Chapter 6

ELT through Drama

Leslie (1990) points out that Diderot wrote in the mid-eighteenth century that "Perfection in the theatre consists of imitating an action so exactly that the spectator, for whom the illusion of reality is never interrupted, imagines that he is present at the action itself". Since the main thrust in drama is on action it has been shunned from the ELT syllabuses. Drama is closely related to theater. And "the word theater is derived from Greek word meaning 'to see'." So it is often believed that an extremely spectacular play will lay more thrust on its visual impact rather than the words. Perhaps this was the lesson behind the banishment of dramatic texts from ELT classrooms and for the same reason in the opinion of Crystal (1987), drama has not been studied much from a "linguistic point of view". But it is an undeniable fact that though drama in theater is considered to be a spectacle yet it is surely to be heard and not just seen. Because "there are some very profound and central human experiences that only verbal drama can express"

Styan (1965) too strongly asserts that, a good dramatist having a "sense of the theatre may still use our faculties of
sight and hearing to draw us into the play. As in order to get acquainted with the plot of a play the audience/readers have to follow closely the language of the plays. Thus the language in drama has its importance too.

Lazar (1993) points out that drama is essentially language because "However familiar or unfamiliar the world of a tragedy, comedy, farce or melodrama may be, everything that we experience has its source, in the long run, in words." As the language in drama is of utmost importance in depicting the action it is fit to be used for ELT purpose. Dramatic texts can easily draw the learners towards their plot because drama has a universal appeal. According to Styan (1965) "drama does aspire to the universal". In comparison to giving a grammar exercise or teaching a literary essay to the learners if a play is improvised by the intermediate class language learners, the learners are bound to be more enthusiastic because their involvement levels will be high. Christopher (1972) too agrees that "a natural education is by practice, by doing things, and not by instruction." And drama provides enough scope for doing things.

Drama definitely lays thrust on doing things thus the involvement level of the learners is the highest. When drama is talked about in ELT context the term "is applied to classroom
activities where the focus is on doing rather than on presentation." Holden (1981) rates all activities like mime, improvisation, and role-playing under the heading drama. Thus, drama forces the actors to portray themselves or other people in an imaginary situation. Through mime the actors can project the play using their facial expressions and hand gestures. Improvisation gives room to the learners to speak and act without any previous practice and preparation.

Mime can be used to portray emotions and feelings. For instance Othello’s suspicion, Lear’s anger, Duncan’s meekness etc, still, mime is not so fruitful for the purpose of language teaching. Though it cannot be argued that facial expressions and gestures are an intrinsic feature of not only drama but real conversation too. Yet Role-playing, simulation and improvisation are better activities than mime when it comes to the business of ELT through drama.

Often the terms role-playing and simulation are used interchangeably. However it’s important to differentiate between the two. Drawing out distinction between a simulation and role-playing Mc -Donough (1984) says "In the former, the learner is assumed to be him or herself, in the sense that the person who will be engaged in a profession or academic study is essentially the same as his or her language class persona,
at least in the manifestation of external behaviour. In the latter, the learner is asked to adopt the role of a character other than him or herself, in other words, to play a part. Role-playing is basically portraying or acting out parts.

Most of the English language textbooks contain lessons in form of dialogues. Take for instance the book on dialogues in English, Everyday Dialogues in English edited by Robert. J. Dixon which contains dialogues on situations like 'Opening a bank account', 'Asking directions' and 'Mailing a package at the Post office' etc. Referring to the dialogues of simple plays and dialogues of ordinary text books Widdowson (1983) points out "when you compare the kind of drama that is available with the kind of drama in textbooks, it's not easy to see how learners at any level can get interested in and therefore motivated by a dialogue about buying stamps at a post-office." Even if simple dialogues are chosen for activities like role-play or improvisation their topic should be interesting from the point of view of intermediate level language learners. They would be more elated in conducting a dialogue on a recent movie that they have watched or the sports week that took place in their school.

In simple dialogues, Widdowson (1983) further adds "There is no plot, there is no mystery, there is no character;
everything proceeds as if communication never created a problem". Such texts are boring because the topic of such dialogues is not close to the heart of the learners, the language of such texts is mundane and the course of action in such contexts is quite predictable.

Dramatic texts on the other hand are full of mystery. As the plot thickens, the dramatic problems too become grave, so the audience or readers get so tied up in the proceedings of the play that they unconsciously pay attention to the language of the plays in order to get to the core of their climax. Hence, it can be said that dramatic texts can motivate the learners to pay attention to the language of dramatic texts.

Drama is different from poetry and fiction, Millet (1950) supports the same view and says 'A poem can convey its meaning to its reader even more directly than a novel. The poet selects and organizes words in patterns of sound, association and image; the reader for his part can linger his eye or his ear over the poem, reading it"13, to enhance his understanding of the poem. Reading and understanding poetry is almost a personal activity on the other hand drama is more of a social activity. In novels the story proceeds slowly as novels are long narrative stories. On the contrary story in drama moves faster as drama is full of action. But just as is the
case with other literary genres the language of drama too has to be 'felt'.

It is an undeniable fact that "it is the spectacle that has been the most popular feature of drama in all ages and cultures." It is often thought that spectacle is the dominant feature of drama as a result it is not fit for imparting the knowledge of language skills like reading and writing to the learners.

Christopher (1972) quotes the example of Caldwell Cook who provided his students with "a vigorous, imaginative power of expression and frank enjoyment of literature", by making his students stage Shakespearean plays. Shakespeare's dramatic genius cannot be questioned but the language of his plays is complex from the perspective of Indian intermediate students though his plays abound with puns and equivocations and provide the language teachers with rich ELT possibilities. But because Shakespearean plays also contain a lot of archaic words, so it would be better to choose simpler plays. Granville (1952) explains that Drama is "A prose or verse composition giving the story in dialogue." Drama is written both in verse and prose. Plays written in verse have such a psychological impact that amateur readers consider them to be poetic texts which are beyond the level of understanding of intermediate
language learners. Therefore rather than choosing a Shakespearean play like Hamlet or Marlow's Dr. Faustus simple plays like Shaw's Pygmalian would be more suitable for the language teaching purposes.

