

The Application of Creative Drama in Primary Oral English Teaching: A Case Study of a Mainland Chinese Primary School

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Creative drama is a kind of art education, which is very important in western countries, such as those in Europe, America, Australia, and so on. Creative drama is, on the basis of listening and speaking teaching, through play, to help students acquire the competence of English in terms of knowledge, skills, and comprehending ability. Although in foreign countries, creative drama has been widely applied in the classroom teaching practice of primary and secondary schools, there are few researches on creative drama teaching. In China, creative drama is still in the exploratory stage. This study carried out experimental teaching in Guilin Zhuoran Primary School. The author tries to explore the role and effect of creative drama teaching method when applied to the primary school English classroom, hoping to draw some implications about how to stimulate students' interest in learning English and how to improve students' oral English ability.

Keywords: creative drama, primary oral English teaching, students' interest in learning English, oral English ability

Introduction

With the coming of the information age and the global economy, English has become more and more important. English learning is an important part of basic education in China, but in the current primary English teaching, the traditional classroom teaching generally focuses solely on English knowledge. Besides, most of the traditional English teaching is centered on teachers, who often control the classroom and instill knowledge to students, while ignoring the students' active participation, experience, thinking, and interaction.

Literature Review

The word "creative drama" comes from the name of a book *Creative Dramatics*, published in 1930 by the American drama educators pioneer, Winifred Ward (1981). Ward's educational thought is mainly influenced by the "progressive teaching" of the theory of *Learning by Doing* by John Dewey, and the theory of *Creative Power* by Hertz Mearns, professor of New York University.

"Creative drama" was defined in 1977 by the Children's Theatre Association in America (CTAA) as: "Creative drama" is a kind of improvisation and informal performance, and the process is a major form of drama. Among them, the participants under the leadership of the guide to imagine, implement, and reflect people's experience. The process of creative drama is a kind of motivation, and the leader guides a group of learners through the practice of drama. They cooperate, express, and communicate with each other.

Creative drama in English teaching is based on the real language materials and nearly perfect learning environment, so that students can easily integrate into the real context. Creative drama teaching is a process of English teaching, which can cultivate students' communicative competence and improve their cultural quality. It can improve students' interest in learning and improve their language ability. In addition, the creative drama activity in teaching is an experiential course. It is a student centered learning process with creative thinking and imagination. With the help of appropriate material selection, psychological guidance, dramatic skills, and reasonable evaluation, drama teaching can be used in daily English teaching. Creative drama teaching is the most important feedback to teachers and students in the atmosphere of emotional integration and interactive learning.

The goals of creative drama in teaching are as following:

1. To ensure happy learning. Creative drama in teaching is in a pleasant and democratic manner to encourage everyone to try spontaneous performance and improvisation. Teachers also need to participate in the role. Participants have no pressure and they can enjoy a happy learning environment;

2. To promote learning willingness. Creative drama in teaching is carried out by teachers or leaders in a planned and systematic way, such as preparation before class, trailers, posters, etc., so that children can understand the situation, interest, and collect relevant information, in order to show in the course. In the course, students develop self-creation and appreciation of the performance of other people in the group. After the discussion, they find and solve problems, so that the content can be appropriately extended and improved. This change is described as a practical and enjoyable teaching that can promote children's willingness to learn;

3. To stimulate creative potential. In the process of drama arrangements, teachers guide the participants to interact with each other in cooperation, brainstorming, to discover, to inspire, to implement tasks, and to identify problems, during the process which, students create new ideas, understand each other, attend group work, influence each other, and find new energy, knowledge, and confidence. From the establishment of their own role, students certainly develop their own potential through their performance. And when they grow up, they will create the better performance in various affairs.

From the above description, creative drama teaching is a teaching method and activities in the form of drama to realize education. It has significant influence even in the children's growth, since the participants have the opportunity to express and to learn, which is required in their whole life.

Research Methodology and Procedures

In this study, it is intended to study the role of creative drama teaching method when applied in the primary school English classroom. It hopes to draw some implication about how to stimulate students' interest in learning English and improve students' oral English ability. Specifically, this study addresses the following hypotheses:

1. The application of creative drama teaching in primary school English teaching can stimulate students' interest in learning English better than traditional teaching method;

2. The application of creative drama teaching in primary school English teaching improves the students' oral English ability better than traditional teaching method.

Research Subjects

In this experiment, the author selected 40 students of Class 2 Grade 4 and 40 students of Class 5 Grade 4 in Guilin Zhuoran Primary School, a total of 80 students, as the subjects of this study. Among them, Class 5

Grade 4 is the experimental class with a total of 40 students (18 boys and 22 girls). Class 2 Grade 4 is the control class, with a total of 40 students (19 boys and 21 girls). The two classes had been taught by the same teacher for three years. And these two classes were very close to each other in the students' age, gender, number, and English level, which lay the foundation for the smooth development of the experiment. In the course of the experiment class, the teaching content and class hours of the two classes were the same. The only difference is that Class 5 the experimental class included creative drama teaching in English teaching. The details of the students in the experiment are shown in Table 1:

Table 1

Subjects' Details in the Experiment

Class	Boys	Girls	Total
The experimental class	18	22	40
The control class	19	21	40

Instruments

Through the experiment, the author tries to verify two hypotheses: The first is the application of creative drama teaching in primary school English teaching can stimulate students' interest in learning English. The second is the application of creative drama teaching in primary school English teaching can improve the students' oral English ability.

