

# A Study on Turkish EFL Teachers' Perspectives on Using Drama to Develop Students' Speaking Skills in the EFL Classroom

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**Abstract:** The purpose of the present study was to investigate K-12 EFL teachers' perspectives and knowledge on the use and effectiveness of drama to develop students' speaking skills. To achieve this purpose, 42 EFL teachers from different state secondary schools of a city located in the west part of Turkey participated in this study. The questionnaire designed by Dal (2017) was used in this study by the researchers with some minor modifications to it. The findings of this study displayed that Turkish K-12 EFL teachers generally revealed high levels of cognizance of the impact of using drama to develop students' speaking skills. The findings also indicated that although EFL teachers generally had high levels of cognizance of the benefits of using drama to develop students' speaking skills, they generally had moderate levels of knowledge of using drama to develop students' speaking skills. Furthermore, as opposed to our expectations, the findings of this study indicated that EFL teachers generally exhibited low levels of cognizance of the prominence of drama in developing students' speaking skills. Lastly, the results of this study revealed that EFL teachers taking drama education in their department had higher levelsof perspectives than those not taking drama education in their department with respect to the use of drama as a technique for improving students' speaking skills.

## Anahtar sözcükler

Drama, konuşma,  
yabancı dil olarak  
İngilizce  
öğretmenleri,  
yabancı dil olarak  
İngilizce sınıfı,  
İngiliz dili eğitimi

## İngilizceyi Yabancı Dil Olarak Öğreten Türk Öğretmenlerin İngilizce Sınıfında Öğrencilerin Konuşma Becerilerini Geliştirmek için Dramayı Kullanma Bakış Açıları Üzerine Bir Çalışma

**Öz:** Bu çalışmanın amacı, K-12 İngilizce öğretmenlerinin, öğrencilerin konuşma becerilerini geliştirmek için dramanın kullanımı ve etkililiği hakkındaki bakış açılarını ve bilgilerini araştırmaktır. Bu amaca ulaşmak için, Türkiye'nin batı kesiminde yer alan bir şehrin farklı devlet ortaöğretim okullarından 42 İngilizce öğretmeni bu araştırmaya katılmıştır. Bu çalışmada Dal (2017) tarafından tasarlanan anket, araştırmacılar tarafından üzerinde küçük değişiklikler yapılarak kullanılmıştır. Bu çalışmanın bulguları, Türk K-12 İngilizce öğretmenlerinin, drama kullanmanın öğrencilerin konuşma becerilerini geliştirme üzerindeki etkisine ilişkin yüksek düzeyde perspektifler ortaya koyduklarını göstermiştir. Bulgular İngilizce öğretmenlerinin, öğrencilerin konuşma becerilerini geliştirmek için drama kullanmanın yararları hakkında genel olarak yüksek düzeyde perspektifleri olmasına rağmen, öğrencilerin konuşma becerilerini geliştirmek için dramanın kullanımı hakkında genellikle orta düzeyde bilgiye sahip olduklarını da göstermiştir. Son olarak, bu çalışmanın sonuçları, okudukları bölümde drama eğitimi alan İngilizce öğretmenlerinin drama eğitimi almayanlara göre öğrencilerin konuşma becerilerini geliştirmek için dramanın önemi hakkında daha yüksek düzeyde bakış açısına sahip olduklarını ortaya çıkarmıştır.

## 1. Introduction

We live in the communication age, and successful communication is regarded as one of the most significant skills that everyone should possess. A prominent aspect of successful communication is made up of receptive and productive language skills (Ulas, 2008). While listening and reading are categorized as receptive skills, speaking and writing are accepted as productive skills (Widdowson, 1978). Since successful English (L2) language learning involves internalization of all the four basic language skills as well as three basic language components (i.e., grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation), it can be stated that second language acquisition is not only a complex but also a time-consuming process (Kusnierek, 2015).

Speaking is generally accepted as the most prominent of all language skills (Noor, Apriliaswati & Rosnija, 2012), and it is also a major component of success in L2 communication (Cole, Ellis, & Mason, 2007; Hughes, 2011; Nguyen & Do, 2017). It is via the development of this productive skill that foreign language learners can become competent in communicating with native and non-native speakers of the English language. However, developing students' speaking skills is not as easy as it seems to be on the surface. As Leong and Ahmadi (2017) indicate, speaking skill is viewed as one of the most challenging aspects of foreign language learning. The segmental features (e.g., the articulation of sounds that are nonexistent in L1, the pronunciation of contractions, vowel reductions and elision), suprasegmental features (e.g., stress, pitch, intonation and juncture), morphophonological cases (e.g., the pronunciations of the plurality, the third person singularity, the past tense and the possessivity morphemes in L2), the use of slang and idioms and nonverbal aspects of spoken communication (e.g., facial expressions, hand gestures, proxemics, haptics and oculesics) are demanding for foreign language learners (Brown, 1994).