Abrams (1999) points out that the drama of Restoration period is written in heroic couplets. English poetic drama is written mostly in blank verse. On the other hand most of the modern plays are written in prose. Widdowson too advises the English teachers not to use Twelfth Night or Merchant of Venice with learners who do not have adequate knowledge of English language. On the contrary, he suggests that "There are many other simpler plays, which are easier to understand and act out," some of the famous plays written in prose are All My sons (by Arthur Miller), Look back in anger (by John Osborne) She stoops to - Conquer (by Oliver Goldsmith) and Arms and the Man (By G.B. Shaw). But when drama is used for achieving the ELT objective it should be deprived of the purposes like catharsis and aesthetic satisfaction, the qualities it is usually associated with.

Christopher (1972) quotes from a book by - Frank Whitehead The Disappearing Dias— a book written on the principles and practice of English teaching. According to Whitehead the main aim of an English teacher is to "use
English under the conditions which will most conduce to improvement; opportunity that is, to use his mother tongue in each of its four modes (listening, speaking reading and writing)."\(^{18}\)

Whitehead is absolutely correct in his approach to ELT. And a similar approach can be adopted for second language learners as well while teaching language through drama. In the words of Brooks (1960) "It might be seen that plays, since they are intended principally for presentation within the limits of audio-lingual band would be ideal material for study by the language learner."\(^{19}\)

Not only should drama be taught to the language learners within the limits of 'audio-lingual band' but also because it is closest amongst all the literary genres to the realm of conversation (the spoken mode of language). In the opinion of Short (1996) it is often called the conversational genre, as drama "largely consists of character to character interaction, and it is for this reason that the most profitable areas of language analysis to apply to drama are those developed by linguists describe face to face interaction and how we infer meaning in context."\(^{20}\) Unlike novels drama doesn't "contain large stretches of narrative description."\(^{21}\) Drama can be called an imaginative manifestation of language in conversation.
Though the dialogues take place as if they are real, the conversation in drama is spontaneous and not real as "the actors on stage are saying words which were written by someone else and expressing views which they do not expect to be committed to after the show is over."\textsuperscript{22} Moreover, Short says the casual conversation is 'unprepared and unrehearsed'. The actors can practise their parts umpteen number of times before performing live on stage. But as the audiences are undergoing the dramatic experience they use their knowledge of common conversation and observation to understand the meaning of the dramatic context. Hence through reading/listening or feeling of drama the audience/reader engages himself/herself in the meaning making procedure; concentrating on the language used in drama.

To quote Short (1996), "in both real and dramatic talk we use our observation of conversational behaviour to infer the things people suggest (as opposed to what they state) when they talk, and we also use such behaviour to infer things about people (or characters) which they might not even intend us to realize."\textsuperscript{23} So as long as the reader/listener is engaged in the dramatic experience it becomes real for him/her and he/she tries to understand the play completely.
The silences and pauses which are a recurrent feature of common conversation are also used to enhance the dramatic effect. Read for instance the following extract:

He suggested a wedding instead, and a change of environment.

Slight pause

Neither mattered.

Pause

He asked me once, at about that time, who slept in that bed before him....

Long silence

(From Old Times by Harold Pinter)

Drama often contains the features of real conversation, as pauses are a common feature of real conversation too. Widdowson (1983) too draws an analogy betwixt drama and ordinary conversation. Drama is all about 'doing' and Widdowson (1983) says, "In drama and in normal conversation the meaning is created by the interaction... And it's this looking for meaning by following directions that I think can encourage learners to do. Unless they can do that in English, they are not
learning English, and they're certainly not learning how to use it." And dramatic text provides the learners with enough scope to look for the meaning so it can be said that drama can be used for ELT. But when drama is used for achieving the ELT objective it should not be merely considered a means of entertainment as dramatic text have enough scope for ELT, if the plays chosen are simple plays. In agreement with the view of Whitehead the emphasis should be on four modes of language-listening, speaking, reading and writing. With emphasis on the language skills drama will serve as an ideal genre for ELT.

In countries like India staging a play for the annual function is a practical idea but staging plays frequently is not feasible not just because of the lack of resources but also because of the shortage of time. As a result, rather than staging the plays the teachers prefer using the text of the plays for teaching students language through improvisation and role play.

Because of its audio-lingual appeal drama is considered ideal for enhancing the listening skills of the learners. Drama is also helpful in teaching the learners the attitudinal function of intonation as drama helps in determining the tone and mood of the speaker. If an English teacher has a sound knowledge of
phonetics and intonation the learners will unconsciously imitate him and learn proper intonation. The teaching of intonation for English teacher through dramatic text is much more feasible than teaching of intonation through the poetic texts or prose texts. While audience enjoys the dramatic experience their auditory senses become activated, they can hear the spontaneous flow of words coming from the mouths of actors. They can hear the determination in Brutus' and Cassius' voice when they plan the murder of Caesar:

Cassius:- Nay, we will all of us be there to fetch him.

By the eighth hour: is that the uttermost?

(Act II, Sc I Julius Caesar)

The audience can hear the trauma in Macbeth's voice when he says:

I have thee not, and yet I see thee still,

Art thou not fatal vision, sensible

To feeling, as to sight? Or art thou but

A dagger of the mind, a false creation,

Proceeding from the heat-oppressed brain?

(Act- II Sc I Macbeth)
Thus drama can be used for teaching intonation to learners. Read the following extract, its intonation has done:

RAINA: [eagerly turning to him, as all her enthusiasm and her dream of glory rush back on her] Did you see the great cavalry charge? Oh, tell me about it. Describe it to me.

THE MAN: You never saw a cavalry charge, did you?

RAINA: How could I?

THE MAN: Ah, perhaps not. No: of course not! Well, it's a funny sight. It's like slinging a handful of peas against a window pane: first one comes; then two or three close behind him; and then all the rest in a lump.

RAINA: [Her eyes dilating as she raises her clasped hands ecstatically] Yes. First One! The bravest of the brave!

THE MAN: [prosaically] Hm! you should see the poor devil pulling at his horse.

RAINA: Why should he pull at his horse?

THE MAN: [Impatient of so stupid a question] It's running away with him, of course: do you suppose the fellow wants to get there before the others and be killed? Then they all come. You can tell the young ones by their wildness and their
slashing. The old ones come bunched up under the number one guard: they know that they're mere projectiles, and that it's no use trying to fight. The wounds are mostly broken knees, from the horses cannoning together.

