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Current Trends and Opportunities on the Use of Drama-Based Pedagogy in English Language Teaching

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ABSTRACT

The implementation of drama-based pedagogy has emerged as a transformative approach in the field of English Language Teaching (ELT), effectively enhancing students' engagement and proficiency in several language skills, including speaking, listening, and communication. This study employs a bibliometric analysis of 118 open access articles published between 2014 and 2024, derived from the Dimension database. The data were processed using Microsoft Excel and visualized with VOS Viewer, which revealed a significant increase in scholarly output, particularly between 2021 and 2023. The majority of studies (61.3%) concentrate on practical applications within the field of Curriculum and Pedagogy. In contrast, areas such as Language, Communication, and Culture, and Specialist Studies in Education remain relatively under-explored. The keyword co-occurrence analysis reveals the prevalence of structured methodologies and emerging participatory practices. Yet it also underscores ongoing deficiencies in global cooperation. The results highlight the potential of drama-led pedagogy for developing critical thinking, creativity, and collaborative capacity in students. However, implementation is hampered by a lack of training and resources. These gaps should be addressed in future research by establishing longitudinal studies as well as partnerships between disciplines and schools in professional education. Drama-based pedagogy can further change the face of ELT internationally by diversifying its research focus and seeking international collaboration.

Keywords: Drama-Based Pedagogy; ELT; English; Bibliometric

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1. Introduction

In the past few years, the creative teaching and learning method of drama-based pedagogy has emerged as a compelling and popular practice amongst the shifting context of English Language Teaching (ELT), captivating the teaching and the learning cultures Smith^[1,2]. Such a method easily integrates into the language education mode other elements within the sphere of the drama including role playing, improvisation and storytelling, which all function to develop the students' active participation while simultaneously enhancing the students' language learning development in a way that is both meaningful and constructive^[3,4]. The use of dramatic activities in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) instruction has certainly secured great attention and favorable ratings for its unparalleled potential to improve students' speaking, listening and general communicational Performance^[5,6], in addition to developing students' critical thinking and promoting creativity^[7,2].

Despite its international prominence, the integration of drama into ELT has not been evenly distributed across regions. While contexts such as Europe, East Asia, and Latin America have produced an expanding literature on its theoretical foundations and classroom application, other regions-including parts of Southeast Asia are only beginning to systematically explore its potential. For instance, in countries where traditional, teacher-centered methods still dominate, like Indonesia, when teaching English-as-a-foreign-language (TEFL), practice and performance of drama is emerging as a viable solution to increasing learner involvement and classroom proficiency^[8,9,10]. Nevertheless, despite the increasing use and recognition of drama-based pedagogy for its promising achievements, it is worth noting that the research investigating its application and the outcome towards the specific setting of EFL teaching in Indonesia is still very limited^[11,12], thereby leaving a considerable gap in the body of the literature that needs to be addressed and examined further. Though there have been global studies on the benefits of including drama as part of language teaching procedures^[6,13], studies specifically on this issue in Indonesian contexts are still few^[11]. Although Indonesia provides a compelling case study where drama-based ELT is gaining momentum in response to the need for more interactive and student-centered teaching,

the significance of this study lies in situating the Indonesian experience within the wider international research landscape. By systematically analyzing published works across global databases, this study seeks to capture both international patterns and regional specificities. In doing so, it contributes to a more comprehensive understanding of drama-based pedagogy in ELT, offering insights that are applicable not only to Indonesian stakeholders, but also to the broader international community of language educators and researchers.

A careful analysis of the existing literature reveals that a large fraction of work has also been devoted to theoretical models and isolated case studies^[14,10]. However, we lack thorough surveys, which also intend to systematically approach the general view and overall impact of research in this field^[9]. The theory will enrich drama-based ELT, but more importantly, practical ideas will be provided for instructors who wish to use new methods to motivate students' learning and to enable language learning through interaction. More generally, the literature has been focusing on qualitative data based on classroom practices or teachers' perceptions^[9,15]. This focus on qualitative understanding, beneficial as it may be, leaves an enormous void on large-scale, quantitative research which might inform broader trends, practice of citation, and scholarly contribution in the area of drama-based English Language Teaching (ELT) in Indonesia^[12,16]. Therefore, there is an urgent need to carry out a comprehensive analysis of the research status on drama-based ELT in Indonesia. This involves recognition of major trends and themes that have emerged from the literature^[17] and identification of areas that could be further researched^[18]. Through this we will gain a better understanding of how drama can be used to successfully support teaching in language education as well as what it means for teaching practices in college-level education in various parts of Indonesia^[19].