A language learner's speaking ability is made up of three aspects. They are knowledge of language and discourse, core speaking skills and communication strategies. The first aspect, knowledge of language and discourse, involves (a) structural knowledge (e.g., phonetic, phonological, morphological, and syntactic characteristics of the language), (b) semantic knowledge (e.g., word meaning and sentential meaning) and (c) pragmatic knowledge (e.g., speech acts). These three types of knowledge contribute to the accurate and appropriate use of L2. The second aspect, core speaking skills, is relevant to L2 learners' speaking fluency. Among some sub-skills of speaking are building previous utterances, checking comprehension, fixing communication breakdown, providing feedback and making conversations. The third aspect, communication strategies, covers the use of tactics to prevent communication failure owing to restricted knowledge; some of these strategies include paraphrasing, checking comprehension, clarifying and repeating an utterance (Goh & Burns, 2012).

Unfortunately, many students are not competent enough to express themselves orally in L2 despite having received English education for years in schools. They cannot describe, explain or discuss things in the target language (Samantaray, 2014). In the EFL classrooms, most students have difficulty joining speaking activities due to shyness, lack of self-confidence or some other reasons. When speaking in front of their teacher and peers, they speak with many pauses and interruptions (Yuniwati, Wijaya & Rosnija, 2010), and they exhibit fear or anxiety (Dal, 2017). In this vein, it is the use of drama as a technique that can decrease students' speaking fear or anxiety during in-class speaking activities and develop their L2 speaking skills (Demircioglu, 2010). Furthermore, as Davies (1990) indicates, the use of drama in the

EFL classroom provides students with the opportunity to deploy their imagination, promotes their speaking fluency and communicative competence and contextualizes the language. When encountering similar situations beyond the classroom context, students are inclined to be more confident as a result of being exposed to life-like situations in the classroom.

Drama creates a genuine, non-threatening and motivating atmosphere in which successful L2 learning occurs (Miccoli, 2003). The use of drama in the EFL classroom fosters students' oral skills to help them to be good communicators (Gathumbi & Masembe, 2005). Since drama is student-centered and meaningful language production-based, it can be considered a communicative technique. It is through the use of drama that students can employ L2 in a natural way within a context that appeals to them (Dodson, 2000). Drama establishes a classroom environment in which students learn L2 in an effective way by performing the components of the language in real life-like situations. Thus, they develop their L2 speaking fluency by performing the language in the given situations in the classroom (Atas, 2015).

Despite its popularity and recognition in the related literature, using drama as a technique to develop students' speaking skill is not given enough prominence by Turkish EFL teachers working in secondary schools in our country. Hence, the aim of the present study is to identify K-12 EFL teachers' cognizance and knowledge on the use and effectiveness of drama to develop students' speaking skill and increase EFL teachers' interest in using drama techniques to develop their students' speaking skills.

## **2. Literature Review**

### **2.1. The development of the idea of drama in the language classroom**

The most famous early proponents of drama in the L1 classroom were Heathcote and Bolton. They stimulated language teachers to incorporate drama into their classes. Later on, L2 teachers began to integrate drama into their teaching, and the use of drama in classes has become fashionable among L2 teachers (Dodson, 2000). As Schewe (2013) indicates, it was because of the remarkable effect of communicative language teaching in the 1980s and 1990s that L2 teachers and L2 specialists began to learn how to use drama techniques in their teaching. At this juncture, some pioneering figures in the field of ESL/EFL have published books on how to integrate drama into language classroom relying on their in-class implementations as language teachers in the 1980s (e.g., Maley & Duff, 1982; Smith, 1984; Wessel, 1987; Ladousse, 1987).

In the 1990s, some L2 specialists published books on (a) identifying how L2 teachers can utilize drama to develop cultural comprehension and knowledge among their students (e.g., Byram & Fleming, 1998), (b) expounding the technique and the benefits of process drama (e.g., Kao & O'Neill, 1998), (c) describing drama activities for L2 teachers (e.g., Whiteson, 1996) and (d) offering suggestions for teachers who want to use drama activities in their classroom (e.g., Woodward, 1997). From the year 2000 to the present time, some books have been published on (a) drama activities and games that are appropriate for children and adults (e.g., Farmer, 2007; Wilson, 2008; Hillyard, 2016) and (b) digital storytelling, assessment, process drama and storytelling in an international context (e.g., Winston, 2012).

### **2.2. Studies on the effects of drama on students' speaking performance**

The effects of drama on students' speaking performance have been investigated by many researchers in the field of foreign language learning and teaching (e.g., Miccoli, 2003; Coleman, 2005; Magos & Politi, 2008; Janudom & Wasanasomithi, 2009; Gill, 2013;

Sirisrimangkorn&Suwanthep, 2013; Cho, 2015; Iamsaard&Kerdpol, 2015; Galante &Thomson, 2017). For instance, in the Brazilian EFL context, Miccoli (2003) examined how drama activities affected 37 university students' oral skills using a variety of tasks ranging from warm-ups to dialogues and role plays in her speaking class over a 15-week period. It was found in the study that students' speaking competence increased, especially in the aspects of structure, vocabulary, and pronunciation.

In the Korean EFL context, Coleman (2005) explored the effect of utilizing a drama-based EFL program on developing the English fluency of 60 randomly selected EFL learners taking part in an EFL summer camp. Voice training, role play, stage movement, and improvisation were the instructional strategies embedded in the study. The results of the study showed that students perceived their highest benefits in L2 pronunciation and voice modulation. The results of the study also exhibited that students felt more self-reliant and comfortable when speaking English as a result of their involvement in the program.

