

Perception of Teacher Candidates with Regard to Use of Theatre and Drama Applications in Education

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ABSTRACT The goal of this study is to identify the perception of mother tongue teachers with regard to the use of theatre and drama in education. In light of this goal, 35 teacher candidates trained in Kutahya Dumlupinar University in the academic year of 2012-2013 were selected as samples. Phenomenology pattern was used in the study as one of the qualitative research patterns, where a survey of 20 open ended questions was used as data collection technique, and the data was analyzed with content analysis. According to the findings of the research, use of theatre or drama in education is shown as the most important reasons for building self-esteem in students and a permanent education for the same. Apart from these, it is also declared that they provide cooperation between students, develop lingual skills and especially speaking skills, they teach how to establish empathy, increase courage, socialize the individual, and strengthen communication. It is also stated as an entertaining and powerful visual art on its own. For these reasons, Theatre and Drama Applications or courses with similar applications should be frequently used in all fields of education.

INTRODUCTION

Theatre, in simplest terms, is defined as scripted plays for stage performance as a whole (TDK 2013). Theatre provides establishing social cohesion, national consciousness, creating common ideas against problems and moving from the perception of the audience, establishing different perspectives to provide re-questioning of oneself and its environment (Yalcin and Aytas 2002). Since theatre is a reflection of life, anything that happens in life may be subject of theatre.

Drama on the other hand, is the enactment of an incident, memory, subject, concept or thought through using theatre activities such as improvisation, role-playing in a comfortable environment with a leader and participants (Akyol 2003). Fiction is intertwined with reality in drama as well, since the actor gives life to its role. It is a learning tool that increases the awareness of the

participants for, especially themselves, other people and the world as a whole, and which develops the imagination and artistic sensitivity (Pinciotti 1993).

Theatre, especially drama, is used in many aspects of the daily life. Other than educational fields such as mother tongue lesson, literature, history, sociology and math, theatre and drama are also used in many fields such as economy, politics and industry. It is known that theatre and drama have an important place in education. This is because it is aimed to establish permanent marked behavior in education. To this end, methods and techniques should be used which the individual has mastered. According to a research conducted in the University of Texas, when the variable of time is held constant, the rate for remembering is as follows; people remember 10% of what they read, 20% of what they hear, 30% of what they see, 50% of what they see and hear, 70% of what they say, 90% of what they do and say. As can be observed, as the number of active sense organs increases, permanency of education increases at the same rate. Therefore the most effective method in learning is being active during learning; in other words learning by doing and experiencing (Arslan and Adem 2010). Theatre and drama are important branches of visual arts that appeal to both the eye and the ear, and which the individual learns by being included in the

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event, in other words by doing and experiencing.

Information age enabled development of new educational methods and techniques that transformed learning into a refined concept for everybody. With constructivism, transition was made from traditional education to active education. Methods and techniques are used in active education where the student actively participates the learning process. Theatre and drama are among the most important of the aforementioned.

Theatre and drama are necessary activities at all levels of education. Drama has benefits in emotional, cognitive and social development of the child due to his / her active participation in drama. In the pre-school period, children of the 0-6 age group desire to be actively involved in theatre. In developing the imagination and lingual skills of the child, creative drama is used. First level students of primary education of the 7-11 age groups want to communicate with their environment. They are both the observers and the participants. For this reason their involvement in theatre will contribute to their communication skills with the environment. Second level students of the primary education of 12-14 age group, comprise the transitional period for theatres written for children and adults. They are appealed by more realistic plays. For their need of approval, theatre gains importance (Yalcin and Aytas 2002). In addition to creative drama studies of adolescents participating in the work group has identified conflict resolution skills have evolved more (Karatas 2011; Yavuzer 2012).

When the child and the education of the child are targeted, concept of teacher, which will raise them, is revealed. The more equipped, knowledgeable and educated the teacher is, the better education the student will receive. Also the importance of improving the performance of teachers to improve the quality of education is known to the results of the survey (Wadesango et al. 2013). For this reason, the concept of teacher and teacher education gain importance.

