Academia.edu articles focus on the following types of schools: primary/elementary school (4) and university (1). As seen from these numbers, articles from ResearchGate mostly focus on university level while articles from Academia.edu focus more on primary/elementary level.
The number of student participants in the studies presented by the selected articles range on a scale from 5 to 143, (more specifically, in ResearchGate articles: 5, 10, 12, 12, 16, 17, 20, 21, 27, 30, 30, 32, 32, 36, 37, 40, 50, 57, 60, 62, 70, 80, 84, 100, 120, 143, in Academia.edu articles: 21, 32, 50). The number of the teachers involved in the presented studies moves on a scale from 2 to 24 (more precisely in ResearchGate.net articles: 2, 2, 4, 4, in Academia.edu articles: 24). Based on these numbers, the studies tend to focus on students (see Table 1: ResearchGate 2-10, ResearchGate 13, ResearchGate 14-29, Academia.edu 1, Academia.edu 3-5) while only a small part deals with teachers (see Table 1: ResearchGate 7, Academia.edu 2). Some studies explore the perspectives of both students and teachers (see Table 1: RG 1, RG 11, RG 13). The sample of the participants also differs from place to place, where smaller participant numbers suggest qualitative research, a deeper, in-depth analysis (e.g. interviews, observations, etc.) and larger participant numbers focus on collecting as much data as possible (e.g. questionnaires, test, etc.). Table 2 provides a more detailed list of data collected during this thematic analysis.

Table 2

Database	**Type of school**	**Number of students**	**Number of teachers**	**Students and teachers**
ResearchGate.net	primary/elementary school (6) secondary school/ high school (6) university (13) business school (1) junior college (1) different programs (1)	5, 10, 12, 12, 16, 17, 20, 21, 27, 30, 30, 32, 32, 36, 37, 40, 50, 57, 60, 62, 70, 80, 84, 100, 120, 143 RG 2-10 RG 13 RG14-29	2, 2, 4, 4 RG7	RG1 RG11 RG13
Academia.edu	primary/elementary school (4) university (1)	21, 32, 50 AE1 AE3-5	24 AE2	

The geographical location of the selected research articles differs in a wide range. The locations of the studies clearly show that drama techniques are recognised as helping tools in order to enhance speaking skills in many Asian or South American countries. All 34 selected articles indicated the geographical location of the conducted study, it was mentioned in the text or in the description of the school type or the title of the article revealed this piece of information. There is a significant difference between the geographical locations of the articles selected from the two databases. While in the articles from ResearchGate.net mostly Asian and Middle Eastern countries dominate, in Academia.edu articles there is a wider range of locations. The localization of the 29 Researchgate.net articles is distributed in the following way (listed in Table 3): Indonesia (7), Saudi Arabia (3), Palestine (2), Jordan (2), Ecuador (2), Thailand (2), India (1), Rwanda (1), Poland (1), Bangladesh (1), France (1), Iran (1), Chile (1), China (1),

Vietnam (1), Colombia (1) and Turkey (1). The locations of articles from Academia.edu are: (listed in Table 3): Turkey (2), China (1), USA (1), and Albania (1). As seen here, there are only 3 European countries (Poland, France, Albania) out of the 34. There may be various reasons for this dispersion if we look at the language and culture of the listed countries. In many Asian and Middle Eastern countries, just like in South America, English language is a key to access better opportunities in learning and in the labour market at the same time. Based on what we know about eastern cultures, people are more restrained, so drama techniques can be of a big help to motivate students' linguistic development.

Table 3

Database	**Geographical location**
ResearchGate.net	Indonesia (7), Saudi Arabia (3), Palestine (2), Jordan (2), Ecuador (2), Thailand (2), India (1), Rwanda (1), Poland (1), Bangladesh (1), France (1), Iran (1), Chile (1), China (1), Vietnam (1), Colombia (1) and Turkey (1)
Academia.edu	Turkey (2), China (1), USA (1), Albania (1)

The 34 selected articles include several types of research methodology and research instruments. Although this comparison does not address the specific lesson plans implemented in the articles, it gives a clear picture of the tools used in the presented studies. All the selected articles clearly indicated the methodology and research instruments used in them. Both databases included articles that are based on qualitative, quantitative data analysis or mixed-method analysis. The 29 articles selected from the database of ResearchGate.net are distributed as follows: 8 articles used qualitative data analysis (Table 1: RG 4-5, RG 7, RG 11, RG 16, RG 18, RG 26, RG 24), 13 articles used quantitative data analysis (Table 1: RG 3, RG 8-10, RG 12, RG 14-15, RG 19-22, RG 25, RG 28-29) and 8 articles used a mixed-method approach (Table1: RG 1-2, RG 6, RG 8, RG 13, RG 17, RG 23, RG 27). The 8 articles that used qualitative data analysis followed these instruments: interviews (semi-structured and in-depth), journals, audio-video recordings, researcher diaries, field notes, qualitative phenomenological approach. The 13 articles that used quantitative data analysis implemented the following instruments: questionnaires (attitude, test battery), test (pre- and post-tests, oral tests, language tests), descriptive-quantitative method, quasi-experimental research design. The 8 mixed-method approach articles used some of the previously mentioned instruments. The selected 5 articles from the database of Academia.edu are designed very similarly: 1 article used qualitative data analysis (Table 1: AE 2), 2 articles used quantitative data analysis (Table 1: AE 4-5) and 2 articles used mixed-method (Table 1: AE 1, AE 3). The articles selected from Academia.edu use the same instruments: pre- and post-test, questionnaires, semi-structured interviews, research diary, oral exams, teachers' feedback. The numbers clearly show that quantitative data analysis is preferred over the other two methods and most articles use it. The underlying reasons for this may be diverse, e.g. it may be easier to collect and analyse data, and it is still more accepted in certain circles. However, to gain a deeper understanding of the problem, it is essential to use qualitative methods as well to capture the entirety of the question. A detailed summary of the above-mentioned data can be found in Table 4.