In the Greek ESL context, Magos and Politi (2008) investigated the particular aspects of the role-play technique which makes a contribution to the successful teaching of L2 to 16 adult immigrants. It was found in the study that role play could be used successfully when teaching L2 to groups of adult immigrants. It was also seen in the study that most students gave positive feedback to the role-play technique. Finally, it was indicated in the study that immigrant involvement in role play is higher when the content of the activity is related to students' interests and existing knowledge.

In the Thai EFL context, it was Janudom and Wasanasomithi (2009)who explored the effects of the use of drama and questioning techniques on 15 undergraduate non-English major students' speaking abilities in Chulalongkorn University. The results of the study displayed that students had positive attitudes towards this type of instruction.

In the Australian ESL context, Gill (2013)examined the effects of drama on improving ten undergraduate non-English speaking students' speaking abilities in Bond University. These ten students received communicative drama-based language instruction for two hours per week for 12 weeks and components of their spoken English communication were measured within 12 weeks. The results of this study revealed that students' speaking abilities developed by the end of Week 12.

In the same EFL context, Sirisrimangkorn and Suwanthep (2013) examined the effects of drama-based role-play and Student Teams Achievement Division (STAD) on 80 non-native undergraduate students' speaking skills, motivation, and self-confidence. The results of the study indicated that drama-based role play combined with STAD was effective in developing students' speaking skills, motivation, and self-confidence.

In the Korean EFL context, Cho (2015) investigated the effects of semi-scripted roleplay (SSRP) and semi-scripted roleplay followed by non-scripted roleplay (SSRP-NSRP) on developing Tourism English students' speaking skills. The results of the study revealed that both role-play types were effective in stimulating learners to communicate in pairs and to develop students' L2 communication skills.

Likewise, in another study conducted in the Thai language social program, Iamsaard and Kerdpol (2015) investigated 26 students' attitudes towards the incorporation of dramatic

activities into a speaking class by employing lesson plans, questionnaire and tests with six assessment scales (i.e., pronunciation, vocabulary, language structure, use, content and fluency). The results of the study showed that students improved their communicative skills and that they held positive attitudes towards this instructional approach.

In the Brazilian EFL context, Galante and Thomson (2017) examined how drama-based language instruction could positively affect L2 fluency, comprehensibility, and accentedness by the participation of 24 adolescent Brazilian EFL learners and 30 Canadian native English speaking raters. The results of the study showed that drama-based instruction contributed to developing students' oral fluency and comprehensibility in L2.

### **2.3. Benefits of drama to developing students' L2 speaking skills**

In the literature, many researchers have focused on investigating the benefits of drama to improve students' L2 speaking skills. For instance, Ronke (2005) listed the benefits of drama to develop students' L2 speaking skills as follows:

- Drama stimulates EFL learners to give prominence to good pronunciation and intonation.
- Drama-based exercises help EFL learners to practice various aspects of L2 pronunciation (e.g., pitch, tempo, volume) and intonation (e.g., accent, melody and rhythm) and hence their speech becomes more fluent and accurate.
- Drama-based exercises stress the importance of body movement in (a) producing sounds (e.g., how to use speech organs like lips, teeth, tongue and jaw to make the sounds) and practicing and (b) practicing prosodic features (e.g., stress, pitch, intonation).
- Drama makes pronunciation practice in the EFL classroom entertaining by presenting joyful hands-on activities that enable students to get rid of demotivating, mechanical and repetitive phonetic practice.
- Drama establishes an ideal and motivating classroom environment where EFL learners can practice L2 pronunciation and intonation without getting stressed and scared in front of their peers and the EFL teacher.

As Burlinska (2016) states, drama helps students to gain fluency in speaking English as a foreign language. It is one of the most effective techniques that develops L2 speaking as it gives students the chance to do communicative practice via different social roles in different social contexts, and it develops students' fluency and accuracy in speaking English as a foreign language. Dailey (2009) stresses that meaningful language, interactive communication and cooperation-oriented drama activities maximize student involvement and oral practice in the EFL classroom. Drama changes monotonous classrooms into colorful and dynamic classroom context, creates motivating opportunities to produce the language and enables students to overcome reticence. Developing student involvement in speaking activities, self-confidence and speaking practice promotes students' English-speaking performance.

## **2.4. Basic drama techniques**

### **2.4.1. Mime**

The term mime can be defined as a "non-verbal representation of an idea or story through gesture, bodily movement and expression" (Dougill, 1987, p. 13). Because students perform in front of their classmates without using the foreign language, they do not get stressed in classroom activities (Savignon, 1983). This technique can be beneficial to involve students with low level of proficiency in classroom activities in crowded EFL classrooms. However, it

should not be forgotten that shy students may have difficulty in miming in front of the classroom, particularly in their first experiences with this technique (Klippel, 1987).