Mother tongue teacher is a teacher, whom the student encounters starting from the pre-school phase all the way to university. Spoken language gains importance for the individual in communication, expression and earning a place among society. This is because language is an advanced communication tool. Language, thus the mother tongue education, is important since it links people together and creates a society by

preventing them to be piles, and also because the personality and emotional world of the child develops and matures with the material of the language it first learned (Topcuoglu 2011). For this reason, more attention should be paid in training mother tongue teachers.

Since it is fundamental for raising teachers in faculties of education in universities and the significance of active participation in education is known, courses such as theatre and drama applications, creative drama, reenactment etc. are provided as compulsory or optional courses. Since teachers are going to become mother tongue teachers according to the Turkish education department, they take the "Theatre and drama applications" course as a compulsory course in their 4th year. It is expected from a teacher candidate graduate of this course the following; comprehension of educational and artistic aspects of theatre and drama, benefit from theatre and drama as a method in classes, comprehension of historic and technical information of theatre and drama, preparation of theatre and drama activities, creation of educational drama activities, use of theatre and drama examples while teaching mother tongue.

Mother tongue teacher candidates, who will teach at the second level of primary education, will benefit from theatre or drama while developing both the fundamental lingual skills of the mother tongue (reading, speaking, writing, listening) and positive personal traits of students. For this reason, teacher candidates are required to improve themselves with regard to theatre and drama especially, and complete deficiencies, if any. How teacher candidates shape theatre and drama in their minds, which are highly important in education, what they think about these and what their plans regarding future comprise the subject of this research. Thus, perception and competence of teacher candidates for the use of theatre and drama applications in education constitute the goal of the study.

METHODOLOGY

Model

Since data sources include individuals or groups that can live and express or reflect the concept focused by the study, the study was conducted in scope of the phenomenology pattern (Yildirim and Simsek 2011: 74).

Participants

Participants of the study are 35 Turkish Education Department students selected from a total of 78 students taking the Theatre and Drama applications course in their 4th year in the academic year of 2012-2013 of the Dumlupinar University selected by simple random sampling. The reason for the selection of this sampling method is based on its providing equal opportunity for selection of each sample unit. (Buyukozturk et al. 2009: 84). Personal information of the teacher candidates is as follows:

1. Of the teacher candidates 21 are female, 14 are male.
2. Of the teacher candidates 22 continue their education in formal education, 13 continue their education in secondary education.
3. Of the teacher candidates, mothers of the 29, fathers of the 18 are primary school graduates; mothers of the 6 and fathers of the 17 are high school graduates.

Collection of Data

Data was collected with a survey consisting of 20 questions. Questions in the survey were prepared as 15 open-ended questions according to the 2 sub problems that aim to collect "general thoughts about Theatre and Drama" and "Ideas with regard to the relation of Theatre and Drama in education" of the teacher candidates. Additionally, 5 close-ended questions are present in the survey, which relate to demographic traits such as the gender of the teacher candidates, families' educational status as well as their theatre background.

Primarily, no goal was set for the survey. Later, a draft form was prepared. For scope validity, expert opinions of two academic staff were obtained and pre-application form was prepared. Pre-application was conducted on a group of 10 individuals from the 4th year students of Turkish teaching, and as a result of analysis of the data collected from application, final version of the survey was prepared.

Data Analysis

Content analysis technique was used in analyzing the collected data. Goals, analysis units and coding categories were determined before initiating research. Answer frequency was used

for commenting on collected data. Quotes were provided from the teacher candidate opinions that the categories were obtained from for validity and internal reliability. In parentheses coding, N1 represents the teacher candidate code created by the researcher, and F and M represent genders.

RESULTS

Findings from Close-ended Questions Directed to Teacher Candidates with Regard to Theatre Backgrounds and Courses

1. Two of the teacher candidates have never watched a theatre or drama, 8 of them watched theatre or drama for the first time in primary education, 10 of them watched it in high school and 15 of them in university.
2. While the least number of total theatres known, heard and read by a teacher candidate is 1, the most is 32. Average number of theatres known, heard or read is 11.
3. Thirteen of the teacher candidates prefer a course closely similar to theatre or drama if they haven't existed, 12 of them prefer another branch of the arts such as painting or music etc. 4 of them prefer a course on communication, 2 of them prefer a course on based on theory, 1 prefer a course on grammar, 1 on sports, 1 on natural sciences and 1 on guidance.
4. Thirty-four of the teacher candidates do not find it appropriate for this course to be introduced in the senior year. 29 of this 34 base their reasoning on the public personnel selection test for becoming a teacher at the end of this year; and 5 on the stress of the senior year. Only 1 is of the opinion that the senior year is appropriate for this course, where blending with the class increases.
5. Thirty-three teacher candidates request the course to be an applied course, 2 is of the opinion that it would be more appropriate for it to be on a theoretical level.

