

Full Length Research Paper

The views and suggestions of Social Studies teachers about the implementation of drama method

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Received 17 June, 2014; Accepted 7 July, 2014

Associating knowledge with daily life leads to permanent knowledge, which increases students' success in school. Drama is viewed to be one of the most effective methods that serves a purpose, and many researchers have determined that this method must be included at all levels of education. There are not much studies on social studies teachers' knowledge, opinions and suggestions about drama method. Hence, the purpose of this study is to seek social studies teacher' opinions on implementing drama as a teaching method. Phenomenology, one of the qualitative research designs, was used to collect data in the study. The research was carried out with 16 Social Studies teachers out of 22 Social Studies teachers working in 15 out of 39 secondary schools located in the city centre of Kirsehir. They were chosen on a voluntary basis in 2012-2013 education year, with simple random sampling. The data were collected with semi-structured interview form in the study. The semi-structured interview form used in the research consists of six open-ended questions which include the knowledge, opinions and suggestions of Social Studies teachers about drama method. Inductive analysis, one of the content analysis, was used to analyse the data obtained in the research. It was revealed in the research that the teachers were not aware of the stages of drama, and they only implemented drama method as a method in which students memorize the roles they are assigned, act the roles on the stage in front of the audience either by reading from a piece of paper or reciting. It can be stated that the teachers only used the enacting stage of drama method. The teachers stated the problems which they encountered while implementing drama method as follows: lack of course hours, too much noise and overcrowded classrooms. For using drama method more effectively in Social Studies teaching, the teachers suggested that first classrooms for social studies should be established.

Key words: Social Studies teachers, drama method, Social Studies lesson.

INTRODUCTION

Secondary school period is an important period for students to gain certain behaviours and to internalize these behaviours. Thus, it is important that in addition to

learning the course in this period, students should gain experiences which will give them opportunities to actualize what they have learned with the activities. The

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aim of Social Studies course is not only to transfer knowledge and raise individuals who are only equipped with knowledge. Hence, it becomes more important that while teaching Social Studies course those methods which will enable the students to adapt themselves to social and physical life and actively engage students in learning process must be used.

In Social Studies teaching, various methods and techniques such as narration, question and answers, field trips and observation, project, discussion (panel, debate, forum, and so on), case study, drama, problem solving, group work, brainstorming, exhibition, individual work, benefiting from a reliable source and acting are used (Acikgoz, 2005; Binbasioğlu, 1988; Can et al., 1998; Demirel, 2006; Erden, 1997; Küçükahmet, 2000; MEB-EARGED, 2007; Nas, 2000; Sönmez, 1996; Tay and Öcal, 2008). Drama method, one of these teaching methods, enables students to actively participate in the course (Aykac and Adıgüzel, 2011; Malbelegi, 2011; Önder, 2000), increases their interest in the course and creates an enjoyable and a pleasant learning environment; therefore, it is very important and effective for Social Studies course.

The use of drama in education as a method enables the modern man to regulate his social relations, get to know himself, produce, and exhibit his existence. The function of drama is quite important in education. Although drama is used in the meaning of play, it is used as a teaching method in education and its purpose is to develop affective, cognitive, and behavioural skills (Genc, 2003, p.196).

Associating knowledge with daily life leads to permanent knowledge, which increases students' success in school. Drama is viewed to be one of the most effective methods which serves a purpose, and many researchers have agreed that this method must be included at all levels of education (Aykac and Adıgüzel, 2011; Debre, 2008; Göncüoğlu, 2010; Kaf, 1999; Okvuran, 1993).

Drama method can be defined as a method which is created by itself for various educational purposes and acting life experiences similar to original and live presentations (Hesapcioglu, 1997, p.218). Drama also reinforces knowledge via audio and visual perceptions by acting and living (Uzgören, 2011, p.27-28). Lindvaag and Moen (1980) define drama method as a teaching method which makes social, universal, and abstract concepts, subjects such as history and literature meaningful and teaches them by enacting them by feeling the special organized experiences concretely (as cited in Önder, 2000, p.31). Drama method is one of the oldest teaching methods which enable students to learn how to act under different conditions via experiential learning (Demirel, 1996, p.61).