#### **2.4.2. Role play**

Role play can be defined as "a range of activities characterized by involving participants in 'as if' or 'stimulated' actions and circumstances" (Yardley-Matwiejczuk, 1997, p.1). It is one of the most popular communicative classroom activities that helps students to practice L2 and develop their proficiency in L2 speaking (Blatner, 2009; Maley & Duff, 2005; Ulas, 2008). As Nguyen and Do (2017) state, role-play activities are very powerful speaking tools that push students to go beyond the classroom practices for real-world language use. Role-play activities also create a stress-free, entertaining and motivating atmosphere in the EFL classroom that contributes to the realization of more cooperation among students as well as better L2 learning (Mollazamani & Ashtiani, 2008).

#### **2.4.3. Simulation**

Simulation is a kind of drama in which the students take part in an event and shape the course of the event by performing roles, functions, duties, and responsibilities in a framed context that requires problem-solving. In simulations, students act as they are instructed, and they practice communication skills such as expressing views, persuading others, eliciting opinions, analyzing situations and so on (Smith, 1984). In simulated activities, students have three basic roles: (1) taking a role, such as a doctor, nurse, salesperson or a customer as a participant; (2) stepping into the event and (3) shaping the event by doing their duties and responsibilities (Jones, 1982). Simulation increases students' motivation to explore, encourages interaction by creating a positive atmosphere for students and gives students the chance for purposeful communication. To illustrate, in a simulated activity, students can practice with their peers how to ask for directions or give directions, how to buy some fruits or make an offer, etc. (Hyland, 1993).

#### **2.4.4. Improvisation**

Improvisation is an impromptu action with no script or preparation for performance but with minimum guidance or frame from the teacher (Burlinska, 2016). Students use their creativity during the improvisation (Fabio, 2014). This technique helps students to develop their oral communication skills as well as their self-confidence. Students are free to develop their own characters as they like and speak as they want (Trivedi, 2013). The students can join the activity spontaneously after the presentation of the theme. However, if some warm-up activities are done to prepare students for the improvisation activities, students can benefit a great deal from the improvisation activities (Wessels, 1987).

#### **2.4.5. Script writing**

Script writing is a technique in which students produce the text using their own words to dramatize. This technique allows students to concentrate on all the basic language skills including speaking as well as language components (Davies, 1990). It can be practiced individually, in pairs or in groups in the classroom. It gives all students the chance to take part in classroom activities (Tajareh & Oroji, 2017).

#### **2.4.6. Dramatization**

Dramatization is an effective technique for promoting students' speaking skill in a stress-free and non-threatening classroom environment. In this technique, students are assigned specific roles to provide them with the opportunity to use the target language. Dramatization presents

a natural context for meaningful language production that students can take turns, ask and answer questions and switch topics in pairs or small groups (Samantaray, 2014). Dramatization offers contextualization for students, and it contributes to more student involvement in classroom activities and more proficiency in spoken language (Peregoy & Boyle, 2008).

### 3. Methodology

#### 3.1. Sample characteristics

Forty-two EFL teachers from different state secondary schools of a city located in the west part of Turkey participated in this study. The teachers ranged in age from 22 to 49, and 7 of these 42 teachers were male. These EFL teachers had anywhere from 1 to over 21 years of teaching experience. All of them had their undergraduate degrees from English Language Teacher Training Department. Twenty-five teachers took drama education in their department. The demographic properties of the participants are presented in Table 1.

Table 1  
*Demographic Properties of the Participants*

		Frequency	Percentage (%)
Age	22-29	1	2.4
	30-39	35	83.3
	40-49	6	14.3
Gender	Male	7	16.7
	Female	35	83.3
Teaching Experience	1-5 Years	2	4.8
	6-10 Years	3	7.1
	11-20 Years	34	81
	21-21+ Years	3	7.1
Undergraduate Degree	ELT	42	100
	Non-ELT	-	-
Formal Drama Education	Yes	25	59.5
	No	17	40.5
Total		42	100

#### 3.2. Instrument and data collection

The main data collection instrument utilized in this study was the adapted and modified version of the questionnaire designed by Dal (2017). It was developed to describe non-native EFL teachers' perceptions and knowledge on the use and effectiveness of drama to develop students' speaking skill. The questionnaire had two main sections: the first section included general information about the respondents' age, gender, teaching experience, undergraduate degree, formal drama education, and the second section contained 18 items related to EFL teachers' perceptions and knowledge on the use and effectiveness of drama to improve students' speaking skill presented on a five-point Likert scale, ranging from 'totally disagree,' 'disagree,' 'uncertain,' 'agree' to 'totally agree.'

### **3.3. Procedure**

#### **3.3.1. Validity of the questionnaire**

The validity of the original questionnaire was approved by six experts. As for the content and face validity of the questionnaire for the present study, the panel of experts, consisting of two assistant professors of English language and literature and two non-native EFL teachers with M.A in ELT, was asked to evaluate the comprehensiveness, acceptability, and clarity of the questionnaire. After receiving feedback from these four experts, the researchers deleted seven items (1, 2, 3, 5, 8, 17, 18) from the original questionnaire consisting of twenty-five items, modified some items in the questionnaire and piloted the modified questionnaire to five K-12 EFL teachers. These five K-12 EFL teachers were also asked to evaluate the questionnaire in terms of comprehensibility, acceptability, and clarity. Several modifications were made to the questionnaire based on these EFL teachers' feedback. The researchers also made some simplifications to the wording of some items in the questionnaire to make them easy to understand.

