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INCORPORATION OF DRAMA INTO ELT METHODOLOGY: A SAMPLE COURSE PROCEDURE FOR INITIAL TEACHER EDUCATION

İngilizce Öğretiminde Drama Kullanımı: İngilizce Öğretmenliği Programı İçin Örnek Bir Ders Tasarımı

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Abstract

Despite the existence of research on drama and language teaching, a class procedure on how this discipline can be applied and how teacher candidates will be informed about this discipline is not available. Some of these studies are comprised of theoretical knowledge while some others present samples of application to be exploited in the classroom. However, what is lacking in these studies is a course design describing how drama courses can be conducted in foreign language classes. In this study, whose starting point is this necessity, a sample course procedure to be applied in ITE (Initial Teacher Education) Programs has been presented. This paper aims to draw a sketch of a Teaching Drama course by proposing one currently conducted at Mersin University ELT Department; it also aims to standardize and disseminate this procedure at ITE programs. In addition, with a syllabus proposed, it also aims to spread and specify the notion of drama in ELT programs. The feedback received from the course participants and their views as the same teacher candidates who take practicum at schools in the following year point out that the use of drama in language education is an effective technique. Furthermore, there are views that the applications harmonized with field specific methods and techniques can be used as a means for the very young learners and young learners to speed up and motivate the language learning processes. This finding shows that theoretical knowledge acquired at the faculty combined with the practice of this knowledge at schools form an effective teaching model.

Key Words: Drama, teacher education, foreign language teaching methodology

Öz

Drama konusunda çok sayıda çalışma olmasına karşın bu alanın dil öğretim programlarına nasıl uygulanabileceğine dair örnekler azdır. Bu çalışmaların bir kısmı teorik bilgiyi içermekte, bir kısmı ise uygulama örnekleri sunmaktadır. Ancak, bu çalışmalarda yabancı dil öğretiminde drama dersinin nasıl yürütüleceği konusunda bir ders akışı tanımlanmamıştır. Bu eksiklikten yola çıkan bu çalışmada, Eğitim Fakültesi Öğretmen Yetiştirme Programlarında drama dersinin uygulanmasına ilişkin bir örnek ders içeriği sunulmuştur. Çalışmanın amacı, Eğitim Fakültelerinin Öğretmen Yetiştirme Programlarında yer alan drama dersi uygulamalarını standartlaştıracak ve drama öğretiminde kullanılacak etkinliklerden örnekler sunmaktır. Bu çalışma, kaynağını Mersin Üniversitesi Eğitim Fakültesi İngilizce Öğretmenliği Programı'nda yürütülen Drama Öğretimi ders içeriğinden almakta olup, yabancı dil öğretiminde drama kullanımına

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ilişkin bir çerçeve çizmeyi ve bu uygulamayı yaygınlaştırmayı hedeflemektedir. Drama Öğretimi dersi sonunda bölüm öğrencilerinden alınan geribildirimler ve izleyen akademik yılda Öğretmenlik Uygulaması dersinden sonra aynı grup öğrencilerden oluşan aday öğretmenler ile yapılan görüşmelerden çıkan sonuçlar, eğitimde drama kullanımının İngilizce öğretimi için etkili bir yöntem olduğuna işaret etmektedir. Ayrıca, bu dersin alana özel yöntem ve tekniklerle harmanlanmış uygulamalarının, özellikle çok küçük ve küçük öğrenci yaş gruplarında dil öğrenmeye motive eden ve bu süreci hızlandıran bir araç olarak kullanılabileceği yolundaki görüşler vardır. Bu bulgu, fakülte ikliminde edinilen teorik bilginin okul ortamındaki uygulama ayağı ile etkili bir öğretim modeli oluşturduğunu göstermektedir.

 Anahtar Kelimeler: drama, öğretmen yetiştirme, yabancı dil öğretimi yöntemleri

1. Introduction

With the advance of new strides in language teaching, innovative, interdisciplinary approaches have gained momentum. For language teaching, which is largely based on other disciplines such as linguistics, literature and psychology, art is an irreplaceable resource, out of which emerge creative and fantastic ideas that can be utilized in the classroom. As a major branch of visual arts, cinema and theatre are the invaluable treasures if used in an interdisciplinary approach. From a general perspective, in the past, 'theatre' was thought to be largely concerned with communication between actors and an audience; whereas 'drama' was largely concerned with experience by the participants, irrespective of any function of communication to an audience (Way, 1967, as cited in Zafeiriadou, 2009: p.4). In light of the given argument, drama as an art form stands to be an independent discipline, but when incorporated into language teaching, it has arisen as a new insight into it since it bears the essential components of language learning and teaching as its milestones. Dramatization is in the very nature of life itself, taking place in socially motivated and supported contexts, which function as the environment for communicative competence. It is a fact that drama as a tool for language teaching still needs more practice, and related research shows that language teaching can make use of drama as an effective way for the language input, particularly in young learner classes.