The terms, method and techniques are used interchangeably in some conditions and they are mixed with each other. While a method is defined as the most

correct, the most reliable, and the most regular way chosen and followed consciously to reach a goal, to solve a problem, to finalise an experiment, and to learn or to teach a subject, a technique is described as a style of implementing a teaching method or the whole things carried out in a classroom (Demirel, 2006; Erciyas, 2008; Saban, 2009). There are many techniques used to reach the target goal during the implementation of stages in drama process. Some of these techniques can be listed as follows: Role play, Miming, Improvisation, Imitating, Fantasy game, Changing roles, Envisaging, Acting stories /events, Puppets (Adıgüzel, 2010; Karadag and Caliskan, 2005; Önder, 2000).

The purpose of the study

Although the study conducted (Aykac, 2008; Debre, 2008; Göncüoğlu, 2010; Karatas, 2011; Pehlivan, 1997; Yılmaz, 2013) determined the contribution of drama method to students' academic achievement (Koc, 2013) and the teachers' competencies about drama method, no research results were found on the Social Studies teachers' implementation of drama method. Accordingly, some of the studies in the field made contributions to the discussion of the research. In the study, the views of the Social Studies teachers were taken in order to identify their lack of knowledge about "drama method", how they used it, the problems they encountered during the implementation and their reasons, and what should be done to eliminate the deficiencies. In order to actualize these purposes, this study sought answers to the following research questions:

1. How do Social Studies teachers implement drama method in their lessons?
2. How often do Social Studies teachers use drama method in their lessons?
3. According to Social Studies teachers, which topics in Social Studies text books use drama method?
4. According to Social Studies teachers, which topics in Social Studies text books should be taught using drama method in order to be more effective?
5. What kind of problems do Social Studies teachers encounter while implementing drama method?
6. What do Social Studies teachers suggest in order to use drama method more effectively in Social Studies courses?

METHOD

Phenomenology, one of the qualitative research designs, was used to collect data in the study. Phenomenological research enables individual perceptions or perspectives related to a specific concept to be revealed and interpreted (Yıldırım and Simsek, 2006). The aim of this study is to explore the opinions of Social Studies

teachers about drama method.

Sampling of the study

The research was carried out with 16 Social Studies teachers Social Studies teachers working in 15 out of 39 secondary schools located in the city centre of Kirsehir. They were chosen on a voluntary basis in 2012-2013 education year, with simple random sampling. Out of the 16 Social Studies teachers, 6 of them are males and 10 of them are females. The teachers' length of service ranges between 1 and 16 years and over.

Data collection tools

The data were collected with semi-structured interview form in the study. While designing the interview form, pre-interviews were carried out with five Social Science teachers, who were not involved in the population and the relevant literature was examined. In the light of the data collected, the first draft of the interview form was developed. The views of the four experts, two faculty members and two teachers were received for the "content validity" of the rough draft of the observation form. In this context, the experts were asked to evaluate each aspect of the form regarding the criteria "appropriate", "inappropriate" and "needs to be developed". The interview form was finalized with the experts' suggestions and views. The semi-structured interview form used in the research consists of 6 open-ended questions which include the knowledge, opinions and suggestions of Social Studies teachers about drama method. The interview form consists of two parts. In the first part, there were questions about gender and the length of service. In the second part, there were interview questions. The interviews were conducted with the teachers individually in a place and time determined by them. The interviews were recorded and the recordings were later transcribed. Then, to check the transcriptions, they were given to the interviewees and their approvals were received.