#### **3.3.2. Reliability of the questionnaire**

The reliability of the original questionnaire was calculated as .847, which indicates a high level of reliability. To check the reliability of the questionnaire for the present study, the instrument was analyzed through the Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient and the reliability was  $\alpha = .909$ , which showed a high level of reliability.

#### **3.3.3. Giving the questionnaire to the subjects**

The questionnaire was given to fifty randomly selected Turkish K-12 EFL teachers working in different state secondary schools in a city located in the west of Turkey during an in-service training program organized by the Directorate of National Education for Turkish K-12 EFL teachers on June 18, 2019. It was this in-service training program that the researchers joined which gave them the chance to get together with the Turkish K-12 EFL teachers and give the questionnaire to them. The return rate from these Turkish K-12 EFL teachers was 84 % (N=42).

### **3.4. Data analysis**

Data were analyzed by utilizing the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS 23.0). Descriptive statistics were utilized to run for percentages, means and standard deviations. To answer research questions one to five, means and standard deviations were calculated. To answer research question six, independent samples t-test was used to test whether there was a significant difference between Turkish K-12 EFL teachers' perceptions on using drama techniques to develop students' speaking skill and teachers' taking drama education in their department:

- 1) What are Turkish K-12 EFL teachers' perspectives on the impact of using drama to develop students' speaking skills?
- 2) What are Turkish K-12 EFL teachers' perspectives on the benefits of using drama to develop students' speaking skills?
- 3) What is Turkish K-12 EFL teachers' knowledge on using drama to develop students' speaking skills?
- 4) What are Turkish K-12 EFL teachers' perspectives on the prominence of drama to develop students' speaking skills?
- 5) What drama techniques do Turkish K-12 EFL teachers know and use most?

6) Do Turkish K-12 EFL teachers' perceptions on using drama to develop students' speaking skill differ depending on whether they have taken drama education in their department?

#### 4. Results

##### 4.1. Turkish K-12 EFL teachers' perspectives on the impact of using drama to develop students' speaking skills

Table 2

*Distribution of Mean Scores on Turkish K-12 EFL Teachers' Perspectives on the Impact of Using Drama to Develop Students' Speaking Skills*

<b>The impact of drama on developing speaking skill</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>SD</b>
1. Drama activities help students to develop their English speaking skills.	4.43	0.70
2. Speaking activities including drama enable students to internalize the phrases/structures which they utilize.	4.12	0.71
3. Drama activities help students to develop their fluency in speaking English.	4.38	0.66
4. Speaking activities including drama increase students' self-confidence to speak English.	4.52	0.59
5. Drama-based activities maximize students' motivation to speak English.	4.24	0.88
6. Drama-based speaking activities maximize students' interest in speaking English.	4.29	0.67
Overall	4.33	0.71

As seen in table 2, Turkish K-12 EFL teachers agreed that (a) drama activities helped students to develop their English speaking skills (item 1,  $M=4.43$ ;  $SD=0.70$ ), (b) speaking activities including drama enabled students to internalize the phrases/structures which they utilized (item 2,  $M=4.12$ ;  $SD=0.71$ ), (c) drama activities helped students to develop their fluency in speaking English (item 3,  $M=4.38$ ;  $SD=0.66$ ), (d) speaking activities including drama increased students' self-confidence to speak English (item 4,  $M=4.52$ ;  $SD=0.59$ ), (e) drama-based activities maximized students' motivation to speak English (item 5,  $M=4.24$ ;  $SD=0.88$ ), (f) drama-based speaking activities maximized students' interest in speaking English (item 6,  $M=4.29$ ;  $SD=0.67$ ). That is, they generally displayed a high level of cognizance about the impact of using drama on developing students' speaking skills.

##### 4.2. Turkish K-12 EFL teachers' perspectives on the benefits of using drama to develop students' speaking skills

Table 3

*Turkish K-12 EFL Teachers' Perspectives on the Benefits of Using Drama to Develop Students' Speaking Skills*

<b>The benefits of using drama to develop speaking skill</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>SD</b>
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7. Using drama techniques fosters learning by doing.	4.21	0.92
8. Integrating drama into speaking activities enables students to learn English in a meaningful environment.	4.31	0.68
9. Speaking activities including drama techniques help students to learn English in an active way.	4.36	0.62
10. Drama activities enable students to learn English speaking in a social way.	4.38	0.62
11. Drama-based speaking activities can present lifelike experiences for students.	4.21	0.61
12. Drama activities reduce students' anxiety in speaking English.	3.76	0.85
13. Drama activities create an environment where all students can take part in the speaking lesson/activity.	3.90	0.76
14. Drama activities make the speaking lesson entertaining.	4.36	0.66
Overall	4.19	0.72