Therefore, before the experiment, it is necessary to make clear two points. First, it is necessary to conduct a questionnaire survey and interviews with the parents of the students in the experimental class and the control class. The second is testing the oral English proficiency of the experimental class and the control class, and organizing the students to participate in the first English Speaking Competition. During the experiment, in order to obtain more comprehensive and accurate information, identify oral ability changes of two classes in the experiment, regular oral English ability tests are needed, so there were four oral tests. After the experiment, it is necessary to survey two classes of students' interest in learning English again, and test oral English again, and organize students to participate in the second English Speaking Competition. In comparison with the data before the experiment, we can make a conclusion on the two aspects of the creative drama in primary English teaching. Therefore, the author conducted a questionnaire survey, interviewed with students and parents, organized oral English proficiency test and encouraged students to join in English Speaking Competition.

Questionnaire. The questionnaire of creative drama and the primary school students' English learning interest, is based on Ma Hongying's (2012) questionnaire of English learning interest of primary school students and the influential factors. According to the cognitive characteristics of the Grade 4 students, the questionnaire adopts multiple-choice question, each question having five options and the language and the expression are as simple as possible. There are 32 questions in the questionnaire, which include the following four dimensions: awareness, classroom participation, use of the language, and confidence and satisfaction. The first dimension is about learning awareness, which is about the awareness of students' English learning, including Items 1, 10, 20, 22, 26, 29, 31, and 32. The second dimension is about classroom participation, which is about whether the students in the English classroom think positively, participate in classroom activities actively, and do English homework efficiently, including questionnaire Items 2, 5, 11, 21, 25, 28, and 30. The third dimension is practice participation, on whether the students actively accumulate extra-curricular knowledge of English, actively practice English and seize every opportunity to exercise oral English, including

questionnaire Items 3, 6, 7, 12, 13, 14, 16, 17, 22, and 24. The fourth dimension is confidence and satisfaction, which is about the willingness to learn English, confidence in English study, and satisfaction with their English level and ability, including questionnaire Items 4, 8, 9, 15, 18, 19, 23, and 27. The questionnaires were distributed two times: at the beginning of the experiment and after the experiment. Each time they were performed independently by the students in the English class. In order to ensure accuracy and validity, students were required to fill out in limited time.

The dimensions of the questionnaire in the experiment are shown in Table 2:

Table 2

The Dimension and Items-Setting of the Questionnaire

Dimension	Items
Learning awareness	1, 10, 20, 22, 26, 29, 31, and 32
Classroom participation	2, 5, 11, 21, 25, 28, and 30
Practical participation	3, 6, 7, 12, 13, 14, 16, 17, 22, and 24
Confidence and satisfaction	4, 8, 9, 15, 18, 19, 23, and 27

Interview. After the experiment, 10 students in the experimental class and 10 students in the control class were randomly selected and interviewed, and 5% of each of the two classes were interviewed and recorded. Before the interviews with students and parents, the author listed the questions for the students and parents in different interviews, to better understand and verify whether the creative drama teaching can improve students' interest in learning English and their oral English ability.

Oral English Test. Oral English Test includes pre-, while- and post-experiment tests. In order to ensure the tests are scientific and effective, before designing the test paper, the author specially consulted the teachers of entire English group, and looked up all oral tests in the 2018-2020 District Education Bureau final tests. The tests include self-introduction, word-spelling, recitation, and talk, a total of four parts. Among them, self-introduction accounts for 20%, word-spelling accounts for 20%, recitation accounts for 30%, and the talk accounts for 30%. The test questions are vivid with pictures, and the design is also very flexible, to fit the age and psychological characteristics of the pupils.

The questions are listed in the following Table 3:

Table 3

Test Items for Oral English

Part 1	20%	Self-introduction: Introduce yourself with five or more sentences.
Part 2	20%	Word-spelling: Look at the picture and read five words.
Part 3	30%	Recitation: Recite the text in the text book.
Part 4	30%	Dialogue performance: Look at the picture and talk about the picture with the teachers or classmates.

English Speaking Competition. Before the experiment, the teacher organized the two class students to participate in the 14th China Daily National Primary School English Speaking Competition. After the experiment, the teacher organized the two class students to participate in the 15th China Daily National Primary School English Speaking Competition. By comparing the results of the two English speech competition in terms of students' enthusiasm and awards, the research explores whether the creative drama teaching influence students' interested in learning English and oral English ability.

The contents of China Daily National Primary School English Speaking Competition are listed in the following Table 4:

Table 4

Questions for China Daily National Primary School English Speaking Competition

Part 1 70%	English performance: English story, English song, and English poem
Part 2 30%	Word question: Answer the word with English or Chinese

Experiment Procedure

The experiment was carried out in two classes of Grade 4 for four months from September 1, 2019 to December 31, 2020. The author was the teacher of the two classes and organized the whole process of the experiment, with the help of the English teacher in the same grade. Teaching material is the textbook of New Standard English for the first semester of Grade 4 students. In the experiment, the teacher applied creative drama teaching in the experimental class. And the teacher used the traditional teaching method in the control class. She presented pictures or words followed by the creation of new patterns of situated learning and used video to teach the texts. Exercises are mostly row train, group exercises, practice of boys and girls, the sound practice, etc.