Data analysis

Inductive analysis, one of the content analysis, was used to analyse the data obtained in the research. Inductive content analysis is a qualitative method of content analysis that researchers use to develop theory and identify themes and concepts underlying the data and the relations between the concepts via coding (Yıldırım and Simsek, 2006,p.227). Some of the data obtained were analysed regularly during data collection. After the activities were completed, the data were re-examined and the consistency and the relation between the re-examined data were analysed. An expert from the field helped to verify the voice recording reports and interview recordings. The expert examined 20% of the research data independently and later he compared them with the researcher's reports. As a result of the comparisons, it was found that the reports were compatible with each other and both the researcher and the expert reached an agreement on identifying the themes. Quotations from the text documents were included in order to support the researcher's interpretations and reflect the teachers' viewpoints.

FINDINGS

The teachers were asked to explain how they used

Table 1. Views of teachers on the implementation of drama method.

Views	f
Assigning student small roles	8
Acting historical subjects	3
Acting representative samples	3
I carry out performances with willing students	2
I myself dramatize the event	1

drama method in their lessons and the data obtained were presented in Table 1.

The answers given to the research questions were presented in the tables in this section. While presenting the findings, the sequence of the questions in interview form was used. The teachers' views were presented as T1, T2, T3, ...,T16 to support the data and reflect the teachers' view points clearly.

This question aimed at determining the stages the teachers used while implementing drama method. When Table 1 was analysed, most of the teachers stated that they implemented the method using only its acting stage by assigning small roles to the students (8), then acting historical subjects and representative samples (3), carrying out performances with willing students (2), and dramatizing any event on their own (1). About assigning small roles to the students, T11 stated, "*I assign roles to my students. They work at home and act in the classroom.*" T8 said, "*Sometimes I have performances with my students about a topic.*" T4 stated that s/he dramatized the event by him/herself and explained the situation, "*I don't often use drama method. However, when I use it, I generally put myself in the centre and a theatrical presentation occurs with mimics and gestures, voice, and body language.*"

The teachers were asked to explain how often they used drama method in their lessons and the data obtained were presented in Table 2. When Table 2 was analysed, half of the teachers stated the frequency of their using drama method with responses as *I don't often use drama method (8), I never use it (3), I always and often use it (2) and I very often use it (1)*. About not using it very often while T4 stated, "*I don't often use it, I prefer it with some topics*", T14 said, "*Frankly, I don't use it very often because student's creative intelligence and ability are important for this method and also it must be related to the subject.*"

The teachers were asked to explain which subjects used drama method in Social Studies books and the data obtained were presented in Table 3. This question aimed at determining how effective the teachers used the text-book. When Table 3 was analysed, the teachers stated that while they used drama method, they mostly only use this with history subjects (7) and communication (4), they

Table 2. Views of teachers on the frequency of implementation of drama method.

Views	f
I very often use it.	1
I often use it.	2
I always use it.	2
I don't often use it	8
<i>I never use it</i>	3

Table 3. Views of teachers on the subjects which use drama method in social studies textbooks.

Views	f
History subjects	7
Communication	4
Paying Tax	2
No subject in my mind	2
Regimes	2
Democracy	2
Human rights and freedom	2
Not many subjects in the book	2
Choice of profession	1
Values	1
Consumer rights	1
Tissue and organ donation	1
Population and settlement	1

used it least frequently with choice of profession, values, consumer rights, tissue and organ donation, and population and settlement.

While T9 stated that history subjects were used with drama method and explained it as *"The Council Committee in Ottoman Empire, World War I, The School Life of Mustafa Kemal"*, T12 stated, *"it was used with history subjects about emperor's speech and the wars."* T6 stated that there was not a subject in his/her mind and explained the situation like that, *"Because I don't use it, I don't know the subjects. It has not drawn my attention."*

The data obtained from the teachers' explanations about which subjects would be more effective and understood better with drama method were presented in Table 4. This question aimed at presenting the similarities and differences between the subjects which were included in the text book and the subjects which were required to be in the text book by the teachers.