As seen in table 3, Turkish K-12 EFL teachers agreed that (a) using drama techniques fostered learning by doing (item 7,  $M=4.21$ ;  $SD=0.92$ ), (b) integrating drama into speaking activities enabled students to learn English in a meaningful environment (item 8,  $M=4.31$ ;  $SD=0.68$ ), (c) speaking activities including drama techniques helped students to learn English in an active way (item 9,  $M=4.36$ ;  $SD=0.62$ ), (d) drama activities enabled students to learn English speaking in a social way (item 10,  $M=4.38$ ;  $SD=0.62$ ), (e) drama-based speaking activities could present lifelike experiences for students (item 11,  $M=4.21$ ;  $SD=0.61$ ), (f) drama activities reduced students' anxiety in speaking English (item 12,  $M=3.76$ ;  $SD=0.85$ ), (g) drama activities created an environment where all students could take part in the speaking lesson/activity (item 13,  $M=3.90$ ;  $SD=0.76$ ), (h) drama activities made the speaking lesson entertaining (item 14,  $M=4.36$ ;  $SD=0.66$ ). Overall, they generally had high level of cognizance on the benefits of using drama to develop students' speaking skills.

#### 4.3. Turkish K-12 EFL teachers' knowledge on using drama to develop students' speaking skills

Table 4

*Turkish K-12 EFL Teachers' Knowledge on Using Drama to Develop Students' Speaking Skills*

Knowledge about using drama to develop speaking skill	M	SD
15. I have adequate knowledge on how to apply drama techniques in speaking activities.	3.33	0.87
16. I can easily apply drama techniques in speaking activities in the EFL classroom.	3.31	0.86
Overall	3.32	0.87

As seen in table 4, Turkish K-12 EFL teachers were uncertain that (a) they had adequate knowledge on how to apply drama techniques in speaking activities (item 15,  $M=3.33$ ;  $SD=0.87$ ), (b) they could easily apply drama techniques in speaking activities in the EFL classroom (item 16,  $M=3.31$ ;  $SD=0.86$ ). That is, they generally had moderate level of knowledge on using drama to develop students' speaking skills.

#### 4.4. Turkish K-12 EFL teachers' perspectives on the prominence of drama to develop students' speaking skills

Table 5

*Turkish K-12 EFL Teachers' Perspectives on the Prominence of Drama to Develop Students' Speaking Skills*

The views on the prominence of drama for developing speaking skill	M	SD
17. Drama is given enough prominence in the curriculum.	2.74	1.04
18. There are enough drama-based speaking activities in the coursebook.	2.26	0.96
Overall	2.50	1.00

As seen in table five, Turkish K-12 EFL teachers stated that (a) drama was not given enough prominence in the curriculum (item 17,  $M=2.74$ ;  $SD= 1.04$ ). They also stated that (b) there were not enough drama-based speaking activities in the coursebook (item 18,  $M=2.26$ ;  $SD=0.96$ ). That is, they generally exhibited low level of cognizance about the prominence of drama for developing students' speaking skills.

#### 4.5. Drama techniques that Turkish K-12 EFL teachers know and use most

##### 4.5.1. Drama techniques that Turkish K-12 EFL teachers know most

Table 6

*Drama Techniques that Turkish K-12 EFL Teachers Know Most*

Name of the drama technique	Frequency	Name of the drama technique	Frequency
1. A day in life	11	21. Reanimation	8
2. Conscience alley	3	22. Ritual ceremony	8
3. Creating Picture	21	23. Role alley	5
4. Dramatization	39	24. Role cards	29
5. Expert opinion	9	25. Role-changing	36
6. Flashback	30	26. Role play	41
7. Gossip circle	19	27. Sculptures	4
8. Headline	11	28. Simultaneous improvisation	11
9. Holding a meeting	12	29. Space between	4
10. Hot seating	2	30. Split screen	4

11. Improvisation	5	31. Still image	5
12. Inner voice	13	32. Story-telling	36
13. Interview-debate- interrogation-meeting	18	33. Teachers in role	16
14. Life circle	4	34. The role on the wall	9
15. Moment of truth	6	35. This way-that way	6
16. Pantomime	13	36. Thought tracking	3
17. Phone conversations	32	37. Trailer	3
18. Pinning a moment	5	38. Walls have ears	4
19. Prepared roles	22	39. Whole drawing	10
20. Private property	4	40. Writing in role	20

As seen in table 6, 'role play,' 'dramatization,' 'role changing' and 'story-telling,' 'phone conversations,' 'flashback' and 'role cards' were the drama techniques that Turkish K-12 EFL teachers knew most. However, 'hot seating,' 'conscience alley,' 'thought tracking' and 'trailer' were the drama techniques that Turkish K-12 EFL teachers knew least.