Pre-experiment. The first stage of the experiment is the preparation for the experiment. In the preparation of the experiment, we conducted the survey among the students in the two classes for the first time, organized the pre-experiment oral English test, and organized the students to participate in the 14th China Daily National Primary School English Speaking Competition. In the experimental class and the control class, 80 questionnaires were distributed, and 76 valid questionnaires were collected, the valid rate being about 95%. The questionnaire was analyzed by using Solutions Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) 13.0 software and Microsoft Office Excel 2003. In pre-experiment oral English ability test, 80 copies were distributed. All the copies were valid copies, the valid rate being 100%. In order to be fair and scientific, the scores of the tests were given by the two teachers too. The result of oral English test was analyzed using Microsoft Office Excel 2003. At the same time, the teacher organized students to participate in the 14th China Daily National Primary School English Speaking Competition. The students' participation rate and the results of the competition were recorded. After the data being collected, the author made a comparative analysis of the results of the pre-experiment questionnaire surveys, oral English ability tests and English Speaking Competition.

Experimental teaching. The second stage of the experiment is the most important stage of the experiment. The teaching content of the experimental class and the control class were the same, but there was a big difference between the teaching methods. In the experimental class, the teacher mainly used creative drama teaching techniques, while in the control class traditional teaching methods were used. In order to explore and verify the process of the experiment, in the four months of the experiment, the author conducted unit test every month, with a total of four units of oral English test.

Five teaching techniques. During the experiment in experiment class, based on creative drama teaching theory, the author integrated personal teaching practice, some creative drama skills and activities into daily English teaching. The techniques of creative drama teaching in experimental class are listed as follows:

Creative Drama Techniques One: Physical expression. It is creative drama movement with rhythm and dance. There are a lot of psychological associations. All kinds of performance of the body movements of the drama are the strong and powerful expression of human beings, which is a natural instinct of human beings.

Dramatic body movements provide the opportunity to give learners a better performance in order to develop their explicit body control and body expression. It is a spontaneous dance, accompanied by the application of rhythm changes or props, by individuals, two persons or group, appropriately expressing the concept of space, personal relationship, and emotion. For students who are quiet and introverted, body movements can make them relaxed and lively. Children can express themselves through their own body expression, observe others, and then recognize themselves, in the activities, to improve their understanding of the learning content, and then enjoy the English learning process.

Creative Drama Techniques Two: Drama game. To use drama game in the English class, the students can quickly enter the atmosphere of the drama. Games provide a stable framework for communication between teachers and students, so that they can achieve emotional relief, build relationships, and enhance the effectiveness of self-control in teams. Because there are many different contents in drama game, students can get more knowledge from the activities, and they can obtain a variety of performance skills, imagination, and intuition, thus enhance their ability of creation and artistic. The way in which drama game is played by the learner is to represent someone or something, as the teacher describes, with a purpose, focus, guidance, attention, and evaluation. Activities of drama game create a relaxing, happy, and lively learning environment for the children. The main activities used in drama game are: mirror games, two men act, the hidden ball game, walk in space, robot games, etc.

Creative Drama Techniques Three: Imagine. Imagination is the experience of almost everyone, but it is not the skill that everyone uses. Those who cannot use the imagination often cannot create new ideas in the general rules and environment. Therefore, in the English classroom, teachers guide students to imagine, the magic power of children used in the study, with encouragement and guidance, can make them change from ordinary into special in the creation, in order to play the potential of individual. The teacher leads the students to imagine by the individual or group or in turns to exercise body action and thinking activities, to stimulate students' learning in meaning of the experience and learning content, to help students understand better and use the language freely.

Creative Drama Techniques Four: Role-play. Role-play is the way of dramatic play. It lets the students play a character or a person, imitating the simulated character's actions and language in accordance with their own imagination, observation, or experience, to express the character or the person's thoughts and feelings and other characteristics. In fact, the instinct of role-playing is innate. Children love action, dialogue, and like playing a character with props. The teacher uses the contents of the teaching text book, to provide students with a creative environment to practice, the students exposed to a simulated real scene to play a role in the development of a drama event. Students in the imagination and creation not only harvest satisfaction and sense of accomplishment, but also gain the confidence and ability to learn English.

Creative Drama Techniques Five: Improvisation. Improvisation is a way of acting in a way that does not follow a script or a memory. Improvisation exercise is, according to the circumstances or conditions, to let students' intelligence, physical fitness, and intuition involved in a spontaneous reaction face, creative performance, development situation, and problem-solving. Through this kind of practice, the students can rouse their self-consciousness, overcome the tension, cultivate their imagination, understand the relationship between language and body movements and the outside world, and enhance their confidence in English expression, reaction, and cognition. Teachers provide opportunities for students to make full use of the contents of the

teaching materials, to carry out improvisation activities, to enable students to feel the fun and practicality of learning English, so as to improve students' ability to use English language.

A sample lesson. In order to show the experimental process more clearly, the author takes a lesson "Cinderella" as an example, attempting to give a brief introduction of the main teaching mode.

In this lesson, the teacher used the creative drama activities to finish the teaching task, which made students comprehend and grasp the knowledge points easily and happily. In the following teaching procedure, T stands for teacher, while Ss stand for the students. Let's see briefly the utilization of creative drama teaching in class.