When Table 4 was analysed, the teachers stated that mostly history subjects (11) and regimes (3) must be included in the textbook and the Turks on the Silk Road, life on the Earth, economy and social life, responsibilities,

Table 4. Views of teachers on the effectiveness of the subjects in social studies textbooks when they are taught with drama method.

Views	f
History subjects	11
Regimes	3
Publicity of important people	2
Tax	2
Right to elect and be elected	2
Current issues	2
Geography subjects	2
The Turks on the Silk Road	1
Life on the Earth	1
Economy and social life	1
Responsibilities	1
Occupations	1
Communication	1
Pirate	1

occupations, communication, and pirate (1) would be understood better if they were taught with drama method.

T3, one of the teachers who wanted to teach history subjects with drama method said, *"It is very effective while telling the wars. When you explain the wars to the children directly, they get bored, but when you tell them to act, all of them participate in the lesson with pleasure. The important point here is to make the subjects which children do not like and get bored more permanent and fun, isn't it?"* T11 stated, *"In my opinion, historical subjects must be enacted because the children are mostly bored with them and they forget them. Moreover, children think that it is an ordinary thing with direct instruction because you can't give that feeling. Because the children are engaged in the process with drama method, the awareness increases. Moreover, due to direct instruction of history subjects and having to memorize them especially at these ages, the children hate history course throughout their life."* T16 stated that current issues must be taught and, *"It can be implemented with many subjects according to student's interest and desire. But, I think that it will be more effective if it is used with the subjects which tell current issues."* T10 stated that geography subjects must be taught and stated: *"Geography subjects such as types of coast and climate issues and the agricultural products grown depending on climate may be taught with drama method. For example, a group of students may act like mountain ranges running parallel to the coast and another group of students may be the mountain ranges running vertically to the coast. The other students try to run through them. While they can go inwards through the mountain ranges extending vertically, they can't go inwards through the mountain ranges running parallel. Its*

Table 5. Views of teachers on the problems they encounter while implementing drama method.

Views	f
Lack of course hour	10
Too much noise	5
Overcrowded classrooms	5
Physical conditions of the classrooms	5
Negative attitudes of the students	5
Lack of teacher knowledge	3
Lack of student motivation	3
Lack of student seriousness	3
Lack of Social studies classrooms	2
Finding costumes	1

results are discussed, and so on. Some of them become climate.”

The teachers were asked to explain the problems they encountered while implementing drama method and the data obtained were presented in Table 5. This question aimed at determining the factors which had an effect on teacher’s use of drama method. When Table 5 was analysed, the teachers had problems while implementing drama method and even they cannot use drama method due to lack of course hours (10), too much noise, overcrowded classrooms, physical conditions of the classrooms and the negative attitudes of the students (5), lack of teacher knowledge, physical conditions of the classrooms, lack of time, lack of student seriousness, lack of student motivation (3), lack of social studies classroom (2), and finding costumes (1). T16 expressed lack of course hours: “Time...Time...Time.... . It is the biggest problem. Course hour is not enough to teach our own subjects even with direct instruction.” T10 mentioned too much noise: “We have some noise. Social studies course is a little noisy, we move the desks”; T11 mentioned lack of teacher knowledge: “As a teacher, it is difficult to say that we are conscious. I read drama method from the articles. It was completely different from the one I implemented. I did not know which one was right.”; T2 stated about lack of seriousness: “Students may sometimes lack seriousness, in other words, they become frivolous and make fun of things.”; T6 mentioned student’s negative attitudes: “Everybody can not take a part, the student has an attitude against the teacher, and s/he is jealous of his/her friends. It is meaningless to create an environment like that.”; T10 stated social studies classrooms: “I had a social studies course classroom in the school where I worked before and it had U shaped desks. It was easier. Preparation was not required.”

The teachers were asked to offer suggestions about the more effective use of drama method in Social Studies course and the data obtained were presented in Table 6.

Table 6. Views of teachers on their suggestions offered about the use of drama method more effectively in social studies course.