#### 4.5.2. Drama techniques that Turkish K-12 EFL teachers use most

Table 7

*Drama Techniques that Turkish K-12 EFL Teachers Use Most*

Name of the drama technique	Frequency	Name of the drama technique	Frequency
1. A day in life	4	21. Reanimation	3
2. Conscience alley	-	22. Ritual ceremony	2
3. Creating Picture	5	23. Role alley	-
4. Dramatization	30	24. Role cards	20
5. Expert opinion	3	25. Role-changing	19
6. Flashback	13	26. Role play	37
7. Gossip circle	4	27. Sculptures	-
8. Headline	2	28. Simultaneous improvisation	1
9. Holding a meeting	3	29. Space between	-
10. Hot seating	-	30. Split screen	1
11. Improvisation	-	31. Still image	-
12. Inner voice	1	32. Story-telling	22
13. Interview-debate- interrogation-meeting	7	33. Teachers in role	6
14. Life circle	-	34. The role on the wall	3
15. Moment of truth	1	35. This way-that way	2
16. Pantomime	-	36. Thought tracking	-
17. Phone conversations	28	37. Trailer	-
18. Pinning a moment	-	38. Walls have ears	-
19. Prepared roles	12	39. Whole drawing	2
20. Private property	1	40. Writing in role	6

As seen in table seven, ‘role play,’ ‘dramatization,’ ‘phone conversations,’ ‘story-telling,’ ‘role cards’ and ‘role-changing’ were the drama techniques that Turkish K-12 EFL teachers used most. However, ‘inner voice,’ ‘moment of truth,’ ‘private property,’ ‘simultaneous improvisation’ and ‘split screen’ were the drama techniques that Turkish K-12 EFL teachers used least.

#### 4.6. Taking drama education in their department and Turkish K-12 EFL teachers’ perceptions of using drama techniques to develop students’ speaking skill

Table 8

*Turkish K-12 EFL Teachers’ Perceptions of Using Drama Techniques to Develop Students’ Speaking Skill in Relation to Taking/Not Taking Drama Education in their Department*

Items	Subscale	EFL teachers taking drama education in their department (n=25) (M, SD)	EFL teachers not taking drama education in their department (n=17) (M, SD)	t-value	p
9 Benefits of drama		4.52 (0.65)	4.12 (0.49)	2.163	.037*
13 Benefits of drama	4.20 (0.65)	3.47 (0.72)	3.436	.001*	
15 Knowledge of drama	3.56 (0.77)	3.00 (0.94)	2.123	.040*	

\*  $p < 0.05$

To reveal whether there were significant differences between EFL teachers taking drama education in their department (n=25) and those not taking drama education in their department (n=17) in relation to their perceptions of using drama techniques to develop students’ speaking skill, an independent samples t-test was conducted to compare the means of these two groups. Based on the results of the t-test, it was unearthed that, relevant to item 9, there were significant differences between EFL teachers taking drama education in their department (M=4.52, SD=0.65) and those not taking drama education in their department (M=4.12, SD=0.49);  $t(40)=2.163$ ,  $p < .05$ . This result indicated that EFL teachers taking drama education in their department had a higher level of cognizance than those not taking drama education in their department as regards the helpfulness of drama techniques in speaking activities to learn English in an active way.

Related to item 13, it was revealed that there were significant differences between EFL teachers taking drama education in their department (M=4.20, SD=0.65) and those not taking drama education in their department (M=3.47, SD=0.72);  $t(40)=3.436$ ,  $p < .05$ . This result indicated that EFL teachers taking drama education in their department had a higher level of cognizance than those not taking drama education in their department that drama activities created an environment in which all students could take part in the speaking lesson/activity.

Regarding item 15, it was found that there were significant differences between EFL teachers taking drama education in their department ( $M=3.56$ ,  $SD=0.77$ ) and those not taking drama education in their department ( $M=3.00$ ,  $SD=0.94$ );  $t(40)=2.123$ ,  $p < .05$ . This result indicated that EFL teachers taking drama education in their department had a higher level of cognizance than those not taking drama education in their department that they had adequate knowledge about how to apply drama techniques in speaking activities.

## 5. Discussion and Conclusion

In this research study, Turkish EFL teachers' perspectives on using drama to develop students' speaking skills in the EFL classroom were examined according to five subcategories. The results in the subcategory on the impact of using drama to develop students' speaking skills are in line with many previous research studies stressing that drama activities have remarkable characteristics which help students to develop their English speaking skills (e.g., Samantaray, 2014; Alvarado, 2017), enable them to internalize the phrases/structures (e.g., Dal, 2017), help them to develop their fluency in speaking English (e.g., Pishkar, Moinzadeh & Dabaghi, 2017), increase their self-confidence in speaking English (e.g., Chauhan, 2004; Gurler, 2015), maximize their motivation to speak English (e.g., Mordecai, 1985; Dicks & Le Blanc, 2009) and arouse their interest in speaking English (e.g., Dal, 2017; Arroyo, 2019).

Similarly, the results in the subcategory on the benefits of using drama to develop students' speaking skills are supported by former research studies. The main benefits of using drama to develop students' speaking skills which were highlighted in the present and previous research were drama activities enable students to learn English speaking in a social way (e.g., Davies & Pearse, 2000; Dal, 2017), help students to learn English in an active way (e.g., Zyoud, 2010), make the speaking lesson entertaining (e.g., Samantaray, 2014), enable students to learn English in a meaningful environment (e.g., Sato, 2001; Hewgill, Noro & Poulton, 2004), foster learning by doing (e.g., Ormanç & Oren, 2010), present lifelike experiences for students (e.g., Heathcote, 1995; Desiatova, 2009), create an environment in which all students can take part in the speaking lesson/activity (e.g., Kao & O'Neil, 1998; Desiatova, 2009) and reduce students' anxiety in speaking English (e.g., Fung, 2005; Atas, 2015; Galante, 2018).