Creative Drama Teaching Procedure:

Topic: Cinderella

Subject: Creative Drama in English Teaching

Teaching aims:

A. The main task: Pupils will be able to talk about the story of Cinderella and act out the story dramatically.

B. Language focus: Pupils will be able to use the following words and patterns properly and freely when they talk about the story: prince, fairy, stepmother, stepsisters, ball, help, courage, kind ... Can you tell us about ... Do you like her/him? Why? Because

C. Affection and attitude: Through drama activities (including drama games, imitating, role-playing, acting, reading, and imagine), pupils will have stronger self-confidence and interest in English. And pupils will remember the words have courage and be kind.

Main points: Pupils will be able to retell the story and act the story dramatically.

Difficult points: Pupils will be able to talk about the story by using the important words and sentences.

Teaching aids: movie, stage property, pictures, call-over, and PPT.

Teaching methods: Drama teaching method, drama games, Interactive activity, and TPR.

Teaching procedure:

Step 1: Warm-up:

(1) Show time: Sing a song.

"Cinderella, Cinderella, we like you.

She is kind, she is nice, and she is beautiful..."

(2) Guessing game: Who is Cinderella?

Step 2: Pre-task: See the movie.

Teacher: Can you tell us who is in the movie?

Ss: Cinderella, prince, fairy godmother, stepmother, stepsister ...

Step 3: In-task 1: Drama Game: Look and do.

(1) Drama game: Magic eyes: Who is she/he?

Pupils will see four pictures fast one by one on the screen. And they will say out the names.

(2) Drama game: Do the dramatic expression.

One pupil of each team will come to the front and do the expression.

(3) Talk: Do you like her/him? Why? Because...

Step 4: In-task 2: Retell the story. Can you tell us about the story? (5')

(1) Pupils will talk something about the story freely.

(2) Pupils will look at the 5 pictures and write the missing words.

Step 5: In-task 3: Dramatic performance.

(1) See the movie again.

(2) Act 1 Pupils will imitate the words.

(3) Act 2 Two-pupil act.

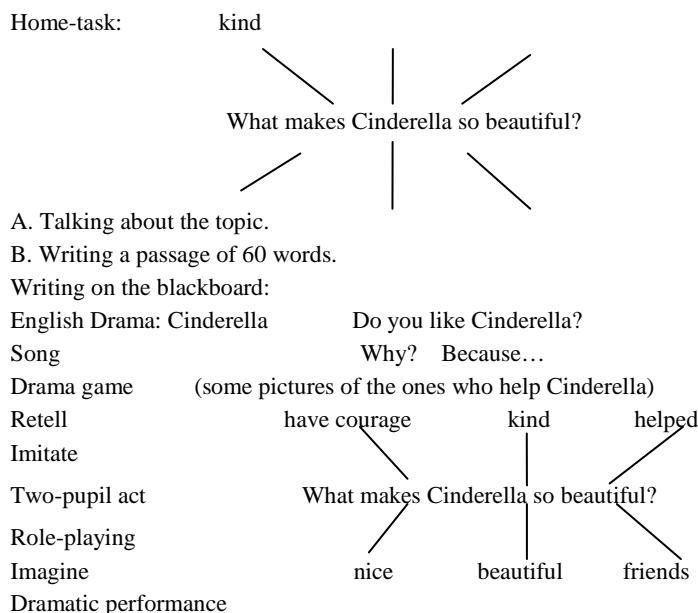
Step 6: Practice: Role-playing.

(1) All the pupils will take part in reading by using the "call-over".

(2) Imagine: Girls will be Cinderella. Boys will be prince. What will they say?

(3) Dramatic performance. Pupils will do the whole performance in teams.

Home-task:



In this lesson, the teaching plan was devised by means of creative drama teaching. Both students and the teacher felt much relaxed, and the class was full of joy, laughs, and creations. In the warm-up stage, creative drama techniques: Physical expression is used. Creative drama movement with a song of rhythm and dance provides a lot of psychological association. Dramatic body movements could make class active and appealing to students' attention and improve their understanding of the learning content, and then enjoying the English learning process.

The application of three drama games and activities in Step 3 could train students' ability in response and creativity as quick as possible. Drama game is one of the most important creative drama techniques. The use of drama game in the English classroom teaching helps the students quickly enter the atmosphere of the drama. Students can get more knowledge from the activities, and they can obtain a variety of performance skills, imagination, and intuition, and thus enhance their ability of creation and artistic. The third creative drama techniques: Imagine is applied in Step 6. The teacher led the students to imagine what the hero and heroine will say and how the story will end. It can stimulate students' learning in meaningful experience and context, and help them understand the language better and use the language freely.

Role-play and improvisation are very important creative drama techniques too. In Step 6 of this lesson, pupils will do the whole performance in roles and improvise an end of the story.

Children love to play a role in the development of a drama event. Teachers provide opportunities for students to make full use of the contents of the teaching materials and enable students to feel the fun and practicality of learning English, harvest satisfaction, and sense of accomplishment, so as to improve students' ability to use English language.

After this class, when 40 students of the experiment class were asked whether they liked this lesson or not, 36 students said the lesson was successful, because they liked creative drama games and they learned knowledge without consciousness. To sum up, from students' response and participation, the researcher knows

that most of students have good feelings and positive attitudes towards English learning through creative drama.