RAINAI: Ugh! But I don't believe the first man is a coward. I know he is a hero...

THE MAN: [good-humoredly] That's what you'd have said if you'd seen the first man in the charge today.

RAINAI: [breathless, forgiving him everything] Ah. I knew it! Tell me. Tell me about him.

THE MAN: He did it like an operatic tenor. A regular handsome fellow, with flashing eyes and lovely moustache, shouting his war-cry and charging like Don Quixote at the windmills. We did laugh.

RAINAI: You dared to laugh!

THE MAN: Yes: but when the sergeant ran as white as a sheet, and told theyd send us the wrong ammunition, and that we couldn't fire a round for the next ten minutes, we laughed at the other side of our mouths. I never felt so sick in my life; though I've been in one or two very tight places. And I hadn't even a revolver cartridge: only chocolate. We'd no bayonets:
nothing. Of course, they just cut us to bits. And there was
Don Quixote flourishing like a drum major, thinking 'he'd done
the cleverest thing ever known whereas he ought to be court-
martialled for it. Of all the fools ever let loose on a field
battle, that man! must be the very maddest. He and his
regiment simply committed suicide; only the pistol missed fire:
that's all.

RAINAI: [Deeply wounded but steadfastly loyal to her ideals]
indeed! Would you know him again if you saw him?

THE MAN: Shall I ever forget him?

(From Arms and the Man by G.B. Shaw)

Lesson Plan no.1 An Extract from Arms and The Man

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skills and language areas covered</th>
<th>Listening</th>
<th>Getting used to of the signs and sounds used in intonation.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Extensive reading</td>
<td>Imbibing a working knowledge of the English tunes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Step 1: The teacher asks the learners to read through the extract quickly.
Step 2: The teacher gives a loud reading of the text exemplifying the English tunes.

Step 3: The teacher then explains the sign to the learners and the tunes these signs stand for. The sign as follows:

a) Falling Tune

Low fall: - [\] is used to indicate matter of fact or detached tunes.

High fall: -[\'] is used to indicate strong agreement or disagreement or to express surprise, anger or disbelief.

b) Rising Tune

Low Rise:- [\] is used to indicate encouragement, bored or resigned attitude, uninterested questions or greetings.

High Rise:- [\'] is used to indicate questions, surprise, disbelief or eagerness in English tunes.

c) Falling rising tune:- [\^] is used to indicate something not expressed or something not expressed or something that is implied.

d) Rising falling tune:- [\^] usually expresses warmth, friendly attitude, anger, sarcasm or suspicion.
Step 4: Once the students become familiar with the English sign and tunes the teacher writes the entire extract on black board. And explains through the sign how intonation helps in determining the emotional attitude of the speaker and also how the learners should also intone their utterances while speaking English language. This exercise should be followed by intensive drills the teacher can give the learner a number of different extract from plays for the practise intonation. This practice will also help the teacher to test his / her learners’ knowledge of intonation.

Step 5: The teacher provides the learners with short extracts from different plays and asks the learners to intone them. For instance the teacher can distribute copies of following extracts to the learners:

1. The action of the play takes place in a state prison. The time is night.

**Scene:** A well – defined spotlight from above reveals a desk and two chairs on the left side of the stage. This is Warden Coughlin’s office. Another well defined spotlight on the right side of the stage reveals a chair and a section of the upright wall. There is a small barred window in the wall about six feet from the floor. This is the executioner’s chamber.
When the curtain rises Haley is shown pacing nervously back and forth, puffing on a cigarette. He wears a prison guard’s uniform. He is about twenty eight years old, and is pale and nervous. He looks at the grim switch on the wall and shudders. Quinn enters, a young man, cigarette hanging from his lips, hat on the back of his head, wrinkled overcoat hanging unbuttoned. Haley sees him and starts in surprise.]

Quinn : Sorry. I didn’t mean to startle you.

Haley : That’s all right. I’m just a bit nervous.

Quinn : I don’t blame you. This isn’t exactly a picnic.

Haley : No. I don’t believe I know who you are.

Quinn : (Slouching into the chair and puffing his cigratte). Quinn.

(From The Other Side by Jack Stuart Knapp)

2. Helmer: I see. But tell me now, you little prodigal, what have you thought of for yourself?

Nora : For myself? Oh, I don’t want anything at all.

Helmer: Of course you do. Tell me just what – within reason – you’d most like to have.
Nora: I honestly don't know. Oh, listen, Torvald -

Helmer: Well?

Nora (fumbling at his coat buttons, without looking at him): If you want to give me something, then may be you could – you could -

Helmer: Come on, out with it.

Nora(hurriedly): You could give me money, Torvald. No more than you think you can spare; then one of these days I'll buy something with it.

(from A Doll House by Henrik Ibsen)

Step 6: Once the learners finish marking intonation the teacher takes back their sheets and corrects them. When the teacher corrects the sheets he/she writes his/her comments too.

So, it can be said that dramatic texts can be used for imparting the knowledge of intonation to the language learners.

Drama is not only suitable for teaching the learners spoken patterns in language but also for teaching them other aspects of language usage for example grammar, word stress, sentence stress, syntax, punctuation, pronunciation etc.
Dramatic texts are not only helpful in enhancing the listening and speaking skills but also for the improvement of reading and writing skills Millet (1950) with reference to the acquisition of the reading skill says “every English course should furnish some guidance to the acquisition of this important skill.” Reading is a language skill, which enhances the vocabulary as well as the knowledge of the syntax. In Miller’s (1950) opinion drama can be used “to train young people in the intensive reading of literature.” Dramatic texts are full of mystery, their intriguing plots render them the interest which makes them fit for the acquisition of reading skills.

Plays can also be useful for bringing about improvement in the writing skills of the learners. To quote Elgar (2000) describes playwriting to be “a multifaceted activity which has great potential for use in language classrooms.” The teacher can ask the intermediate learners to write a play on a topic that seems appealing to them for instance ‘School Friends Meet in College after Five Long Years’. Learners can choose any number of characters they wish to have. However the teacher sets a word limit of three hundred words. Once all the learners finish writing their plays. The teacher can select the best play and it can be improvised in the class. This sort of activity is going to boast the morale of the learners. “Through
writing plays students can develop greater self-esteem, become more autonomous learners, and feel a sense of accomplishment. But writing plays can be too taxing and time consuming for Indian intermediate language learners the teacher can ask them to write dialogues instead.