A bibliometric survey, which is the quantitative analysis of academic publications and the citation of these works, can compensate this research void by providing a systematic view of the domain. Bibliometrics allows you to map the intellectual structure of any given field, locate influential works, and analyze identified trends of a discipline^[20,21]. And, also for drama-based pedagogy in ELT, analysis focusing on one linguistic-related industry might

bring interesting information about the history of this pedagogical path, mapping most referred works and researchers, and showing gaps regarding what can still be explored. Amidst the current worldwide movement towards evidence-based education, bibliometric studies become more and more important as such research provides researchers, teachers, and decision-makers with information on how to construct curricula, how to organize pedagogical work and what research topics should be further explored.

A bibliometric study on drama-based pedagogy in ELT is relevant in the milieu of the Indonesian education system. The infusion of drama in language instruction in Indonesian high schools and universities is a relatively newer, dynamic and innovative teaching approaches^[13]. A thorough investigation of research literature in this area can provide valuable learning that directs the development and improvement of drama-based pedagogy^[22,23]. Such a bibliometric analysis might uncover different underexplored facets of drama-based education and, therefore, indicate key lacunae in this area of literature^[13]. A systematic mapping of the current research can show which areas need more investigation and suggest implications for research and practice at the theoretical level and for implementation in the classroom practice^[24,25]. Furthermore, it may throw some light on the general trends in the teaching and learning of English, and the changes in the ELT scene in Indonesia and the potential contribution of drama-based methodology to be an effective complement to more conventional teaching practices^[8]. Evidence regarding attitudes, behaviour and social skills such as the results of this current study could support a less passive approach to learning, as well as a more student-centered approach to learning within the classroom, where drama is seen to facilitate active participation of the learner^[3,26]. Dramatic activities help develop creativity, collaboration and critical thinking thus offering a more appealing and engaging language learning experience^[27]. Hopefully, this study would become an initiating base for educators and researchers to adopt and develop drama-based instruction and enhance and improve English language teaching and learning quality in Indonesia^[23].

The value of conducting bibliometric research on this subject is more than a mere academic novelty; it has a possible far-reaching impact on policy decisions and

strategic planning of ELT in Indonesia. With the country facing the demand to improve the English language competency due to globalization and competitiveness in the labor market, improving the teaching methods has become very essential. Related to this are methods like those used in drama-based pedagogy, which show a lot of promise in terms of increasing student engagement and motivation. This great teaching innovation not only engages the students, but will also create a vibrant, interactive learning atmosphere in the bid to transform ELT/EMU practices in most parts of Indonesia. However, if teachers are to adequately exploit the potential of drama-based pedagogy, they need to engage more with what research has to say. This entails summarizing the existing research base, identifying promising implementation approaches that have been associated with success, and documenting gaps that need to be addressed. In so doing, all concerned will have access to a broad perspective on how best to integrate this pedagogy within ELT Indonesian syllabi with the aim of continuing to improve educational practice and raise student proficiency levels of English in the Indonesian EFL environment.

The goal of the present study is to conduct an extensive bibliometric analysis of drama-based teaching in the field of English Language Teaching (ELT), which would significantly improve the existing knowledge on this area. Unlike previous research that may have touched on the component of education, this research will systematically analyse the literature that is available in quite a broad range of academic journals that provide a more complete and definite picture of the research landscape for those interested in the research context of the application of drama in the classroom. In carefully mapping the main contributors and influencers in this field of enquiry, the intention is not simply to trace such work but to identify the transformative potential that it exerts on extending our understanding of the engagement with drama within the field of language education. This will reveal previously unobserved traces and connections between researchers, enabling a more comprehensive interpretation of collective undertakings that have contributed to the constitution of the field. Second, this study will explore some of the trends and developments that are increasingly appearing on the radar screen of the academic community, in a key step to inform

how these advances can lead to new approaches in future research and instruction.

2. Literature Review

2.1. What is Drama-Based Pedagogy?

Drama-based pedagogy is the use of drama techniques such as improvisation, storytelling, role-play or mime as a teaching or training tool. This strategy is designed to promote communication by getting students to employ language in authentic communicative settings, a prerequisite for the development of communicative competence. Contrary to most language instruction, which tends to concentrate on grammar and vocabulary, drama-based pedagogy asks students to use language in active performances, where they need to negotiate meaning, to think in the moment, and to adapt to changing situations. Through role play, the approach encourages students to widen their knowledge of the language and gain a more comprehensive range of social and emotional skills by adopting different roles and perspectives^[28]. Drama-Based Pedagogy in ELT In English Language Teaching (ELT), drama-based approaches pave the way for students to experiment with language use, and to investigate it from an emotional and cognitive standpoint, in a collaborative and creative environment^[29]. This method promotes not only linguistic competency but the critical thought, social interaction and creativity inherent to language acquisition.