Views	f
Social studies course classrooms must be created	8
Teachers must be offered in-service training	5
Textbooks must be more guiding	5
Course hours must be increased	3
Drama classes must be created	3
Help must be asked from expert teachers	2
The number of students must be decreased	2

The aim of this question was to determine the necessary conditions required by the teachers to implement drama method. When Table 6 was analysed, the teachers mostly stated that Social Studies classrooms must be created (8), then teachers must be offered in-service training and the textbooks must be guiding (5), course hours must be increased, drama classrooms must be created (3), and expert teachers must be benefited from and the number of students must be decreased (2). T10 mentioned the formation of social studies classrooms: “Of course it would be better if there were mixed classrooms like foreign language classrooms. The traditional classrooms are suitable for direct instruction.”; T4 mentioned in-service training to the teachers: “First of all, teachers and students are not ready for drama method. They don’t have much knowledge. Moreover, drama method has not become a habit. Informative seminars about this subject must be given practically.”; T5 mentioned the same topic: “Instead of holding meetings about nonsensical things for many hours, we must gather for such things.”; T12 expressed the textbooks being more guiding: “The activities of the subjects suitable for drama method may be added to the teacher’s books.”; T13 mentioned the formation of drama classrooms: “drama classrooms may be formed, materials may be provided and students may be divided into groups and do some work.”

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

While Karadag and Caliskan (2005,p.132) studied the implementation stages of drama method in four steps, Adıgüzel (2010,p.124) discussed it in three stages but he did not mention relaxation stage. These stages are:

- 1.Preparation- Warm Up Stage (Planning Stage)
- 2.Acting (playing) Stage (Plays)
- 3.Relaxation Stage
- 4.Evaluation Stage

Drama was a compulsory course in Pre-School Teaching,

Primary School Teaching, Turkish Teaching and Foreign Language Teaching departments in Education Faculties in 1998. The program in Education Faculties was re-evaluated in 2006 and drama became a compulsory course in the departments of Physical Education Teaching, Primary Education Social Studies Teaching, and Hearing Impaired and Gifted Children Teaching (Yegen, 2009, p.17). Teachers mix drama method with role play, a technique of drama method used in acting stage. Karadag and Caliskan (2005, p.134) and Adigüzel (2010, p.432) evaluated role play as a technique used in educational drama in acting stage. It was revealed in the research that the teachers were not aware of the stages of drama, and they only implemented drama method as a method in which students memorize the roles they are assigned, then they act the roles on the stage in front of the audience either reading from a piece of paper or reciting. It can be stated that the teachers only used the acting stage of drama method. When the teachers' length of service in the sampling was considered, most of them (75%) had a 11 year or above experience while 12.5% of them had experience between one and five years and 12.5 % of them had experience between 6 and 10 years. Because the majority of the group did not take a course under the name of drama during their undergraduate studies, their lack of knowledge about the stages of drama can be evaluated as a typical condition. However, as the teachers with experience between one and five years were considered to be appointed as novice teacher for the first time, although they had taken drama course in their undergraduate studies, neither of them discussed the stages of the drama. It can be stated that the teachers did not use drama method adequately. The studies conducted reveal (Aydemir, 2012; Aydemir and Akpınar, 2012; Celikkaya and Kus, 2009) the use of drama method less frequently by Social Studies teachers.

In addition to the training offered to the teachers in in-service training, it is important that drama method must be included in the textbooks which are the equipment and tools used commonly by the teachers in their profession (Adigüzel, 2010; Karatas, 2011). For that purpose, Teacher's Guidebook and Student's Books (MEB, 2011; MEB, 2011a; MEB, 2011b; MEB, 2012; MEB, 2012a; MEB, 2012b) were examined to determine the implementation of drama method in Social Studies Teaching Curriculum. It was found that social studies teacher's guidebook published by MEB included miming technique with one activity in the 5th grade and drama method and role play with two activities in the 4th grade. Textbooks published by private publishing companies tried to include drama method in each class level. They included drama method with two activities in the 4th grade, one activity in the 5th grade, five activities in the 6th grade, and two activities in the 7th grade.