Burton (1980) feels an English teacher ought to concentrate on "linguistic mechanisms that are, in some way, being used and exploited by the writer of dialogue, and reacted to by the reader of the dialogue" for making English plays successful for the achievement of the ELT purpose. An English teacher can use and explore a single play for teaching various language items to the learners. A single dramatic text can also be used for enhancing all the language skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing) of the learners. Take for instance the exhaustive exploration of the play The Hour of Truth for the achievement of ELT objectives. But before taking up this particular play the teacher will again make the students familiar with the signs in English tunes.

a) Falling Tune

Low fall: - [i] is used to indicate matter of fact or detached tunes.
High fall: -[\'] is used to indicate strong agreement or disagreement or to express surprise, anger or disbelief.

b) Rising Tune

Low Rise:- [\] is used to indicate encouragement, bored or resigned attitude, uninterested questions or greetings.

High Rise:- [\'] is used to indicate questions, surprise, disbelief or eagerness in English tunes.

c) Falling rising tune:- [\^] is used to indicate something not expressed or something not expressed or something that is implied.

d) Rising falling tune:- [\^] usually expresses warmth, friendly attitude, anger, sarcasm or suspicion.

The teacher must also explain the phenomenon of words stress to the learners. He/she can tell the learners that most of the two syllable words in English language have one stressed and one weak syllable. For example Jones (1991) points out that nouns ‘increase’ and ‘insult’ have stress on the first syllable by the second syllable is left unstressed but verbs ‘increase’ and ‘insult’ have stress on the second syllable while first syllable is left unstressed. For instance:
Jones 1991 further adds that "In English words of three or more syllables there is mostly one strong syllable and occasionally two. The other syllables in the words are as a rule weak ('unstressed'), but in some words there is a syllable with secondary stress." See the following examples:

Excessively /ɪk'sesɪvli/  
Philanthropist /ˈfɪlənθrəpɪst/  
Litigation /ˈlɪtɪɡeɪʃn/  

Once the teacher finishes explaining the phenomenon of English tunes and word stress to the learners he/she can ask them to read carefully the following play. *The Hour of Truth* by P.Wilde. It features in the book *Impressions* edited by Kirti Kapur and Rajendra Dixit, published by NCERT. The book is taught to XIIth class students in Aligarh Muslim University:
Characters

Robert Baldwin
Martha, his wife
John, his son
Evie, his daughter
Mr. Marshall
A Maid

The Scene: At Baldwin's

It is a rather hot and sultry Sunday afternoon, and the sun overhead and the baked clay underfoot are merciless. In the distance, lowering clouds give promise of coming relief. And at the parlour window of a trim little cottage the Baldwin family is anxiously awaiting the return of its head.

John, the son, an average young man of twenty-seven, is smoking a pipe as philosophically as if this day were in no whit more momentous than other. But his mother, trying to compose herself with her knitting, has made little progress in the last half hour; and Evie, his sister, takes no pains to conceal her nervousness.
There is a tense pause. It seems as if none of them likes to break the silence. For the tenth time in ten minutes. Evie, goes to the window and looks out along the sultry road.]

MARTHA: It's time he was home.

EVIE: Yes, Mother.

MARTHA: I do hope he hasn't forgotten his umbrella; he has such a habit of leaving it behind him...

EVIE: Yes, Mother.

MARTHA: It might rain. Don't you think so, Evie?

[Without waiting for an answer she goes to the window and looks out anxiously.] The sky is so dark. (She starts.) There was a flash of lighting! [John rises slowly, moves to a center table, and knocks the ashes out of his pipe. His mother turns to him.] John, run into your father's room and see that the windows are closed. That's good boy.

JOHN: Right- o. [He goes.]

EVIE: (after a pause): Mother. [There is no answer.] Mother! [Mrs. BALDWIN turns slowly.] What does Mr. Gresham want with him? Has he done any thing wrong?

EVIE: Then why did Mr. Gresham send for him?

MARTHA: He wanted to talk to him.

EVIE: What about? Mr. Gresham has been arrested: they're going to try him tomorrow. What can he want with Father?

MARTHA: Your father will have to give evidence.

EVIE: But he's going to give evidence against Mr. Gresham. Why should Mr. Gresham want to see him?

MARTHA: I don't know, Evie. You know, your father doesn't say much about his business affairs. (She pauses.) I didn't know there was anything wrong with the bank until I saw it in the papers. Your father wouldn't tell me to draw my money out- he thought it wasn't loyal to Mr. Gresham (Evie nods). I did it of my own accord--- against his wishes----- suspected....

EVIE: (after a pause): Do you think that Father had anything to do with ---with ... [She does not like to say it.]
MARTHA: With the wrecking of the bank? You know him better than that, Evie.

EVIE: But did he know what was going on? You know what the papers are saying—

MARTHA: They haven't been fair to him, Evie.

EVIE: Perhaps not. But they said he must have been a fool not to know. They said that only he could have known - he and Mr. Gresham. Why didn't he stop it?

MARTHA: He was acting under Mr. Gresham's orders.

EVIE: (Contemptuously): Mr. Gresham's orders! Did he have to follow them?

MARTHA: (after a pause): Evie, I don't believe your father ever did a wrong thing in his life--- not if he knew it was wrong. He found out by accident--- found out what Mr. Gresham was doing.

EVIE: How do you know that?

MARTHA: I don't know it: I suspect it--- something he said.[eagerly] You see, Evie, he can't have done anything wrong. They haven't indicted him.
EVIE: (slowly): No. They didn't indict him--- because they want him to testify against Mr. Gresham. That's little consolation, Mother. [John re-enters]

MARHTA: (Seizing the relief): Were the windows open, John?

JOHN (shortly): I've closed them. [He crosses to the table, takes up his pipe and refills it.] Look here, Mater; what does Gresham want with the governor?

EVIE (nodding): I've just been asking that.

MARTHA: I don't know, John.

MARTHA: Didn't you ask him? [As she does not answer] Well?

MARTHA: Yes, I asked him. He didn't say, John. [anxiously] I don't think he knew himself.