In primary English class, no matter how teachers design their lessons, they should always remember that students need interest, confidence, and sense of joy and success for effective learning.

Post-experiment. The third stage of the experiment is post-test.

In order to investigate whether using creative drama in primary school English teaching can stimulate students' interest in learning English and improve students' oral English ability, in this study, after the experiment, we conducted the survey among the students in the two classes again, and organized the post-test of the oral English ability and organized the students to participate in the 15th China Daily National Primary School English Speaking Competition. The contents of the questionnaire before and after the experiment are the same and it was done by students independently, retrieved immediately after the end of the survey. In order to make the data accurate and valid, SPSS 13.0 software and Microsoft Office Excel 2003 was used to process and analyze the data. Eighty copies of the second questionnaires were distributed; 76 valid questionnaires were collected; and the valid rate was about 95%. Eighty copies of post-test of oral English ability were distributed; the valid recovery of the test of 80; and the valid rate was 100%. After the data analysis, the author made a comparative analysis between the pre-test and the post-test and the first questionnaire and the second questionnaire results of the two classes. After the experiment, the teacher organized students to participate in the 15th China Daily National Primary School English Speaking Competition, between the first and the second competition, the students' participation rate and the results of the competition were recorded and analyzed.

Results and Analysis

Questionnaire

In order to investigate whether the application of creative drama teaching in primary school English teaching can stimulate students' interest in learning English, before and after the experiment, a questionnaire survey was conducted among students of the experimental class and the control class. The contents of the two questionnaires are exactly the same. The students' interest in English learning can be reflected in their attitudes towards English learning and the enthusiasm of learning English in or after the class. Positive and optimistic attitude and high learning enthusiasm in class, as well as desire to use the language, mean that the students are interested in learning English. In addition, students may obtain great confidence and satisfaction from what they are interested in. So, the questionnaire survey was designed to explore students' interest level through four dimensions: awareness, classroom participation, use of the language, and confidence and satisfaction.

First of all, Independent *t*-test was used to analyze the difference between students of two groups in terms of their interests in English.

Table 5

The Students' Interests in English Learning Before the Experiment

Group	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Sig.</i>
The control class	38	3.5318	0.35851	0.061
The experimental class	38	3.6384	0.36097	

Observation of the two groups' means indicates that the average interest level of students from the experimental class (3.63) is similar to that of students from the control class (3.53). There is no significant

difference between the two groups ($p > 0.05$). In short, Table 5 shows that students from the experimental class and the control class are close before the experiment in terms of interest.

Then, after the experiment, independent t -test was done again to see whether there occurred any changes in students' interests in English learning. The result is shown in the Table 6.

Table 6

The Students' Interests in English Learning After the Experiment

Group	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Sig.</i>
The control class	38	3.6895	0.32808	0.006
The experimental class	38	3.9513	0.33094	

By observing the two groups' mean shown in Table 6, it can be found that the average interest level of students from the experimental class (3.95) is significantly higher than the level of students from the control class (3.68), which means after the four months of experiment students from the experimental class were significantly different from those from the control class in terms of interest ($p < 0.05$).

In order to further explore the way that their interest changed, the author conducted paired t -test between students' interest levels before and after the experiment, particularly among those from the experimental class. In addition, not only the global result, but also the results of each dimension were inspected. The results are shown in Tables 7 & 8.

Table 7

The Students' Interests in English Learning in Experimental Class Before and After the Experiment

Experimental class	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Sig.</i>
Before the experiment	38	3.6384	0.36097	0.002
After the experiment	38	3.9513	0.33094	

Table 7 shows that the average interest level of students from the experimental class after the experiment (3.95) is significantly higher than that before the experiment (3.63) ($p < 0.05$). For the students, from the experimental class, their interest in learning English has been greatly improved after the experiment of creative drama teaching.

Table 8

The Students' Interests in English Learning in Four Dimensions in Experimental Class

Dimension		<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Sig.</i>
Awareness	Before	3.4178	0.61256	38	0.023
	After	3.6809	0.43272	38	
Classroom participation	Before	3.8596	0.74790	38	0.066
	After	4.1316	0.62259	38	
Use of the language	Before	3.3553	0.73326	38	0.017
	After	3.7000	0.50027	38	
Confidence and satisfaction	Before	3.9211	0.76528	38	0.009
	After	4.2928	0.44861	38	

Table 8 shows that the average interest levels of students in four dimensions in the experimental class after the experiment are all higher than those before the experiment, and the differences were significant except for the dimension of classroom participation.

First of all, from the data in the table we can see that after the experiment of creative drama teaching, the awareness of students' towards English language increased: the mean rose from 3.41 to 3.68 ($p < 0.05$). They have higher motivation in learning English, and know better the role of English in their study and life. Besides, they performed better in light of classroom participation, the mean rising from 3.85 to 4.13. The rise is obvious although it does not reach the significance level. The students like to be positive and actively participate in classroom activities and English homework better than they were before the experiment. Specifically, they did better in concentrating on the English class, considering questions actively, joining classroom activities actively, and finishing English homework consciously. Thirdly, the picture is more optimistic concerning students' use of the English language, which mean ascends from 3.35 to 3.70 ($p < 0.05$). The students actively accumulate extra-curricular knowledge of English, actively practice English, and seize every opportunity to exercise oral English. Finally, students are more confident and satisfied with their performance in English learning. The mean of this dimension increases from 3.92 to 4.29 ($p < 0.05$). It suggests that students are more willing to learn English, more confident in English study, and more satisfied with their English level and ability.