Moreover, the benefits of drama-based pedagogy go beyond language learning and delve into the psychological realms of emotional intelligence and relational skills – the latter of which are essential in an increasingly networked global world^[26]. Since role-play involves life-like simulations of daily scenarios, it provides students with the unique opportunities not just to use and to learn linguistic phenomena but also to manipulate complex social factors^[13]. This learning experience increases their ability to empathise or see and feel the world through the eyes and feelings of others, helping them to connect on every level by learning how to “speak” in their tone of voice and reading what they “say”^[6]. This pedagogical application is specifically consistent with current educational goals, which focus on holistic development of the student^[25]. It supports cognitive and affective development and

helps develop a sense of community and belonging among students^[10]. With the growing recognition in education of the importance of the arts in educational curriculum, drama-based pedagogies stand as a versatile medium that can enhance learning in a transformative manner^[27]. Such unconventional methods that not only engage the students but also teach them how to think critically and unleash their creativity – and incidentally teach them how to think for themselves about other issues outside their classroom^[24]. These skills not only enhance academic achievement, but they also prepare students to successfully cope with the demands of a changing world, developing in them the ability to adapt and confront future challenges^[26]. Through drama-based pedagogy, teachers can create a dynamic and interactive learning context in which students are motivated to express their ideas and work collaboratively amongst other learners^[24]. This cooperative culture leads to increased knowledge of different points of view and cultures, enhanced learning and students’ ability to succeed in a multicultural society^[30].

In theory, drama-based pedagogy fits with communicative language teaching (CLT) and sociocultural theories of learning, especially Vygotskian notions of the zone of proximal development and mediated action, since interaction and collaboration are key elements in both. But what it is that this group of children is experiencing is something that modern educational ideas and 21st-century skills, creativity, collaboration and problem-solving, are closely aligned with. Yet with all these strong theoretical foundations, the inclusion of drama in the field of ELT has been characterised more in terms of classroom practice rather than considered as a theorized pedagogical approach. This raises significant theoretical divides as, on the one hand, the research indicates drama’s potential contribution to communicative competence and socio-emotional development and on the other hand, there is not the same level of attention on how drama is applicable to cognitive theories of SLA, including input–output processing models and task-based learning. This gap could be bridged to consolidate and enhance the explanatory force of drama-based pedagogy and to more firmly establish it in mainstream ELT scholarship.

Significantly, while drama-in-education is heralded for its ‘multiple benefits’ (see effect positive side) for the

whole child—ffective, cognitive, and social outcomes to name several—it is not without detractors. It does, however, require the confidence, skill and “training” in drama techniques which are not always found in teacher training colleges. Moreover, existing studies have been largely qualitative, relying on small-scale case studies or classroom observations. Although these reports offer valuable information on learner experience, they limit generalisation and raise concerns for long-term effectiveness, scalability and cultural relevance. Validation that these and other claims are true, and exploration of contextual factors that help (or hinder) success (curricular design, cultural norms, and institutional support are but a few examples), both suggest a direction for future research.

As the importance of arts in education is increasingly being acknowledged, drama-based pedagogy emerges as flexible and powerful tool. As such it encourages critical and creative thinking and enhances intercultural competence, adaptability—skills that are needed to cope with the challenges of an uncertain and multicultural next ^[24,25,27]. But its promise has not been fully achieved—for theoretical integration is partial, and empirical work is unevenly distributed across settings. Future research should more rigorously investigate how drama intersects with cognitive and socio-cultural theories of language learning, and how and in what forms it could be integrated more systematically in curricula or in different global contexts. Such an endeavour not only could validate drama as an effective pedagogy but would further influence the broader language education reform discourse.

2.2. Benefits and Challenges of Using Drama in Language Teaching

Drama in the language classroom has many advantages, especially for learning languages. Methods such as role-play, improvisation or other drama-based tasks require students to produce the target language in real, immediate contexts and this can make a real difference to both speaking and listening abilities. Research pointed out that drama activities can improve students’ fluency, vocabulary acquisition and pronunciation as they must use the language in realistic situation ^[28,31]. Furthermore, through drama, learners can relate their feelings to the content being taught and hence there is more pleasure and meaning in the learning

process, and that increases motivation ^[32]. Drama in particular helps learners to be fully engaged, which in turn promotes confidence and lowers apprehension, especially while handling oral activities. Language anxiety is often reduced when students are participating in role play, as the attention is trained toward the process rather than the target language produced ^[33,34]. This promotes greater communicative fearlessness and a cooperative learning environment in which experimentation is encouraged.

Crucially, drama also encourages collaborative learning and socialisation. As many drama-related activities are inherently collaborative, they develop skills related to teamwork, communication and relationships – all competencies that are important for language learning and wider educational purposes ^[35]. Additionally, drama-based activities are prompting critical, creative thinking and decision making and problem solving as learners are being asked to take on roles or embody others’ way of ‘seeing’. This is a form of ‘cognitive engagement’ that is directly related to the greater language ability ^[32]. Theoretically, these findings are highly compatible with sociocultural learning theory, and Vygotsky’s view of learning as having a social nature, as well as with communicative language teaching (CLT), which promotes interaction and negotiation of meaning. Such drama-based pedagogy, then, might be understood as a practical enactment of CLT as well as an advancement of sociocultural theory, in that on the one hand, it offers learners zones of proximal development for language learning during improvised, interactive performance, for example.