Information about drama method in the 4th grade (MEB, 2012, p.46); 5th grade (MEB, 2012a, p.47); 7th grade

(MEB, 2012b, p.52); and detailed information about role play and dramatization methods /techniques in the 7th grade (MEB, 2012b, p.56-57) were given. Despite these, drama method, predicted to be used while teaching the courses, was used to teach total three activities in the 4th and 5th grades. Although explanations about drama were made in few sentences in the textbooks published by private publishing companies in the 5th grade (MEB, 2011, p.18) and 7th grade (MEB, 2011a, p.14), subjects taught with drama at each class level (4-7) were included. Drama method was mostly used while teaching five subjects in the 6th grade.

About the question which asked which subjects were taught using drama method in Social Studies textbooks, the teachers stated that history subjects and then communication subject included drama method. However, they stated that the subjects which used drama method least frequently were choice of profession, values, consumers' rights, tissue and organ donation, and population and settlement. While some of the subjects stated by the teachers were included in the textbooks (values, human rights and freedom, regimes, and so on), some of them were composed of the subjects which did not use drama method (tissue and organ donation, and population and settlement). This situation reveals that the teachers did not use the teacher's guide book adequately and also they mentioned the subjects which were required to be in the text book.

Using drama method with all the subjects of Social Studies course which includes mostly abstract concepts has an important effect on increasing achievement. It is possible to reenact the situations encountered in social life via drama at any time. In addition to providing opportunities for the children to live and learn the situations which they will not be able to experience, drama method provides many positive benefits in terms of developing students' cognitive, interpretation, perception, listening, and speaking skills effectively (Karadag and Caliskan, 2005, p. 99). Morris and Welch (2004) state that students find drama method beneficial while learning Social Studies subjects and developing their cognitive skills. Students study the subject about the history of the old world, read it and act the scenario. As the story is displayed, students will bring whatever was experienced in the ancient times and places into the class environment. Students use structured drama to learn the events, places, and people in the past. They put themselves into the shoes of the characters in these historical events. Of course, the students develop their prediction ability to predict their lives and the events they are going to experience in the future.

There is a great similarity between the subjects which were included in the Social Studies textbooks and the subjects which were required to be in the textbooks by the teachers. The teachers stated that history subjects should be taught with drama method because acting and

implementation were easy. However, what must not be forgotten is that after drama method is planned and the techniques suitable for the subjects are used, it can be used with any subject.

The teachers stated the problems which they encountered while implementing drama method as follows: lack of course hours, too much noise, overcrowded classrooms, physical conditions of classrooms, and negative attitudes of the students, and then lack of teacher knowledge, physical conditions of classrooms, lack of time, lack of students' seriousness, lack of students' motivation, lack of classrooms for Social Studies course, and finding costumes. The problems arise due to lack of knowledge about drama method, but if we have enough information about drama method, the problems will be resolved.

To use drama method more effectively in Social Studies teaching, the teachers suggested that: first classrooms for social studies should be established, teachers should be given in-service training and the text books should be more guiding for the teachers, course hours should be increased, drama classes should be structured, expert teachers should be benefited from, and the number of students in the classrooms should be decreased.

Setting up social studies classrooms not only makes the teachers' work easier but also saves them the time of making changes in class organization. If in-service training given to the teachers is practical rather than theoretical, it will be more beneficial.

Suggestions are offered in line with the findings obtained in the research:

1. Web pages, CDs, books, and programs which will inform the teachers related to the determination and implementation of the method, techniques, and strategies should be prepared.
2. In addition to having content knowledge, teachers are required to be a good drama leader in order to use drama method. Thus, teachers can be given in-service training courses on drama by the Ministry of Education.

Conflict of Interests

The author have not declared any conflict of interests.

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