Interview

The author's interview in this study is a supplement to the questionnaire. After the experiment, the author randomly selected 10 students and the parents of the five students in the experimental class. The interview with the students is to know whether the students love the creative drama in the English classroom, whether in creative drama English classroom, they get more fun and achieve improvement in oral English proficiency. The interview with the parents is to find out the children's interest in learning English and the ability of oral English after the experiment. In order to understand the effect of experiment in the experimental class, the author also randomly selected 10 students in the control class and five parents to know whether the students love English learning, their difficulty in learning English, in order to design more suitable way for children's creative drama teaching method and teaching activities.

This interview with students include questions: Do you love English? Why? What kind of English classroom activities do you love? What activities do you want to increase or decrease in English class? Will you take the initiative to speak English or learn English on books or internet? Why? The interview results are recorded and analyzed as follows. To protect the privacy of the participants, their Chinese names are replaced by English names.

Do you love English? Students from the experimental class generally express high interests in English and English class as well. Jason says, "I love English. If we have more time in English class, it will be better and we will have more time to play." However, students from the control class are not so interested in English. Peter said, "I don't like learning English, because I think English is boring, and soon after the lesson I forgot everything." And they mention more about the difficulties they met when learning English. Betty says, "I think it is more difficult to learn English: The words are longer and longer, the texts are more and more difficult to read. It's hard to remember and more difficult to use." Her parent can also sense her negative emotion. "My child has been very afraid of English learning. She often complains that English learning is very difficult; it's hard to memorize so many words and English text."

What kind of English classroom activities do you love? Both students from the experimental class and the control class are generally interested in various kinds of classroom activities and are likely to participate in actively. Jason said, "I love all kinds of drama activities, especially drama games, role plays, and improvisation

in English class.” Betty also claims that, “I hope there are more innovative activities in the classroom, so that we can learn English in happiness.”

Do you speak or use English after class? Students from the experimental class are intended to practice English a lot after class. And they are proud of their performance in English learning. Alice talks about how to learn English after class. “First, I speak more English. The teacher often asks us to memorize the lessons we have learned. I often go home and show or recite with my mother. It is better than I recite it by myself. And my mother encourages me to use the words and sentences in my daily life. Second, I keep English as interest. I not only took part in the school English interest classes, but also developed a good habit of early reading. My English score is one of the best in the class. I know if I want to keep it up, I need keep going.” Their parents are happy about their performance too. Jason’s Dad says, “My child used to be a more introverted child, usually returned home to speak almost no English, but also quietly do English homework. Since the teacher carried out creative drama teaching activities, the children came home took initiative to act the dialogue and story books with parents. They also often watch TV English programs or movies. To our surprise, the children first initiative to enroll in the national primary school students English speaking competition, but also won the first prize in the competition.” In contrast, parents of students from the control class are a little worried about their children’s English learning at home. Betty’s parent says, “She occasionally makes excuses not to do homework. Sometimes she plays with her classmates, we encourage her and her classmates to say a few words of English, but she is not willing to.”

Through interviews with several students and parents, the author makes the following conclusions:

1. The reason why the students show different interests in English class

The rich and colorful drama activities in creative drama English class let every student to participate. The students practice to speak English, perform dialogue, and dramatic performances in teamwork. It makes them relaxed and happy to learn English. In the control class, however, the English class is boring and difficult. English is too difficult to learn, and soon is forgotten. English is not used in daily life. For students in primary school, English is not so important as math and Chinese.

2. Ways to stimulate students’ interest in English

By understanding and analyzing the views of primary school students and parents on creative English teaching and English classroom activities, the author holds that English Teaching in primary schools should be done as follows:

(a) To strengthen the awareness of the importance of English

To make students realize that English is a beautiful language and is the door to another cultural world. The view of there cannot be understood without the knowledge of English. If we can lay a good foundation of English in primary school, it will be of great benefit to the study of English in middle and high school.

(b) To develop students’ interest in learning English

The study of educational psychology shows that students’ intrinsic interest in learning materials is the best motivation for learning. Therefore, in order to make students interested in English, teachers should be flexible in dealing with the content of textbooks, organizing and implementing a variety of classroom activities. It is a good attempt to apply creative drama teaching in the English classroom of primary school.