Table 4

Database	Qualitative	Quantitative	Mixed-method	Instruments
ResearchGate.net	RG 4-5 RG 7 RG 11 RG16 RG 18 RG 26 RG 24	RG 3 RG 8-10 RG 12 RG 14-15 RG 19-22 RG 25 RG 28-29	RG 1-2 RG 6 RG 8 RG 13 RG 17 RG 23 RG 27	interviews (semi-structured and in-depth), journals, audio-video recordings, researcher diaries, field notes, qualitative phenomenological approach, questionnaires (attitude, test battery, etc.), test (pre- and post-tests, oral tests, language tests), descriptive-quantitative method, quasi-experimental research design
Academia.edu	AE 2	AE 4-5	AE 1 AE 3	same instruments: pre- and post-test, questionnaires, semi-structured interviews, research diary, oral exams, teachers' feedback

All the selected 34 articles from both databases clearly conclude that implementing drama techniques in the EFL class to enhance speaking skills is efficient and has a positive effect on language learning and oral expression. It is highly recommended by scholars to incorporate drama techniques in everyday EFL lesson plans.

Discussion

The results of the systematic review conducted in this study brought surprising results. Most of the studies dealing with the topic of enhancing speaking skills with drama techniques in the EFL classroom take place within university setting and focus on university students. One of the many reasons for this may be that research into drama techniques has direct didactic relevance at university level since this is the place where future language teachers are trained, so there is an increased importance of implementing innovative methods and techniques. This tendency is rather true for articles in the ResearchGate.net database, however there is a limited number of articles based on university research in the database of Academia.edu as well. Based on

geographical locations, studies regarding the application of drama techniques in improving EFL speaking skills seem to appear in significant numbers in Eastern countries and South America and are less common in European countries. The analysis of ResearchGate.net articles pointed at 2 European countries, in the AcademiaEdu.net search only 1 European country was found. Altogether, it is 3 European countries out of the 34 countries, which represents only 8.82%. It seems that European research on the application of drama techniques in the EFL classroom and their efficiency in improving speaking skills is not appropriately represented in the selected databases.

The analysis revealed that quantitative methods are more often used in the selected articles rather than qualitative or mixed-method research methodology. Based on the limited number of data it is difficult to formulate far-fetched conclusions; however, it is evident that all types of research and a variety of research instruments were used when conducting studies in the field of drama techniques, which suggests colourful and multifaceted research findings.

RQ1 related to the differences in the amount and quality of articles between the two databases. Not only did we find far fewer relevant articles in the database Academia.edu compared to ResearchGate.net, but they also had to be filtered by quality, since there were relevant texts that could not be used (e.g. university theses: bachelor's and master's thesis). RQ2 focused on the differences in research methods and the participants studied in the selected articles in the two databases. As discussed previously, the research methods used in the selected articles from both databases are the same, they use qualitative, quantitative methods and mixed-method. Similarity in research instruments could be observed as well. However, the participants' level of education differs. While the selected articles from the database of ResearchGate.net mainly focus on university level and university students, the articles selected from Academia.edu primarily address primary/elementary level and focus on primary students. RQ3 examined the results of the empirical research of the selected articles. Based on the findings and conclusions of the 34 selected articles, it can be clearly stated that the articles agree ont he fact that drama techniques help to enhance speaking skills and have a beneficial effect on foreign language learning in the examined educational and language levels.

Future research should compare articles from further smaller, open access online databases (e.g., ERIC), and compare databases such as ResearchGate.net, Academia.edu with bigger multidisciplinary, international scientific databases (WoS or Scoups) and to examine the results of different search keywords. Another interesting goal could be to compare the studies conducted in one or two selected countries or to compare the articles of published in a European country with an Asian country of a similar population size.

CONCLUSION

The study was an experimental attempt to map the databases of ResearchGate.net and Academia.edu, two of the most popular websites used by scholars and educators and compare the results of searches on drama techniques and improving speaking skills in the EFL classes. The findings suggest that there is a certain level of imbalance between European research articles – presenting research findings of studies conducted in European countries – as compared to articles publishing results on studies carried out in Asian or American countries in the field of drama techniques in EFL education. However, the systematic review highlights the continued relevance and effectiveness of drama techniques in improving EFL speaking skills.

The application of drama techniques and conducting research in this field has remained an exciting area many scholars and researchers are interested in. Drama techniques support a more student-centred learning environment. Despite some limitations in the scope and the methodological diversity of the investigated articles and studies, the overall evidence points to the positive impact of integrating drama into EFL instruction.

Future research should focus more on empirical data from various educational contexts and proficiency levels, as well as explore the long-term effects of using drama techniques to improve both accuracy and fluency in teaching EFL speaking.

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