Theatre and Drama Applications Course

Theatre and Drama Applications course is a mandatory course taken by 4th year students in both formal and secondary education of Education Faculty Turkish Education Department. Theoretically, it is required from students to stage a

play of their selection in the application phase of the course that covers topics such as theatre, birth and development of theater, theatre in terms of education and learning, and staging techniques. As result of the survey, findings below were collected.

Findings With Regard to General Perception of Theatre and Drama

1. Perception of Teacher Candidates with Regard to Theatre or Drama: Teacher candidates perceive theatre and drama commonly as a tool for entertainment (f=11), sincere, natural, part of life (f=9), and a tool for improving and educating individuals (f=7) and a tool necessary for individual sociability (f=5). *"I like theatre a lot, because it establishes sociability, improves empathy, entertains and socializes persons etc."* (N11 F). *"Theatre is an art form that entertains, teaches while entertains and that tells the story of life itself"* (N13 F). Additionally, candidates touch upon the importance of theatre in building self-esteem, creating different perspectives, and imagination.

2. Most Appealing Elements of Theatre or Drama: Teacher candidates are most appealed by the impersonation of actors in theatre and drama (f=16), costumes (f=10), and scenery of the play (f=8). *"I enjoy watching actors and actresses using mimics and gestures and paying attention to whether they are in role or not"* (N4 F). *"I pay attention to the scenery and costume, because it gives information about the actor or actress. They state what the actor or actress cannot say"* (N22 F). Additionally, music, sound and sincerity (f=4) are among other elements declared.

3. Good or Bad Character?: 14 of the teacher candidates state that they would prefer enacting the good characters, 17 state they would prefer enacting bad characters, and 4 state it would not matter, they would enact both characters equally well. *"I would enact bad characters because they stick in the minds of the audience better and it is harder to enact the bad characters"* (N3 M). *"I would like to enact good characters; good characters are always respected among society"* (N4 F).

4. Perception of Theatre and Drama Applications When They First Heard about the Course or in the First Week of the Course: Teacher candidates state that they generally had

negative thoughts on the course when they first heard it or in the first week of the course. They have stated that they had worries about the course (f=8) and this worry caused stress, they thought that the course would be boring (f=6), the course is scary (f=5) and they attended the courses unwillingly (f=5). *"At first, I was really scared. I was worried that I would not be able to do it. Practicing continuously was very boring"* (N16 M). Along with these negative thoughts, there are teacher candidates that thought the course would be entertaining and fun (f=6). *"I thought this was a fun course which we can let off some steam"* (N8 F).

5. General Expectations from Theatre and Drama Applications Course: General expectations of teacher candidates from the theatre and drama applications course are to stage a good play (f=13), personal development (f=7) and cooperate with classmates (f=5). *"Staging a good plays and establish cohesion and solidarity among friends"* (N1 F), *"Stage the play in a well performed manner. Generally to receive a good education"* (N25 F). Along with these; there are teacher candidates who expect for their talents to be discovered, build self-esteem, relax and pass the course. *"I expect those with talent to master them, and those who do not realize their talent to acknowledge these skills"* (N33 M).

6. Perception about the Theatre and Drama Application Course after Taking the Course: Teacher candidates generally share positive opinions. They especially touch upon how fun and entertaining the course is (f=28), how it increases cooperation (f=11), its pragmatic attributes (f=7), how comforting and relaxing it is (f=4). *"It's great and really fun. It made the class comes closer to each other, which was disconnected from one another until the 4th year"* (N2 M). Along with these, although in small numbers, there are teacher candidates who think that the course is exhausting (f=2). *"It becomes a little exhausting when there is a lot of practice"* (N29 M).