JOHN (after an instant's thought): I was talking to the assistant cashier yesterday.

EVIE: Donovan?

JOHN: Yes, Donovan, I saw him up at the Athletic Club. He said that nobody had any idea that there was anything wrong until the crash came. Donovan had been there eight years. He thought he was taken care of for the rest of his life. He had got married on
the strength of it. And then, one morning, there was a sign up on the door. It was like a bolt out of a clear sky.

EVIE: And Father?

JOHN: He said the governor must have known. He'll swear nobody else did. You see, Father was closer to Gresham than anyone else. That puts him in a nice position, doesn't it?

MARTHA: What do you mean, John?

JOHN: The governor the only witness against John Gresham--- and me named after him! John Gresham Baldwin, at your service!

MARTHA: Your father will do this duty, John, no matter what comes of it.

JOHN (shortly): I know it. And I'm not sure but what if it's right. [They look at him inquiringly.] There's John Gresham, grown rich in twenty years, and the governor pegging along as his secretary at sixty dollars a week!

MARTHA: Your father never complained.
JOHN: No; that's just the pity of it. He didn't complain. Well, he'll have his chance tomorrow. He'll go on the stand, and when he's through, they'll put John Gresham where he won't be able to hurt anybody for a while. Wasn't satisfied with underpaying his employees; had to rob his depositors! Serves him jolly well right!

MARTHA (rather timidly): I don't think your father would like you to talk that way, John.

JOHN: (shrugs his shoulders; speaks contemptuously): Humph!

MARTHA: Your father has nothing against Mr. Gresham. He will tell the truth – nothing but the truth.

JOHN: Did you think I expected him to lie? Not father! He'll tell the truth: just the truth. It'll be plenty!

EVIE (at the window): There's father now!

[There is the click of a latchkey outside, Evie makes for the door.]

MARTHA: Evie! You stay here: let me talk to him first.
[MARTHA hurries out. JOHN and EVIE look at each other.]

JOHN: Wonder what Gresham had to say to him? [EVIE shrugs her shoulders. He turns away to the window.] It's started to rain.

EVIE: Yes.

[There is a pause. Suddenly JOHN crosses to the door, and flings it open.]

JOHN: Hullo, Dad!

BALDWIN (coming in, followed by MARTHA): How are you, my boy? [He shakes hands with JOHN.] Evie! (He kisses her).

MARTHA: You are sure your shoes aren't wet, Robert?

BALDWIN (shaking his head): I took the car. Not a drop on me. See? [He passes his hands over sleeves. He goes to a chair: sits. There is an awkward pause.]

JOHN: Well, Dad? Don't think it's about time you told us something?

BALDWIN: Told you something? I don't understand, John.
JOHN: People have been talking about you—- saying things.....

BALDWIN: What kind of things, John?

JOHN: You can imagine: rotten things. And I couldn't contradict them.

BALDWIN: Why not, John?

JOHN: Because I didn't know.

BALDWIN: Did you have to know? Wasn't it enough that you knew your father?

JOHN (after a pause): I beg your pardon, sir.

BALDWIN: It was only a day before the smash-up that I found out what Gresham was doing. [He pauses. They are listening. Intently.] I told him he would have to make good. He said he couldn't ---

EVIE (as he does not continue): And what happened?

BALDWIN: I told him he would have to do the best he could—and the first step would be to close the bank. He didn't want to do that.

MARHTA: But he did it.
BALDWIN: I made him do it. He was angry——very angry, but I had the whip hand.

EVIE: The papers didn't mention that.

BALDWIN: I didn't think it was necessary to tell them.

MARTHA: But you let your name rest under a cloud meanwhile.

BALDWIN: It will be cleared tomorrow, won't it? [He pauses.] Today Gresham sent for me. The trial begins in twenty-four hours. I'm the only witness against him. He asked ---you can guess what.

JOHN (indignantly): He wanted you to lie to save his skin, eh? Wanted you to perjure yourself?

BALDWIN: That wouldn't be necessary. John. He just wanted me to have an attack of poor memory. If I tell all I know, John Gresham will go to jail——no power on earth can save him from it. But he wants me to forget a little——just the essential things. When they question me I can answer, "I don't remember". And there you are.

JOHN: It would be a lie, Dad!
BALDWIN (smiling): Of course But it's done every day. And that they couldn't touch me—any more than they could convict him.

MARTHA (quivering with indignation): How dared he—how dared he ask such a thing—.

EVIE: What did you say, Father?

BALDWIN: (smiling, and raising his eyes to JOHN'S): Well, son, what would you have said?

JOHN: I'd have told him to go to the devil!

BALDWIN (nodding): I did.

JOHN: Bully for you, Governor!

MARTHA (half to herself): I knew! I knew!

BALDWIN: I didn't use your words, John. He's too old a friend of mine for that. But didn't mince matters any. He understood what I meant.

EVIE: And what did he say then?

BALDWIN: There wasn't much to say. You see, he wasn't surprised. He's known me for thirty-five years, and, well [with simple pride] anybody who's known me for
thirty-five years doesn't expect me to haggle with my conscience. If it had been anybody else I would have struck him across the face. But John Gresham and I were boys together. We worked side by side. And I've been in his employ ever since he started in for himself. He is desperate – he doesn’t know what he is doing – or he wouldn't have offered me money.

John (furious): Offered you money, Dad?

BALDWIN: He’d put it aside, ready for the emergency. If they don't convict him, he’ll hand it over to me. The law can't stop him. But if I live until tomorrow night, they will convict him! [He sighs]. God knows I want no snare in bringing about his punishment – [He breaks off. EVIE pats his hand silently] Young man and old man, I've worked with him or for him the best part of my life. I'm loyal to him – I've always been loyal to him – but when John Gresham ceases to be an honest man, John Gresham and I part company!

MARTHA (weeping softly): Robert! Robert!

BALDWIN: I've got only a few years to live, but I'll live those as I've lived the rest of my life. I'll go to my grave
The rain's stopped, hasn't it?

EVIE (following him and taking his hand): Yes, Father.

BALDWIN: It'll be a fine day tomorrow.

(There is a pause.)

JOHN: Dad.

BALDWIN: Yes?

JOHN: What did Gresham offer you?

BALDWIN (simply): A hundred thousand dollars.