Despite these benefits, however, there are also obstacles to using drama for teaching language. The first is teacher preparation and professional development. A lot of teachers don’t have the confidence to use drama-based activities, and in many cases where teachers weren’t trained in it, they lack a lot of skills. Without guidance, teachers may find it difficult to determine how drama activities can be used efficiently and therefore, for their students to benefit from them ^[36,29]. Furthermore, many drama exercises are also expensive in terms of both time and resources such as rehearsal time between the teachers and students, props, costuming and so forth. In a classroom in which there is no time, the drama may be less effective. There are other problems, such as classroom management (drama activi-

ties can get very loud and be very anarchic, especially with large classes). Teachers need to know how to handle group dynamics, structure, and allow freedom for creativity and expression. In addition, students have different cultural and linguistic profiles, which interfere with the application of pedagogy through drama. Some of the drama activities may not be culturally acceptable or easy to do for all students, especially in a multi-cultural and multi-lingual environment. Teachers will need to make certain that the activities are suitable and respectful of the culture of the classroom.

At the theoretical level, drama-in-education has been strategically positioned to connect language learning, social development and affective engagement. Its integration in the second language acquisition (SLA) theory, however, is only partial. Although connections with CLT and sociocultural views are clear, drama's interaction with psycholinguistic theory—including input-output processing, task-based learning, and affective filter hypotheses—has yet to be fully mined. This opens a space for theoretically richer integration which views drama not as a 'supplementary' classroom practice but as a powerful pedagogical scaffold with the capacity to explain how language is developed in interaction.

Thus, drama-based pedagogy has promising opportunities to impact language teaching by reducing anxiety, producing creativity and enhancing communicative competence. "But you're also up against real barriers, including teachers being persistently undertrained in the technology, the ability to access resources and whether there is the willingness to adopt new cultural norms. Also, studies are often small-scale and qualitative, which limits the applicability of findings. Possibilities for future research are continuing this work on a larger scale and in diverse cultural settings and investigating the compatibility of drama with other SLA theories. By filling these conceptual and empirical lacunae, drama-based pedagogy would be more substantiated as a theory-driven and internationally relevant pedagogy in the field of ELT.

2.3. Overview of Previous Studies and Research Trends

In this regard, the number of studies on DBP and language teaching has significantly increased over the last

years, and their scope of research has extended to the contribution of DBP toward improving language competence, to decreasing anxiety and to promoting collaborative learning. One major theme in the literature is the beneficial effect of drama on speaking and listening. Studies confirm that drama-based activities, like role-playing or improvisation, can promote students' fluency, pronunciation and vocabulary^[28,31]. Furthermore, drama has been claimed to have an ability to lower language anxiety, especially in speaking activities. Drama as a form of experience creates a non-threatening atmosphere which allows learners to experiment freely with language, consequently promoting confidence and willingness to talk^[33,34].

Another major trend in recent research is the fusion of drama-based pedagogy with other L2 methodologies. Advances in blended learning; for example, there is the research on integrating drama and Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) to boost language skills and content knowledge. Such integration offers students more interactivity of their learning and a richer experience using language beyond communication to access architected real-world layers^[35]. In addition, drama facilitates the students to put the language in meaningful use in CLIL setting that seemingly helps in their language acquisition and retention.

It has also been suggested in research that teacher education and curriculum development influence the success of integrating drama in language learning. Acting activities cannot be handled without a lot of specific skills, which need an effort of adaptation on the part of the teacher. Research points to the need for professional development programs that provide teachers with the resources to teach drama in the classroom. Similarly, studies have suggested that a drama-infused curriculum can be effective if it is 'a systematic' part of the teaching so that its curriculum learning objectives and opportunities for extensive practice are not lost through all the time demands of regular academic lessons and examinations^[35].

As a result of the continued research in the field, there has been an emerging literature analyzing drama-based pedagogy trends and the dissemination of studies on it worldwide. These analyses show that this topic has generated significant numbers of publications (especially in Europe, Asia and the USA) with the aim of examining

how drama can be transferable in different educational settings^[37,38]. In this manner, educators have been able to determine the most influential studies, authors and institutions in the field, demonstrating the growing credibility of drama as a tool in language education.

3. Methodology

This paper uses bibliometric analysis for the analysis of research trends and contributions in the drama-based pedagogy and ELT. Bibliometric study is a quantitative method that uses research literatures to find the patterns, trends and relationships of a particular field of research. This approach is particularly useful for acknowledging influential authors, key themes and emerging research areas, leading to an overview of the field^[20,21]. Through the use of indicators such as citation counts, co-citation relationships, and keywords co-occurrence, this approach allows for a comprehensive overview of global research on drama-based pedagogy in ELT, highlighting both established directions and emerging areas of inquiry.