7. Perception with Regard to Following Theatres in the Residing Cities: While majority of the teacher candidates (f=32) state that they will follow theatre and would follow if there would be one in their residing city, 3 of the teacher candidates state that they would not follow theatres based on laziness or because they follow cinema. *"I actually would like to watch theatres but laziness and irresponsibility prevents me from*

doing so" (N35 M). Those who state that they would follow theatres explain it by the following; their appreciation for theatre (f=8), they deem theatre to be entertaining (f=7), theatre is staged live (f=3), theatre increases sociability (f=3). *"I would definitely follow it, because I really enjoy watching plays"* (N28 F). *"I would. Theatre is entertaining and fun. It is a good social activity for spending spare times and personal development"* (N21 F). Along with these, improving perspective, educational value and the effort put in are among other reasons.

Findings with Regard to Theatre and Drama in Education

8. Perception with Regard to Whether It Would Be Generally Useful to Use Theatre or Drama in Education: All of the teacher candidates believe that theatre and drama applications course would be generally useful to use in education. Two most important reasons for this answer, which all answered "yes" without exception, are the following; building self-esteem (f=10) and providing permanent learning (f=9). Other than these, the following were stated in order; establishes cooperation (f=5), improvise lingual skills, especially speaking (f=5), teaches establishing empathy (f=5), increases courage (f=4), increases sociability, strengthens communications, and theatre and drama being entertaining and powerful visual arts. *"Theatre and drama course establishes cooperation. It is great for students with learning difficulties. Improves body language significantly. Builds self-esteem. Helps accurate and effective speaking skills"* (N10 F), *"It definitely is beneficial. The most lasting learning is enabled though doing and experiencing. It is beneficial in terms of self-expression, sharing and cooperation, and establishing empathy"* (N13 F).

9. Perception on Whether the Course is Beneficial in Terms of Teaching: All of the teacher candidates believe this course will be beneficial in terms of teaching. As mother tongue teacher candidates, it is emphasized that the students would socialize while being entertained and their communication would improve (f=14), and it would increase permanence in learning (f=7) *"This course definitely teaches sociability for students, cooperation, well speaking, establishing empathy and more. These are very important for a teacher"* (N15 F). *"Enactment in topics*

where students have hard time learning would be very effective and permanent" (N24 F). It is also stated that the course would encourage the student (f=4), to improve its enactment skills (f=4), improve use of gestures and mimics, and help the student take responsibility by discovering oneself.

10. Perception with Regard To Competence in Theatre and Drama: 3 of the teacher candidates evaluate themselves as competent, 10 partially competent and 22 not competent. Those who evaluate themselves as not competent state that they do not have the required talent (f=10), they do not have experience (f=6), they are nervous (f=5) and have introvert personalities (f=5) and thus cannot immerse themselves in character (f=5). *"No, because I think I cannot overcome some aspects in myself. I do not have the gift therefore I cannot act as I planned. I have an introvert and nervous personality"* (N9 F), *"I don't think I am sufficiently competent. I didn't have the opportunity to improve myself since schools do not have acting classes."* (N10 F).

11. Perceptions with Regard to Improvement Requirements for Theatre and Drama Talents: Teacher candidates express that they could improve their theatre or drama skills by continuously practicing (f=9), watching a lot of plays (f=8), enacting different roles (f=7), practicing gestures, mimics and doing vocal exercises (f=6), taking place in small skits (f=4), getting additional training (f=4) and by practicing in front of a mirror (f=3). *"I would work a lot, do vocal exercises, stage exercises, practice facial expressions and gestures"* (N6 M), *"I would enact different roles and watch more plays"* (N7 F). Along with these there are teacher candidates who state that they would not want to improve their skills since they lack the theatrical talent (f=4).

12. Perception on Contributions of the Theatre and Drama Applications Course: Majority of the teacher candidates states that they have gained self-esteem and confidence (f=17), they could control their anxiety (f=7), they become more sociable (f=7), they got entertained and happy (f=7) as result of the course. *"Acting in plays increased my courage. I was happy when I received positive feedback. I became more comfortable in from of people"* (N27 F). Along with these they have stated that now they can express themselves better in public (f=6), they

learned cooperation (f=5), they discovered their talents, they could establish empathy, they gained different perspectives, and they gained responsibility and discipline.

