

## **A Qualitative Analysis of Communication on the Stage : Expressions Seen in English Drama by University Students**

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There are many examples from around the world to use drama activities in el-hi and university classes. However, as Kao and O'Neill (1998) point out, when we survey the previous researches of drama activities in language learning, most of them have reached their conclusions on the basis of the teachers' observations, the students' impressions, or the teachers' empirical interpretations through the activities. Thus, the aim of this research is to analyze what the students actually did on the stage as performances in English separately the developmental stage of communication.

The drama activity project was conducted with seventy-five freshmen of a national university in Japan, of which twenty-seven were male and forty-five were female. They separated into nineteen groups of four members, and each group chose one from five prepared scripts of English drama and had practiced it. Students performed in front of the classmates and some guest, and all groups' performances were recorded by a video camera on a tripod by the researcher. She chronicled every word and deed of the performers for the following discussion.

This research focuses on communication on the stage: the response/reaction between actors. We usually think of communication from the perspective of the first action: What an actor (the addresser) sent out to a fellow-performer (the addressee)? However, we may interpret it differently from the perspective of how the first action is interpreted: What an actor (the addressee) received from a fellow-performer (the addresser)? In a response to a survey of the transcription of students performances, dialogues which contain the above factor are picked up and classified into one of four categories depending on the phase of the developmental stage of communication based on Murata and Yoshihisa (1994), and is discussed.

The researcher concludes as follows. The whole performances of the students are generally conative; a performer makes the move first and another performer follows it. However, students show underperforming reaction to respond to others' movement. It follows from this that the students finished this project without obtaining the more profound experience of communication that is of equal worth to drama activities. We should provide students with opportunities to create a dramatic relationship with each

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other, but the way remains unanswered. Even though, it is believed that the analysis of this research will help students notice these perspectives and combine them with practical communication skills development via dramatic activities.