The database chosen very carefully for this intensive analysis is no other than Dimension, known as one of the largest and most comprehensive databases of academic literature in a wide range of fields including, inter alia, education, linguistics and drama pedagogy. The dimension has been selected as an optimal resource due to its extensive coverage of scientific literature, advanced tools for conducting deep bibliometric analysis, and real-time updating which ensures the researchers have access to the most recent and relevant research results^[39,40]. Utilizing a list of specific search terms, such as drama-based pedagogy with English (or EFL/ESL) in the title/abstract/keywords, a refined dataset of relevant publications was collected over the period 2014–2024 for each original search. The inclusion criteria were purposely set to favour some open-access articles published during this time, to guarantee that the chosen works would be available to the academic community and would be related to the topics of interest. To ensure an exhaustive application of the field, in a structured way the methodology consisted in writing systematically the corresponding keywords among all possible terms included in the Dimension database. The data were then cleaned and refined through a rigorous process by using

Microsoft Excel, which removed duplicate records and irrelevant entries, thus increasing the accuracy and reliability of the final dataset. Out of these initial 271 publications, 118 were identified by the initial search. The Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) guide was also used to ensure a methodical and transparent selection process. During the identification, we retrieved 118 records in total from the Dimensions. One record was excluded as non-relevant, 12 duplicates. Additionally, the database only retrieved 41/67 full texts. The stage of eligibility required the consideration of 106 publications with respect to inclusion criteria: that publications be peer-reviewed and in English and that they directly address drama-based pedagogy applied in ELT. Lastly, 92 articles were included for bibliometric analysis as the final index database. This structured and transparent approach reduced potential bias and increased study reproducibility.

The bibliographic information (i.e., authors, titles, DOIs, publication years, journal publication information, affiliations, abstracts, keywords, and references) of the selected publications was exported to Microsoft Excel with initial filtering. A thorough data cleaning process was carried out to remove inconsistencies including duplications, variation in author names and institution's information. After standardization and organization, the dataset was loaded into software VOSviewer (version 1.6.19), a popular tool for bibliometric visualization. Three main types of analysis were conducted in VOSviewer: co-authorship analysis (to ascertain patterns of collaboration among researchers and institutions), co-citation analysis (to discover influential studies and intellectual structures of this field) and keyword co-occurrence analysis (to expose thematic clusters of drama-based ELT and emerging research trends). Tools generated networks, density maps, and overlay visualizations, in which individual nodes were research units (e.g., authors; keywords; institutions) and their size and color corresponded to publication volume, citation impact, and thematic clusters respectively. The outcomes of VOSviewer were compared with the Excel data set to confirm the accuracy of the outputs.

Through the adoption of Dimensions AI as data source, PRISMA framework in systematic selection, Microsoft Excel in data analysis, and VOSViewer in visualization, this study contributes a rigorous and comprehensive

bibliometric review on drama-based pedagogy in ELT. This methodological attitude also ensures that, alongside expositioning and describing of the state of art and the contributions of the most influential authors, it also highlights the lack of writings on the matter and and points out future directions following the development of this blossoming teaching approach in the ELT community at global level.

4. Results

4.1. Publication Trend

A clearer picture of the development of our field can be observed when we compare the publication cycle of the DBP materials from 2014 to 2024. The number of publications was limited to between 3 to 5 a year between 2014 and 2017, suggesting that studies in the domain were still growing. Activity has slowly escalated from 2018 to 2020 with the number of publications rising to 8 in 2020. This

development demonstrates a growing acceptance of Drama-Based Pedagogy as a potentially effective mechanism of enhancing learner involvement and promoting language development within educational contexts.

Figure 1 shows that an especially striking increase was found between 2021 and 2023, and the number of publications reached a maximum of 26 in 2023. This continued inundation highlights a surge of interest in digital teaching methods to keep students' attention during the COVID-19 pandemic with remote, hybrid learning. Things changed slightly in 2024 with only 22 publications, suggesting a shift in research emphasis or levelling off of interest. This fall-off notwithstanding, the relatively large numbers compared to previous years indicate that the field of Drama-Based Pedagogy is still one worth investigating. In the future, a follow-up study might investigate its usage in various settings, its long-term effect to language learning outcomes and the reasons behind the rapid growth of the publication.

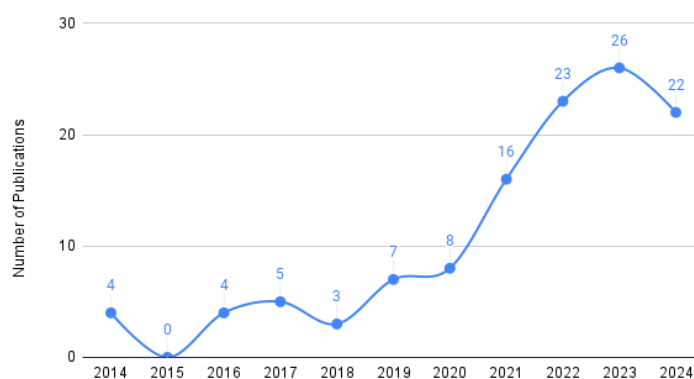


Figure 1. Publication Trends from 2014 to 2024.