13. Perception with Regard to Social Gains of an Individual Competent in Theatre or Drama: Teacher candidates express that an individual competent in theatre or drama knowledge would be a self-esteemed (f=11) individual, a good communicator (f=11), that can express itself well (f=6), that possesses the skill of empathy (f=6), responsible (f=4) and that can see different perspectives (f=3). *“They establish better communication with people. Can establish empathy for persons and incidents”* (N30 M), *“They would have high self-esteem. Their speech, persuasion and empathy skills would be higher”* (N24 F).

14. Perception With Regard to Which Skill Fields (Reading, Speaking, Writing, Listening, Grammar) They Would Use Theatre and Drama Applications While Teaching: Teacher candidates state that they would use theatre and drama applications mostly in speaking skills (f=31), following speaking the listening skill (f=16), reading (f=11), grammar (f=9) and lastly writing (f=7). *“Speaking and reading being the first, I would use it in all skills when necessary”* (N15 F), *“I think theatre can be used in all skill fields, as long as the teacher knows how to use it”* (N17 F).

15. Perception With Regard to the Types of Activities for Theatre and Drama Applications While Teaching: Teacher candidates state that they would conduct small plays and skits (f=21), prepare theatrical plays (f=6), start theatre clubs (f=4), and try to discover their talents (f=3) while teaching. *“I would start with small skits and plays in the class and prepare larger theatrical plays that can be staged on a larger venue. I would even hold a “skit” contest to promote creative thinking for the students”* (N17 F), *“I am planning to stage plays with short topics, written by the students and monitored by myself”* (N18 M).

DISCUSSION

Drama or theatre in education is important due to the reasons such as these forms being means of communication, having important roles in adjusting to social life, enabling the child to transform incidents in its environment to substantial experiences and contributing to the child

for applying many elements learned (Koc and Dikici 2003). In addition, to adapt to social life and self-confidence and assertiveness are necessary to communicate the importance of the concepts are known for (Gundogdu 2012).

In his work, Fulford et al. (2001), state that participants make sense of themselves, others and many aspects of the world they live in by creating, progressing and reflecting the same. In this case, people, by presenting different opinions, are able to analyze their own opinions against others'. Establishing empathy and different perspectives through theatre and drama, as revealed by the findings of our study, correspond to this information.

In his study, Akyol (2003) states that getting to know different lives, gaining experience for various incidents and occasions through enacting different roles, perceiving life in multi-dimension and providing development for will for research, learning through doing and experiencing, providing permanent learning are among expected individual gains as result of drama studies. These statements are in conformity with the perception for social gains of an individual who is competent and knowledgeable in theatre or drama as provided with our findings of this study. Despite its challenges, the professional learning, learning opportunities with colleagues to improve the quality of education is an indispensable requirement. Co-operation between schools, teachers, learning together and provide new ideas and opportunities to increase their professional development (Matseliso et al. 2012; Steyn 2013).

Findings in our research with regard to the contributions of theatre on an individuals' life and grammar skills and especially on which skill fields theatre and drama applications would be used while teaching, corresponds to the contributions of theatre to fundamental learning and teaching of lingual skills stated in the study of Altunbay (2012). Additionally, it supports the importance of theatre for development of social, emotional and cognitive traits, development of fundamental lingual skills (reading, writing, speaking, listening), emotional motivation and happiness, development of creative thinking, providing personal development, better self-expression, maintaining social cohesion and integrity, development of empathy, development of rhetoric.

A sense of self-efficacy of the students, teachers and differences in the structure of the interactions have been identified (Bayraktar 2013). In addition that in his work, Kara (2009) states that several expression issues and deficiencies are observed in students in second level of primary education such as lack of self-esteem, uncontrolled vocal tones, presentation lacking body language. He suggests drama method as an alternative method for the remedy of these issues and deficiencies. He states that this method will provide learning while entertaining since the method itself includes the emotion for playing. Referred study corresponds to the findings with regard to whether the course would be beneficial while teaching and findings with regard to the types of activities teachers would conduct for theatre and drama applications.