EVIE: What!

MARTHA: Robert!

BALDWIN: He put it aside for me without anybody knowing it.

It's out of his private fortune, he says. It's not the depositors' money – as if that made any difference.

EVIE (as if hypnotised): He offered you a hundred thousand dollars?
BALDWIN (smiling at her amazement): I could have had it for the one word “Yes” – or even for nodding my head – or a look of the eyes.

JOHN: How – how do you know he meant it?

BALDWIN: His word is good.

JOHN: Even Now?

BALDWIN: He never lied to me, John. [He pauses.] I suppose my eyes must have shown something I didn’t feel. He noticed it. He unlocked a drawer and showed me the hundred thousand.

JOHN: In cash?

BALDWIN: In thousand-dollar bills. They were genuine: I examined them.

EVIE (slowly): And for that he wants you to say, “I don’t remember.”

BALDWIN (Smiling): Just that: three words only.

JOHN: But you won’t?

BALDWIN (Shaking his head): Those three words would choke me if I tried to speak them. For some other man,
perhaps, it would be easy. But for me? All of my past would rise up and strike me in the face. It would mean to the world that for years I had been living a lie; that I was not the honourable man I thought I was. When John Gresham offered me money, I was angry. But when I rejected it, and he showed no surprise, then I was pleased. It was a compliment, don't you think so?

JOHN (slowly): Rather an expensive compliment.

BALDWIN: Eh?

JOHN: A compliment which cost you a hundred thousand dollars.

BALDWIN: A compliment which was worth a hundred thousand dollars. I’ve never had that much money to spend in my life. John, but if I had I couldn’t imagine a finer way to spend it.

JOHN (slowly): Yes, I suppose so.

MARTHA (after a pause): Will the depositors loose much, Robert?

BALDWIN (emphatically): The depositors will not loose a cent.
EVIE (surprised): But the papers said---

BALDWIN (interrupting): They had to print something: they guessed. I know. I tell you.

MARTHA: But you never said so before.

BALDWIN: I left that for Gresham. It will come out tomorrow.

JOHN: Why tomorrow? Why didn’t you say so before? The papers asked you often enough.

BALDWIN: Nothing forced me to answer, John.

JOHN: That wasn’t your real reason, was it, Dad? You knew the papers would keep right on calling you names [BALDWIN does not answer. JOHN’S face lights, up with sudden understanding.] You wanted to let Gresham announce it himself: because it will be something in his favour! Eh?

BALDWIN: Yes...... We were able to save something from the wreck, Gresham and I. it was more than I had expected-------- almost twice as much---- and with what Gresham has it will enough.

EVIE: Even without the hundred thousand?

[BALDWIN does not answer.]
JOHN (insistently): Without the memory that Gresham had put away for you?

BALDWIN: Yes, I didn't know there was the hundred thousand until today. Gresham didn't tell me. We reckoned without it.

EVIE: Oh!

JOHN: And you made both ends meet?

BALDWIN: Quite easily. (He smiles.) Mr. Marshall is running the reorganization; Mr. Marshall of the Third national. He hasn't the least idea it's going to turn out so well.

(There is a pause.)

JOHN: They're going to punish Gresham, aren't they?

BALDWIN: I'm afraid so.

JOHN: What for?

BALDWIN: Misappropriating the funds of the ----

JOHN: (interrupting) : Oh, I know that. But what has he committed?

BALDWIN: That's a crime, John.
EVIE: But nobody looses anything by it?

Baldwin: It's a crime nevertheless.

John: And they're going to punish him for it!

Baldwin: They can't let him go, John. He's too conspicuous.

John: Do you think that's right, Governor?

Baldwin: My opinion doesn't matter, John.

John: But what do you think?

Baldwin: I think—I think that I'm sorry for John Gresham—terribly sorry.

John (Slowly): It's nothing but a technicality, Dad. Nobody losses a cent. It's rather hard on Gresham, I say.

Baldwin: (after a pause): Yes, John.

Evie (timidly): Would it be such an awful thing, Father, if you let him off?

Baldwin (smiling): I wish I could, Evie. But I'm not the judge.

Evie: No, but...

Baldwin: But what?
EVIE: You're the only witness against him.

BALDWIN (nonplussed): Evie!

JOHN: She's right, Governor.

BALDWIN: You, too, John?

JOHN: it's going to be a nasty mess if they put John Gresham in jail--- with your own son named after him! It's going to be pleasant for me! John Gresham Baldwin!

MARTHA (after a pause): Robert, I'm not sure I understood what you said before. What did Mr. Gresham want you to do for him?

BALDWIN: Get him off tomorrow.

MARTHA: You could do that?

BALDWIN: Yes.

MARTHA: How?

BALDWIN: By answering, "I don't remember" when they ask me dangerous questions.

MARTHA: Oh! And you do remember?
BALDWIN: Yes, nearly everything.

JOHN: No matter what they ask you?

BALDWIN: I can always refresh my memory. You see, I have notes.

JOHN: But without those notes you wouldn't remember?

BALDWIN: What do you mean, John?

JOHN (without answering): As a matter of fact, you will have to rely on your notes nearly altogether, won't you?

BALDWIN: Everybody else does the same thing.

JOHN: Then it won't be far from the truth, if you say. "I don't remember."

MARTHA: I don't see that Mr. Gresham is asking so much of you.

BALDWIN: Martha!

MARTHA: Robert, I'm as honourable as you are—

BALDWIN: That goes without saying, Martha.

MARTHA: It doesn't seem right to me to send an old friend to jail.[ As he speaks she holds up her hand.] Now
don't interrupt me! I've been thinking. The day John was baptized, when Mr. Gresham stood sponsor for him: how proud we were! And when we came home from the church you said------ do you remember what you said, Robert?

BALDWIN: No. What was it?

MARTHA: You said, "Martha, may our son always live up to the name which we have given!" Do you remember that?

BALDWIN: Yes----- dimly.

JOHN: Ha! Only dimly, Governor?

BALDWIN: What do you mean, John?

MARTHA: (giving JOHN no opportunity to answer): It would be sad--- very sad--- if the name of John Gresham, our son's name, should come to grief through you, Robert.

BALDWIN: (after a pause): Martha, are you telling me to accept the bribe money that John Gresham offered me?