Oral English Test

In this study, a total of six tests were carried out, including a pre-experiment test, a post-experiment test,

and four unit tests. The objective of the pre-experiment test is to compare the two classes before the experiment, so as to ensure that there is not much difference between the two classes in terms of students' oral English abilities before the experiment. The purpose of the unit testing is to test the process of the experiment, with the application of the creative drama teaching method in English teaching in the experimental class. In order to be fair and scientific, each test is carried out at the same time, with strict scoring. The results were promptly collected after the test. The oral English test of the two classes is tested by another two English teachers in Grade 4. The statistics and analysis of the test results are completed by Excel 2003 software. The contrastive analyses of oral English test scores in the experimental class and the control class are following:

Table 9

The Results of Oral English Tests of the Experimental Class and the Control Class Before and After the Experiment

Class	The mean scores before the experiment			The mean scores after the experiment		
	Total score (100%)	Score of Part 1 & 2 (40%)	Score of Part 3 & Total Score 4 (60%)	Total Score (100%)	Score of Part 1 & Score of Part 3 2 (40%)	Score of Part 4 & 4 (60%)
The experimental class	90.08	35.12	55.16	97.26	38.97	58.29
The control class	90.16	35.38	54.78	90.48	35.46	55.02

From Table 9, we can draw the following conclusions:

1. Before the experiment, generally speaking, observed from the average scores, the difference between the two classes is very small. The average total score of the experimental class was 90.08 and the average total score of the control class was 90.16, the difference between the two beings about 0.08. Particularly, in Parts 1 and 2, self-introduction and word-spelling, the average score of experimental class is 35.12, 0.26 lower than that of control class, there being no great difference; for the third and forth part of the test, recitation and dialogue performance, the average score of experimental class is 55.16, 0.38 higher than the control class, the difference being still small.

2. After the experiment, generally speaking, the average scores of the experimental class are higher than that of the control class including the total average scores and the scores of each part. Among them, the total average score of the experimental class was 97.26 points, 6.78 points higher than that of the control class, the difference being much greater than before the experiment. When it comes to each part, after the experiment, for the first and second parts of self-introduction and word-spelling, the score of the experimental class is 3.51 points higher than the control class. For the third and forth part of the test, recitation and dialogue, the performance of the experimental class is 3.27 points higher than the control class. The average score of the experimental class in each part was greatly higher than that of the control class.

The results showed that:

1. Before the experiment, there was no great difference between the two classes, in terms of students' oral English abilities, including their general performance and performance in self-introduction, dialogue, and recitation;

2. After the experiment, the difference in the above mentioned aspects grows apparently greater. The students from the experimental class performed much better than students from the control class, both in general aspect and specific aspects.

Through Table 10, it can be seen that during the experiment the difference between the results of the two

classes gradually appear. With the experiment going, the total average score of the experimental class and the average score of self-introduction, word-spelling, recitation and dialogue performance gradually increased, and it is gradually higher than the average score of the control class. In the whole experiment, there was no significant change in the results of the control class in each unit.

Table 10

The Results of Four Unit Oral English Tests From the Experimental Class and the Control Class

	Total score (100%)		Score of Part 1 & 2 (40%) Self-introduction and Word-spelling		Score of Part 3 & 4 (60%) Recitation and dialogue performance	
	The experimental class	The control class	The experimental class	The control class	The experimental class	The control class
Unit 1 Oral English test	90.12	90.26	35.24	35.22	54.88	55.04
Unit 2 Oral English test	92.35	90.49	36.37	35.38	55.98	55.11
Unit 3 Oral English test	94.66	90.78	37.59	35.96	57.07	54.82
Unit 4 Oral English test	96.85	90.35	38.61	35.25	58.24	55.1

English Speaking Competition

China Daily National Primary School English Speaking Competition is a national English Speaking competition for primary students. The author organized the students from the experimental class and the control class to participate in the contest before and after the experiment. The number of students participating is different and the result of the competition is different too. The author tries to explore whether creative drama teaching experiment can improve students to participate in the contest and achieve better results.

Table 11

The Number of Students Participating in the English Speaking Competition Before and After the Experiment

Class	Total number	N before the experiment	N after the experiment
The experimental class	40	5	35
The control class	40	6	8

We can see from Table 11, before the experiment, five students from experimental class participate in the English Speaking Competition. Six students from the control class participate in it. The total number of students' participating is nearly the same. After the experiment, 35 students from experimental class participate in the English Speaking Competition. The number of students from experimental class has increased by 30 while the number of the control class only increased by two. It shows that, after the experiment of creative drama teaching, the students have more willingness to take part in the English Speaking Competition. That is to say, creative drama teaching in primary school English teaching may stimulate students' interest in learning English and willingness to speak English.

We can see from Table 12, before the experiment, two students from the experimental class got the second prize and three students from the experimental class got the third prize; two students from the control class got the second prize and four students from the control class got the third prize and no one from the experimental class and the control class got grand prize and the first prize. After the experiment, five students from the

experimental class got grand prize, 16 students from the experimental class got the first prize, eight students from the experimental class got the second prize and six students from the experimental class got the third prize. That is the big progress in the experimental class after the experiment. While there are no students from the control class got grand prize and the first prize and only three students got the second prize and five students got the third prize. It is obvious that creative drama teaching experiment has improved the students' oral English ability, and the students can get excellent results in the English Speaking Competition.

Table 12

The Results of in the English Speaking Competition Before and After the Experiment

Award grade	Before the experiment		After the experiment	
	The experimental class	The control class	The experimental class	The control class
Grand prize	0	0	5	0
The first prize	0	0	16	0
The second prize	2	2	8	3
The third prize	3	4	6	5

Conclusion

Major Findings

The use of creative drama in primary school English teaching can stimulate students' interest in learning English. The various activities in the English class not only successfully involve students in English learning, but also provide them chances to learn with initiatives and creation. Their enthusiasms in participating in the activities lay important bases in their effective learning. Through script creation, recitation, and performance, students learn in cooperation, in joy, and in sense of fulfillment. As a natural result, their interests in learning English are effectively enhanced. They are aware of the importance of English and English learning. They participate in classroom activities actively. In addition, they enjoy themselves in the use of the English language, and gain great satisfaction as well as confidence from their performance in English learning. All these aspects reflect their high interests in English learning.