4.2. Research Categories

The pie chart displays the distribution of research categories within the field of Drama-Based Pedagogy in English Language Teaching. The dominant category, Curriculum and Pedagogy, accounts for 61.3% of the total research output, highlighting a strong focus on developing and improving teaching frameworks, methodologies, and curricular integration. This substantial portion underscores the importance of Drama-Based Pedagogy as a tool for enhancing educational practices, particularly in designing learner-centred approaches to language acquisition.

As presented in **Figure 2**, the other remaining categories

represent much narrower spheres, with Language, Communication and Culture covering 19.3% of the research, illustrating interest in how drama promotes an understanding of culture and develops efficient communication. Specialist Studies in Education (12.6%) and Language Studies (6.7%) demonstrate that, while less frequently explored, attention is also diverted in those areas, potentially to examine educational environments or linguistic phenomena. All three of these categories reveal that, despite the focus on pedagogy, dramatists have not failed to experiment with the cross-disciplinary use of drama in education. This variety allows for future research that could focus on areas of underrepresentation, like more specific linguistic and cultural outcomes.

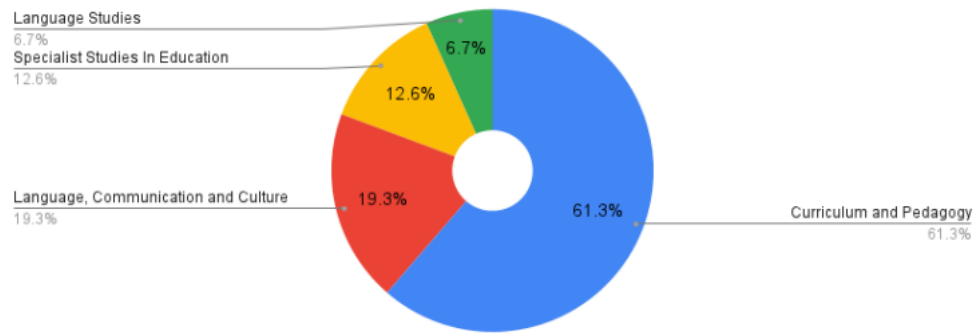


Figure 2. Popular Research Categories.

4.3. Common Keywords

Keywords in the co-occurrence map are ranked by the frequency in which they are used in research on Drama-Based Pedagogy in English Language Teaching (2014–2024). Terms such as programme, strategy, process and process drama cluster centrally, high-lighting their centrality to the discourse. These keywords indicate that many of the studies concentrate on how they designed and conducted integral or long-term programs and strategies involving process drama as a central pedagogical tool. This is consistent with the focus on pragmatic methodological aspects of drama in the teaching of English.

From **Figure 3**, it can be seen that associated words surround these core terms—“model,” “inquiry,” “vid-

co”—are indicative of a concern for blending theoretical orientations, reflective strategies, and new media resources in the name of Drama-Based Pedagogy. Terms “effectiveness,” “perception,” and “role play” are indicative of studies investigating the effect of drama activities on learning outcomes and student engagement. Peripheral designators such as “creative drama,” “improvisation activity,” and “collaborative drama project” signal creative, collaborative components of this domain as well. These trends show a balance between the theoretical aspects and practical applications of drama in language teaching, with scope for further investigation in those areas, which received less attention such as interdisciplinary ties and cultural contexts.