EVIE: Why do you call it bribe money, Father?
BALDWIN: (bitterly) : Why indeed? Gresham had a prettier name for it. He said that he had underpaid me all these years. You know, I was getting only sixty dollars a week when the crash came-----

JOHN (impatiently): Yes, yes?

BALDWIN: He said a hundred thousand represented the difference between what he paid me and what I had actually been worth to him.

MARTHA: That's no less than true, Robert. You've worked for him very faithfully.

BALDWIN: He said that if he had paid me what he should have, I would have put by more than a hundred thousand by now.

JOHN: That's so isn't it, Dad?

BALDWIN: Who knows? I never asked him to raise my salary. When he raised it, it was of his own accord.[There is a pause. He looks around.] Well, what do you think of it, Evie?

EVIE (hesitantly): If you go on the stand tomorrow...

BALDWIN: Yes?
EVIE: And they put John Gresham in jail, what will people say?

BALDWIN: They will say I have done my duty. Evie: no more and no less.

EVIE: Will they?

BALDWIN: why, what should they say?

EVIE: I don't think so, of course, but other people might say that you had turned traitor to your best friend.

BALDWIN: You don't mean that, Evie?

EVIE: When they find out that they haven't lost any money-- when John Gresham tells them that he will pay back every cent----- then they won't want him to go jail. They'll feel sorry for him.

BALDWIN: Yes, I believe that. I hope so.

JOHN: And they won't feel too kindly disposed towards the man who helps put him in jail.

MARTHA: They'll say you went back on an old friend, Robert.

JOHN: When you pull out notes in court, to be sure of sending him to jail---- ! [He breaks off with a snort.]
EVIE: And Mr. Gresham hasn't done anything really wrong.

JOHN: It's a technicality, that's what it is. Nobody loses a cent. Nobody wants to see him punished.

EVIE: Except you, Father.

JOHN: Yes, And you're willing to jail the man after whom you named your son!

MARTHA (after a pause): I believe in being merciful, Robert.

BALDWIN: Merciful?

MARTHA: Mr. Gresham has always been very good to you.

[There is another pause. Curiously enough, they do not seem to be able to meet each other's eyes.]

MARTHA: Ah, well! What are you going to do now, Robert?

BALDWIN: What do you mean?

MARTHA: You have been out of work since the bank closed.

BALDWIN (shrugging his shoulders): Oh, I'll find a position.

MARTHA (shaking her head): at your age?

BALDWIN: It's the man that counts.
MARTHA: Yes. You said that a month ago.

JOHN: I heard from Donovan---

BALDWIN (quickly): What did you hear?

JOHN: He's gone with the Third National, you know.

BALDWIN: Yes; he's helping with the reorganization.

JOHN: They wouldn't take you on there----

BALDWIN: Their staff was full. They couldn't very well offer me a position as a clerk.

JOHN: That was what they told you.

BALDWIN: Wasn't it true?

JOHN (shakes his head): Mr. Marshall said he wouldn't employ a man who was just as guilty as John Gresham.

BALDWIN: But I'm not!

JOHN: Who knows it?

BALDWIN: Everybody will tomorrow!

JOHN: Will they believe you? Or will they think you're trying to save your own skin?
BALDWIN: I found out only a day before the smash.

JOHN: Who will believe that?

BALDWIN: They will have to!

JOHN: How will you make them? I'm afraid you'll find that against you wherever you go. Governor. Your testifying against John Gresham won't make things any better. If you ever get another job, it will be with him! [This is a startling idea to BALDWIN, who shows his surprise.] If Gresham doesn't go to jail, he'll start in business again, won't he? And he can't offer you anything less than a partnership.

BALDWIN: A partnership?

JOHN (with meaning): With the hundred thousand capital you could put in the business, Dad.

BALDWIN: John?

JOHN: Of course, the capital doesn't matter. He'll owe you quite a debt of gratitude besides.

(There is a pause.)
MARTHA: A hundred thousand would mean a great deal to us, Robert. If you don't find a position soon, John will have to support us.

JOHN: On thirty dollars a week, Dad.

JOHN: That won't go very far.

MARTHA: It's not fair to John.

JOHN (angrily): Oh, don't bother about me.

[Evie begins to weep.]

JOHN (angrily): Look here, Governor, you've said nothing to the papers. If you say nothing more tomorrow, what does it amount to but sticking to your friend? It's the square thing to do—he'd do as much for you.

BALDWIN (looks appealingly from one face to another. They are averted. Then): You --- you want me to take his money? [There is no answer.] Say "Yes" , one of you. [Still no answer.] Or "No", [A long pause. Finally] I couldn't go into partnership with Gresham.

MARTHA (promptly): Why not?

BALDWIN: People wouldn't trust him.
JOHN: Then you could go into business with someone else.

Dad. A hundred thousand is a lot of money.

BALDWIN (walks to the window. Looks out): God knows I never thought this day would come! I know --- I know no matter how you try to excuse it---- I know that if I take this money I do a dishonorable thing. And you know it! You and you, and you! All of you! Come, admit it!

JOHN (resolutely): Nobody'll ever hear of it.

BALDWIN: But amongst ourselves, John! Whatever we are to the world, let us be honest with each other, the four of us! Well? [His glance travels from JOHN of EVIE, whose head is bowed; from her to his wife, who is apparently busy with her knitting. He raises MARTHA’S head; looks into her eyes. He shudders.] Shams! Liars! Hypocrites! Thieves! And I no better than any of you! We have seen our souls naked, and they stink to Almighty Heaven! Well, why font you answer me?


BALDWIN: It’s not right.
JOHN (facing him steadily) A hundred thousand is a lot of money, Dad.

BALDWIN (Nodding slowly): You can look into my eyes now, my son, can't you?

JOHN (without moving): Dad, why did you refuse? Wasn't it because you were afraid of what we'd say?

BALDWIN: except the four of us.

JOHN: Yes ------- Father.

[Abruptly they separate. EVIE weeps in silence MARTHA being less emotional, blows her nose noisily, and fumbles with her knitting. JOHN having nothing better to do, scowls out of the window, and BALDWIN, near the fireplace, clenches and unclenches his hands.]

JOHN: Someone's coming.

MARTHA (raising her head): Who is it?

JOHN: I can't see. (With sudden apprehension.) It looks like Marshall.