Creative drama in primary school English teaching can improve students' oral English ability. High interests and effective learning result in students' improvements in their oral English abilities. Students apparently develop their spoken English proficiency during the process of creative drama involvement. As one of the most important and most frequently practiced part of English ability, their oral ability is effectively strengthened. After the creative drama teaching, students develop gradually but obviously in their spoken English proficiency. They perform much better in reciting the course texts, doing self-introduction, and making dialogues. Furthermore, they can achieve much better results in oral English competitions at inter-school levels.

Suggestions for English Teachers

Implications and suggestions for English teachers in primary schools. In the above chapters, the paper discussed and verified using creative drama teaching in primary school English teaching for two aspects:

1. It is able to stimulate students' interest in learning English;
2. It can effectively improve the students' oral English ability.

In addition, the author also analyzes the pupils' learning psychology through interviews with students and parents, whose results show that creative drama teaching accords with the psychological needs of students. This is also a major factor to improve their interests in learning and speaking ability. Therefore, a primary school

English teacher can get the following enlightenment:

First of all, teachers should accumulate a wealth of theoretical knowledge of creative drama teaching. Only when the teaching method of creative drama has been accumulated, can it be possible for them to use the techniques of creative drama in teaching. Therefore, it is necessary for English teachers to read more books and take part in some professional training of creative drama teaching.

Second, teachers need to be effective in designing creative drama teaching activities. If the activities are always the same, there is no appealing for the students. The teaching effect can be less effective. This requires teachers' creative teaching methods be of variety according to different teaching contents. This will allow students to find everything fresh and new, and not to appear tired.

Again, in the use of drama in teaching process, teachers should strive to create a relaxing environment for English learning, involving students in learning English in a natural way, so that they can constantly absorb new knowledge better. Teachers should also constantly summarize and use new teaching methods, design activity as a creative and interesting tool, update the teaching contents and methods, and consider specific conditions, including the specific type of courses, teaching hours, and the corresponding mode of drama activities, so as to establish teaching strategies and skills of their own. Furthermore, teachers should pay attention to promote teacher-student interaction and cooperation between students, cultivate students' teamwork and cooperation, and handle the relationship between teaching and learning, so as to achieve harmony and unity, as well as student-centered teaching style.

In addition, teachers should pay attention to grasp the time and rhythm, giving students show times properly, but not to make them act for the show. Drama is only a means of English teaching. Simple repetition of the performance will not only take up a lot of classroom teaching time, but also make students feel bored. It is difficult for them to maintain long-term motivation and interest.

The problems needing attention in the teaching of creative drama in English teaching. Although the use of creative drama teaching in primary school English teaching can improve the students' interest in learning English, and also can improve their oral English ability, there are still some problems which should be avoided in the teaching process.

First of all, the activity should not be purely for the sake of activities, and the ultimate purpose of using creative drama teaching activities should not be neglected. If the teachers' study on creative drama teaching is not deep enough, and they are in lack of deep theoretical guidance, there may be too much emphasis on the form in creative drama teaching. As a result of paying attention to the activities only, they could not fulfill the final purpose of using creative drama.

Secondly, in the teaching process, before the use of creative drama teaching activities, the rules should be declared clearly. Unclear rules of the activities in the process will result in poor classroom discipline. In the explanation of the rules, teachers tend to pursue English.

It is better to explain the rules of the game entirely in English, but if teachers' language is not simple or easy to understand, students may hardly understand, for there are many language barriers before them. Thus, it will greatly increase the burden on students, making them hard to participate in creative drama activities with interest. In addition, even if the activities are carried out as usual, in the course of the activity, the unclear rules of the game will result in classroom chaos. Then, activities cannot be conducted normally and orderly.

In the end, the use of English language in the process of creative drama activities cannot be ignored. It has

the function of practicing and consolidating the knowledge of English language. In addition, creative drama activity is always associated with the teaching content, and the activity is for the purpose of better completing the teaching goal. To ensure that the complicated knowledge of English is absorbed in students' process of participating in creative drama activities, teachers need to make it easier for students to accept and master the language knowledge and language skills in relaxing activities. When some students put their focus on the activities of the form, rather than obtaining new knowledge and skills, even if the participation is full of passion, it is ineffective. If teachers ignore the use of English language and use a large number of Chinese, they would lose their teaching goal, leading students to distraction, eventually leading to the failure of teaching.

Limitations of the Study

This paper verified the feasibility of application of creative drama to the primary school English teaching. It meets the students' psychological demands, and can improve the students' interest in learning English, and on this basis to improve students' oral English ability. At the same time, in the teaching practice, it is found that there are still some problems in the teaching of creative drama.

There are still some problems with the research because of the time, the limited objective conditions, and the author's inadequate experience in researching. Her research angle and depth may not be comprehensive. The experiment also has many deficiencies. However, it is very worthy of attention about the theory and methods of teaching to deeper and better the understanding of drama in education, and about how to better use the creative drama to the practice of English teaching in primary school. The author is to continue to study in this direction in the future.

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