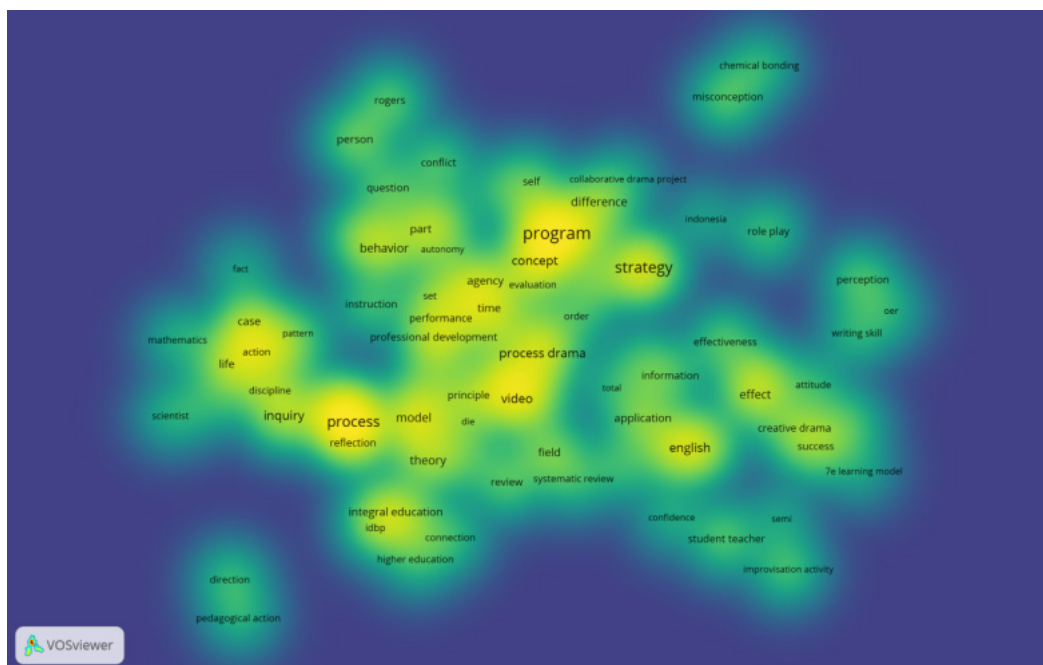


Figure 3. The Result of Keyword Co-Occurrences Analysis.

4.4. Co-Authorship

The co-authorship analysis map for Drama-Based Pedagogy in English Language Teaching between 2014 to 2024 (**Figure 4**) demonstrates a research network and its collaborator relationships. The densely connected red group is a core group of researchers with frequent co-authorships. Important are the host organizers such as Chiang Tien Hui and Evers Colin William for promoting research activities and initiating collaboration in the community. Their deep links to many other writers demonstrate their culture and their role at the forefront of the topic.

In comparison, the green group formed by Ma Li-

wen and Subbiondo Joseph L seems to be more distant, representing a small and maybe regional or topic focused group of collaborators. This divide could be indicative of two separate research focuses or weak interaction with the wider research community. At its centre is a dense core of global researchers that encompasses the system as a whole and smaller, fringe groups. The presence of interconnected authors may indicate that the field is a heavily collaborative one, which favours idea exchange and creative exchange of techniques. Yet the fact of isolated clusters suggests room for growth across these divides and inclusive cross-network collaboration.

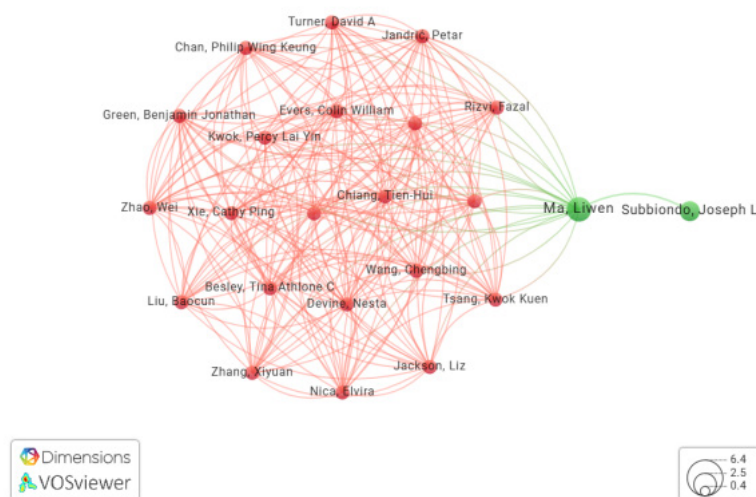


Figure 4. The Result of Co-Authorship Analysis.

5. Discussion

It is beyond question that drama-based pedagogy has gained popularity as an accepted practice in the field of English Language Teaching (ELT) largely because of its impressive ability to involve learners actively in learning while promoting language competences such as speaking, listening and general communication^[1,2]. Researchers and educators have observed that such types of engagement not only improve language knowledge but also encourage an active classroom setting^[41,25]. Such a thorough examination of the recent publication trends based on the year 2014 through 2024 clearly indicates this emerging phenomenon in inquiring into the drama-based pedagogy in research, more so during the specific period of 2021 to 2023 where prolific output of a total of 26 publications was at an all-

time high^[42]. This demonstrates the increased interest each one of these pedagogic models has received, as articulated by other scholars^[26]. This clear expansion in publications stands as a significant symptom of the broader acceptance and value that is now being given to drama's transformative powers, and especially in relation to its role within English Language Teaching^[23]. However, such a small reduction to 22 publications in 2024 only goes to show the urgent need for further novelty and deeper exploration in this with respect to educational domain^[24]. This is congruent with the conclusions of some recent studies, which recommend researchers to keep the line to give continuity to the development of teaching systems that are more effective^[13]. In addition, an analysis of different fields of study in the research pool shows that most of the studies, 61.3%,

focus on applied research under “Curriculum and pedagogy,” whereas “Language, Communication and Culture” (19.3%) and “Specialist Studies in Education” (12.6%) are less considered ^[43]. This emphasizes the great potential of diversity in research efforts in these less explored categories, which is a finding echoed by multiple authors noting the need for research diversity ^[44]. The identification of these trends is in line with the general purposes aimed at in this paper, that is, to rigorously map the current research landscape and to identify emerging themes on the rise, while also critically appraising the main contributions to the field of English Language Teaching ^[45].