BALDWIN: Marshall?
[The Doorbell rings. They are motionless as a MAID enters at one side and goes of the other. The MAID-re-enters.]

The MAID: A gentleman to see you, sir.

BALDWIN (pulling himself together): Who, me?

The MAID: Yes, sir. (She hands him a card on a salver.)

BALDWIN: It is Marshall.

MARTHA: The President of the Third National?

BALDWIN: Yes. What does he want here?

The MAID: Shall I show him in, sir?

BALDWIN: Yes, yes. By all means.

[The MAID goes out.]

MARTHA (crossing to him quickly): Robert! Be careful of what you say: you're to go on the stand tomorrow.

BALDWIN (nervously): Yes, yes I'll look out.

[The MAID re-enters, opening the door for MARSHALL.]

MARSHALL (coming into the room very buoyantly): Well, well spending the afternoon indoors? How are you, Mrs.
Baldwin? (He shakes hands cordially.) And you, Baldwin?

MARTHA: We were just going out,. Come, Evie.

MARSHALL: Oh, you needn't go my account. You can hear what I have to say. {He turns to the head of the family.) Baldwin, if you feel like coming around to the Third national some time this week. You'll find a position waiting for you.

BALDWIN (thunderstruck): Do you mean that, Mr. Marshall?

MARSHALL (smiling): I wouldn't say it if I didn't. (He continues more seriously): I was in to see Gresham this afternoon. He told me about the offer he had made you. But he knew that no amount of money would make you do something you thought wrong. Baldwin, he paid you the supreme compliment: rather than go to trial with you testify against him, he confessed!

Baldwin (Sinking into a chair): Confessed!

MARSHALL: Told the whole story. (He turns to MARTHA.) I can only say to you what every man will be saying tomorrow: how highly I honour and respect your husband! How sincerely------
MARHTA (seizing his hand piteously): Please! Please! Can't you see he's crying?

(Curtain)

(by Percival Wilde)

**Lesson Plan No-2: The Hour of Truth**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skills and Language areas covered</th>
<th>Intensive reading Scanning</th>
<th>Writing dialogues</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Character sketches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Vocabulary practice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Grammar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Intonation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Pre-reading phase:**

Step 1: The teacher asks the following questions:-

a. How important is money these days?
b. If you have to choose between a best friend's life and your honour, what would you do?

c. Can money/wealth be the cause of estrangement between friends and family members?

Step 2: Once the discussion on the above mentioned questions in the class gets over. Teacher asks the students to read through the entire play silently.

**Reading Phase:**

Step 1: While the learners read the play intensively, the teacher asks them to underline the difficult words in the play and guess their meanings from the context. They come up with words like – haggle, convict, perjure, conspicuous etc.

Step 2: Learners are asked to search and write down two sentences each having following structures in the play:

(a) Sub + verb + adjunct.

(b) Sub + verb + complement.

(c) Sub + verb + object + adjunct.

(d) Sub + verb + object + complement.
Post-Reading Phase:

Step 5: Once the learners finish contextual guessing and writing the above mentioned structures the teacher supplies them with the following multiple-choice question:

Tick the most appropriate choice:-

i) Not whit-  
   a) No whines,
   b) No intelligence
   c) Not at all
   d) None of the above

ii) Indict-  
   a) inject
   b) accuse (by a legal process)
   c) prove
   d) None of the above

iii) Testify  
   a) Sit for exam
   b) Give evidence in court
   c) Play a game
   d) None of the above
iv) Perjure-  
   a) swear falsely
   b) to get
   c) Improve
   d) None of the above

Step 6: Once they finish the exercise the teacher can write the correct choices on black board and the learners can compare their choices with the meanings written on the black board.

Step 7: Learners are asked to use the following words into sentences of their own. The words are as follows:

Indict, witness, perjure, convict, haggle, mince, conscience, cease, nevertheless and conspicuous.

Step 8: Learners are asked to write the synonyms and antonyms of the following words:

Forgotten, against, fair, necessary, fortunate, essential, genuine, expensive and dimly.

Step 9: Learners are asked to convert the following into word-class shown in the brackets:

   d. Break (Noun)
Step 10: Learners are asked to break the following compound and complex sentences into simple sentences:

(a) I didn’t know there was anything wrong with the bank until I saw it in the papers.

(b) He said that nobody had any idea that there was anything wrong until the crash came.

(c) He said a hundred thousand represented the difference between what he had paid me and what I had actually being worth to him.
Step 11: Learners are asked to read the solved examples of intonation and stress:

(a) MARTHA: Its \textit{time} he was \textit{home}.

EVIE: '\textit{Yes, \textit{Mother}}\textit{.}'

(b) EVIE \textit{(after a pause)}: \textit{Do you \textit{think} that \textit{Father} had \textit{anything} to do with --- with ... [She does not like to say it.]}\textit{.}

MARTHA: With the \textit{wrecking} of the \textit{bank}? You \textit{know} him better than that. \textit{Evie}.

Learners are asked to mark intonation in the extract given below:

(c) JOHN: \textit{Dad}.

BALDWIN: \textit{Yes}?

JOHN: What did Gresham offer you?

BALDWIN \textit{(simply)}: \textit{A hundred thousand dollars}.

EVIE: \textit{What}!

MARTHA: \textit{Robert}

This kind of an exercise helps the learners in improving their speaking skills.
Step 12 : The teacher asks the learners to write the character sketches of Martha and Baldwin. The teacher supplies the learners with a few clues with reference to their sketches:

Martha:- persuasive, greedy, observant etc.

Baldwin:- honest, conscientious, hard working etc.

Step 13: Finally the teacher asks the learners to write concluding dialogues about what Martha and Baldwin would have conversed about after Marshall moved out.

With the help of exemplary treatment of the play 'Hour of the Truth' it can be concluded that drama is fit ELT. The English plays have multidimensional qualities due to which they provide various opportunities to the learners for enhancing their language skills. To quote Holden (1981) through drama the students have the "opportunity to experiment with the language they have learnt," thus drama helps in achieving the ELT objective.
References:


12. Ibid.


21. Ibid.

22. Ibid., p. 174.

23. Ibid., p 175.

24. ELT Journal Vol 37/1, op. cit., p 34.


26. Ibid.


28. Ibid.