Teacher candidates' perception with regard to their competence for theatre and drama in this study and Maden's (2011) results of the study on the issues encountered by Turkish teachers in use of drama applications are in conformity with each other. Maden (2011) states that one of the problems faced by Turkish teachers in drama method is that the drama education Turkish teacher received in undergraduate studies is not sufficient for the efficient use of this method.

Dogan and Ozberk (2013) propose that the attitude of teacher candidates towards theatre and drama applications courses is generally positive. When attitudes of teacher candidates are examined on class basis, a significant difference was observed in favor of the 3rd year. It is stated that such result emerges due to graduation anxiety and preparation for public personnel selection tests for the teacher candidates of the 4th year. This result once again corresponds identically to the results of our study revealing that the teacher candidates do not think it is suitable to have this course in the senior year, and this is due to their preparation for public personnel selection test in order to become a teacher and anxiety of the senior year.

Perception of the teacher candidates after they received the theatre and drama applications course, and the perception with regard to the contributions of the theatre and drama applications course correspond to the findings of Okvuran's (2003) study with regard to the competence of drama teachers. Teacher candidates especially stated that the course was fun and entertaining, it strengthened cooperation, it is prag-

matic, relaxing and comforting, and thanks to this course they built self-esteem and courage, controlled their anxiety, socialized, had fun and were happy. Additionally, they have declared that they could express themselves better in public, learned cooperation, discovered their talents, established empathy, and gained a different perspective towards incidents, and gained responsibility and discipline.

Kara (2011a), in his study on the effects of the method for creating stories through drama on the attitudes of second level students of Turkish language, reached the conclusion that as in many countries in our age, drama takes its place as a modern method for developing fundamental lingual skills, creativity and grammar teaching in our country as well. He mentioned how the use of this method will gain importance in scope of constructivist education, the effects of which are seen more clearly especially in Turkish courses. Kara's (2011a) research is in conformity with the perception in our study with regard to whether the use of theatre or drama course would be generally beneficial in education. It also provides suggestions for the perception with regard to types of activities for theatre and drama applications while teaching.

Alacapinar (2013) in his study of grade levels and creativity, fluency, flexibility, originality, and the total scores ornament is raised to the third grade, fifth grade and concluded that the ups and downs in middle school. Findings of the study of Kara (2011b), which evaluates the teacher opinions on method for creating stories through drama in Turkish courses, support the findings of our research. It is observed that the teacher candidates defend that drama develops creativity and imagination the most and following that the fundamental lingual skills. It is observed that the teachers find it more appropriate to use the role-playing, improvisation and dramatization techniques.

Tanriseven (2013) refers to the use of drama in education improves the effectiveness of teacher candidates and teachers. Researcher also thought that it is essential to do practical work in real life teachers also emphasized. This result coincides exactly with the research.

CONCLUSION

According to the results of the research, perception of teacher candidates on use of theatre

and drama applications in education is in parallel to the studies in literature. Perception of teacher candidates for theatre or drama is positive.

When the answers of the teacher candidates are evaluated as a whole; it is stated that theatre or drama are fun, sincere, natural, realistic applications that improve and educate people, necessary for individual sociability, development of self-esteem and courage, establishment of different perspectives, and enrichment of imagination. Additionally they have shared opinions as to the course increasing the cooperation within the class and relaxing and comforting people.

It was concluded that the use of the course in education in general would build self-esteem, provide permanent learning, establish cooperation, develop lingual skills, teach empathy, increase courage and sociability, strengthen communication, and that it would be positively beneficial as an entertaining and powerful visual art.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Since theatre and drama are capable of addressing all skill fields, they have a different place from other methods and techniques. Therefore, they should be used more frequently.
2. Theatre and drama are efficient ways for children to learn and improve their lingual skills. Therefore mother tongue teachers should improve their knowledge and skills in these fields.
3. Theatre and drama applications should have a more significant place in raising teachers.
4. Theatre and drama training should be provided to all teachers, especially mother tongue teachers, and the use of these applications in class should be encouraged.

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