The keyword co-occurrence analysis indicates the necessity for both systematically organized methodologies and specialized tools, and that specific jargon, as evidenced by “process drama,” “strategic approaches,” and “educational programs,” tends to permeate the current talks and narratives within this area of study ^[20]. The developing patterns that are revealed in the peripheral keywords, for example, “creative drama” and “collaborative drama project”, present an overall clear and notable transition towards a more participatory and innovative style of teaching that encourages students to be actively involved in their learning experience ^[21]. However, an investigation on the co-authorship network highlights that there are significant discrepancies in the collaboration level of researchers, showing a diverse panorama of participation ^[20]. Notable scholars such as Chiang Tien Hui and Evers Colin William are demonstrated to be very well connected in the wide international academic community, others such as Ma Liwen and Subbiondo Joseph L, have worked in more isolated and less connected communities of academic engagement ^[21]. This almost imperceptible difference calls for more powerful international synergies and interdisciplinary engagements that can well fill these cracks, consequently maximising the scale and scope of the impact of research on drama-based pedagogy in schools at a global level ^[20,21].

These major discoveries are in accordance with the more established conclusions in the current literature, which claims that drama-based pedagogy not only creates a dynamic learning environment but contextually and actively situates students in real and realistic situations that mimic the complexities of life ^[4,28,29]. Students develop linguistic and social competences by taking part in role play

and improvisation activities at the same time stimulating their critical thinking, creative and communicative capacity to interact with others ^[6,41,42]. Still the visible underrepresentation of studies of the particular emphasis on the themes of “Language, Communication, and Culture” reveals a serious and major gap in our knowledge about how arts-based methods succeed to address cultural and linguistic diversity, and particularly in multilingual settings, such as Indonesia ^[23,44]. To effectively target and close this gap, findings suggest that more purposeful research needs to be undertaken that can serve to improve the fit and transfer of these drama-based study methods to multiple educational environments ^[46].

Even though drama-based instruction clearly has pedagogic advantages, it is not without problems. There are barriers challenging teachers, such as under-preparation, lack of resources, and behaviour issues in class ^[32]. The presence of “strategy” and “process” in keyword analysis implies that educators seek concrete strategies to deal with these issues. And professional development courses, and courses that have incorporated drama systematically in the structured curriculum can be professional plays for teachers to engage well with these activities. In addition, drama-based pedagogy, as being student-centred and requiring interaction, can help this in direction of teamwork development and create a student-centred learning environment and must be taken as an essential component of the current ELT practice ^[35].

To progress this area, future research will need to fill in critical gaps, such as the absence of large-scale, longitudinal studies on the long-term effect of drama-based pedagogy on linguistic and cognitive development ^[34,31]. More should also be done to incorporate disconnected research nodes into the wider academic discussion, in support of a more inclusive and connected research environment. In a context where traditional teacher-centred approach is the mainstream method applied in the teaching-learning context in Indonesia, drama-based pedagogy emerges as a counteractive source to develop a more inviting learning atmosphere and condition. National curriculums should make it a priority, while localised studies are required to investigate how this subject area works, as well as what happens as a result ^[28,21]. In attempting to face these challenges and to take advantage of the virtues of drama-based

teaching methods, the field can maintain the frontier in re-defining and reshaping ELT around the globe.

6. Conclusions

Drama-based pedagogy has also been shown to be an effective, transformative tool in English Language Teaching, encouraging student involvement and helping to develop language skills such as speaking, listening, and communication. An ebb and flow of research is foreseeable between 2014 and 2024, including a marked increase in work on “Curriculum and Pedagogy”. Nevertheless, cultural and linguistic diversity and international partnerships need to be systematically explored to tackle these gaps. To maximize the potential benefits of DBP in education, priority should be given to large-scale longitudinal research studies, studies in under-represented regions, and the development of teacher training programs that would enable teachers to implement DBP effectively. It is through further development of international collaborations and through the development of different areas of research that the insight into this technique will become richer and more inclusive. Whilst addressing such gaps, drama-based teaching should evolve to provide dynamic and radical solutions to today’s global English language teaching challenges.

Author Contributions

Primarily responsible for the conceptualization and design of the research project, including formulating the research questions and theoretical framework, conducting the majority of the literature review, leading the data collection and initial analysis processes, and writing the first draft of the manuscript, N.W.S.M.; reviewing and editing the manuscript, offering constructive feedback that improved the clarity, coherence, and academic quality of the final paper, J.T.; assisted in interpreting the findings, ensuring accuracy and alignment with the research objectives, I.J.C.T. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

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This article is a bibliometric study that was conducted using secondary data retrieved from publicly available databases. All data supporting the findings of this study can be accessed directly from the respective databases as cited in the manuscript.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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