With respect to the subcategory entitled knowledge on using drama to develop students' speaking skills, the results of this study unearthed that Turkish K-12 EFL teachers were uncertain that they had enough knowledge on how to apply drama techniques in speaking activities, which is in line with the results of Dal (2017).

Regarding the subcategory entitled the prominence of drama for developing students' speaking skills, the results of this study revealed that drama was not given enough importance in the curriculum and that there were not enough drama-based speaking activities in the course book. These results were contrary to the results of Dal (2017) who found that EFL teachers thought that drama was given enough significance in the curriculum. There is a difference between these two studies. However, the reason for this discrepancy is unknown and unexplainable. Hence, further research should be done to strengthen the results of this study.

Relevant to drama techniques that Turkish K-12 EFL teachers know most, the results of this study revealed that 'role-play,' 'dramatization,' 'role changing,' 'story-telling,' 'phone conversations,' 'flashback' and 'role cards' were the drama techniques that Turkish K-12 EFL

teachers knew most. As for the drama techniques that Turkish K-12 EFL teachers use most, the results of this study revealed that 'roleplay,' 'dramatization,' 'phone conversations,' 'story-telling,' 'role cards,' and 'role-changing' were the drama techniques that Turkish K-12 EFL teachers used most.

Turkish K-12 EFL teachers' perceptions of using drama techniques to develop students' speaking skill differ depending on whether they took drama education in their department. The results of this study revealed that EFL teachers who took drama education in their department had a higher level of cognizance than those who did not take drama education in their department with respect to drama-based speaking activities' (a) helping students to learn English in an active way, (b) creating an environment in which all students could take part in the speaking lesson/activity and (c) having adequate knowledge on how to apply drama techniques in speaking activities.

It can be stated that using drama as a technique is beneficial for helping EFL learners to develop their speaking skills. In-service EFL teachers should give prominence to incorporating drama into their teaching to promote their students' speaking skills. Similarly, pre-service EFL teachers should learn how to use drama-based speaking activities before they begin to teach speaking to their students in the EFL classroom. Thus, being aware of research studies on Turkish K-12 EFL teachers' perspectives of using drama to develop EFL learners' speaking skills, the EFL teachers can understand how to establish a stress-free, non-threatening and entertaining classroom context in which effective interaction can be realized between the teacher and the students. To further help EFL teachers know how to implement drama in the EFL classroom, professional development seminars should be organized by the Ministry of Education in all cities in our country, and these professional development seminars should be made available to as many EFL teachers as possible.

As for the limitations of this study, it can be stated that only forty-two EFL teachers from different state secondary schools of a small city located in the west part of Turkey participated in this study. Hence, the findings cannot be generalized to the overall population of Turkish EFL teachers in different state secondary schools of other small or big cities in our country. Furthermore, the study was restricted to K-12 EFL teachers' perspectives and knowledge on the use and effectiveness of drama to develop students' speaking skills, and it did not include tertiary level EFL teachers' perspectives and knowledge on the use and effectiveness of drama to develop students' speaking skills. Besides, as K-12 EFL teachers are different from one another in terms of background characteristics (i.e., age, gender, teaching experience, undergraduate degree, and formal drama education), their perspectives and knowledge on the use and effectiveness of drama to develop students' speaking skills cannot be the same as those of their peers.

With respect to recommendations for classroom practices, it can be stated that the EFL teacher should allocate enough time and resources for professional preparation. When the teacher uses drama as a technique to improve students' speaking skills for the first time, s/he should feel herself/himself secure enough to meet the needs and expectations of all students whose minds are full of questions concerning how drama as a technique can be practiced in the EFL classroom. At this juncture, s/he should receive constant and adequate support from her/his peers who are experienced in integrating drama into teaching L2 speaking. The teacher should also analyze the course book to see whether the course book already includes drama activities. The language teacher should look for other teaching materials if drama activities are not existent within her/his materials. The language teacher should also analyze her/his

own teaching method. By analyzing her/his lesson plans, the language teacher can determine whether her/his lesson plans give students the chance to improve their speaking skills via drama-based activities or not. The teacher can see whether his teaching allows learners to involve in meaningful interaction. Classroom practices also need to be taught because in our time the EFL teachers still feel unsure as to how to infuse drama into their teaching program. Therefore, regular seminars and workshops should be organized by Ministry of Education to raise EFL teachers' awareness as to how to practice drama-based speaking activities.

Finally, regarding recommendations for future studies, it can be stated that K-12 EFL teachers' perspectives and knowledge on the use and effectiveness of drama to develop students' speaking skills can be compared and contrasted with tertiary level EFL teachers' perspectives and knowledge on the use and effectiveness of drama to develop students' speaking skills in future studies. Research studies which concentrate on classroom observation of drama-based activities can also be conducted in the future to reveal whether there is a correlation between drama-based activities and EFL teachers' perspectives and knowledge on the use and effectiveness of drama to develop students' speaking skills.

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