Drama should be distinguished from theatre as for the educational point of view. While theater refers to the expression of feelings on the stage within a text, drama can be used as a source for learning rather than an art form. In this sense, while using drama in education the purpose is not solely sympathizing with a wide array of the emotions evoked in the audience, who is a passive taker of these feelings; rather, educational drama lets the learners learn from the practices of drama in an educational art form as active participants. Furthermore, the use of drama enables the learners to decode the language ciphered in words thanks to the body language and theatrical abilities. While watching the teacher or peers, the learner will comprehend and learn the new words from the dramatized part (Karaman, 2017: p.162) As for the context of learning, as stated by (Giebert, 2014: p.139), such activities assign meaning to linguistic forms by enabling the learners to experience these forms in concrete cases, also enabling holistic learning from a context (Giebert, 2014: p.139). As suggested by Clipson-Boyles (1998: p.4), drama allows children to produce another medium for the expression of the learning in classrooms where they produce works of different formats such as fiction, reports, newspapers and paintings. In addition to its communicative perspective, drama also helps readers to comprehend the meaning better as suggested by Gül-Peker (2010: p.180).

Despite the existence of research on drama and language teaching, (Holden, 1982; Davies, 1990; Clipson-Boyles,1998; Chauhan; 2004; Üstündağ, 1998; Hui,et.al, 2011; Elaldı &Yerliyurt, 2016; Karaman, 2017) a class procedure on how this discipline can be applied and how teacher candidates will be informed about this procedure is not available in the field. With this on the agenda, this paper aims to draw a sketch of a Teaching Drama course at ITE (Initial Teacher Education) programs by proposing one currently conducted at Mersin University ELT Department. In addition, with a syllabus proposed, it also aims to spread and specify the notion of drama in ELT programs, which will act as an irreplaceable tool, particularly in young learner classrooms. The study includes the course procedure as well as the weekly schedule conducted during the course with the methodology and the rationale behind it; moreover, the authentic samples of the drama scripts created and acted by the teacher candidates aim to make the pioneers of the drama courses merged with the young learner classrooms. In addition to the practicalities noted, this study also consists of a research focusing on the experiences and observations of the teacher candidates as for the application of the drama to young learner classrooms.

2. Methodology

The research design of this study is qualitative, conducted with 30 teacher candidates doing their practicum, having taken the drama course in the previous years as the participants. The raw data have been obtained from the participants who are expected to write their observations as self reports as for the real classroom application of the drama course. The data gathered on a regular basis with semi structured questions as research instruments aim to find out the way drama can be used in real educational settings. The data have been processed by means of content analysis procedure, after which emerging themes have been identified and placed as implicational remarks in the findings, discussion and conclusion section.

3. The Course Procedure

The course description involves basic paradigms as the members of the procedure: course design, teacher role, student role and materials to be exploited during the course. Initially, the course aims to define the procedure in line with the pedagogical content knowledge through the 'what' and 'how' components of the teaching drama course. The content of the course has been identified as the "what" part, in other words, the lot to be taught to the teacher candidates as part of the course, and the "how" part as the methodological issues to open the road as to how drama can be used in language classrooms. To Savignon (1991: p.274), as a requirement of CLT, more traditional programs will find a path to include both the teachers and the learners in describing the goals and choosing the interpretive and expressive tasks which are focused on meaning for the achievement of these goals.

Teacher Roles

In this course, the researcher has been identified as constructivist: The main role of the teacher is to be a planner for the whole process to run smoothly. The teacher is expected to construe meaning from this procedure and to be involved in the whole process as an active participant to facilitate the operation of the whole system. In addition to this role, the teacher is centered as the resource of knowledge for the whole cycle to be completed with the help of the professional pedagogical contributions. The other role identified is being a monitor so that the whole operation can be tracked and evaluated from a professional perspective. The final role is being a reflective practitioner which assigns the

teacher the duty of reflecting on the whole period and assessing the cycle for the strong and weak points.

Learner Roles

Learners (in our case teacher candidates) are also expected to be active participants, not passive takers. They are assumed to have their own avatars, with the help of whom they can reveal their own identities and move freely behind the shield of these heroes/ heroines to express themselves without timidity. Thanks to these avatars they are supposed to work as character builders and create their own personal traits or fabricate very new identities to add up the condiment to the taste of the whole journey of learning to learn. The reflection experience followed by the active engagement and the creation of the texts finalized in this spun are embodied in the roles of reflective practitioners creative writers. The steps given below describe the phases of the Teaching Drama course:

Phase 1: The Kick- off

At the beginning of the course, the researcher asks the candidates if they have ever got involved in a drama course or if they have any idea of what drama is. Having discussed the main features of drama, the kick off starts with some mimicry and gesture practices to provide the candidates' first confrontation with the body language. The philosophy behind this start is to let the would-be teachers realize that this is not a classical course, and that one needs to discover the inner power to handle the job of teaching instead of clinging to the nearest possible opportunity such as books, materials and worksheets. They are also expected to notice that the core of teaching starts with the individual to be used as a source before moving towards a teaching tool, you should start the art of teaching with yourself (personal observation: a student teacher was once seen teach body parts using the self-recorded video of her body parts, not realizing that he could do the same in the classroom). The candidates are expected to realize the fact that teaching is art (Savignon, 1991: p.261) and that they cannot become ideal teachers without lifting the filter of "anxiety" (Öztürk, 2016: p.66) before their students. Moreover, if the nature of a conversation is considered, communication is not what is planned beforehand, and that turn taking is the milestone of a healthy conversation. The competence of starting a conversation or deciding on the interruption of a flowing conversation is something that is required by foreign language learning. The best environment as a means of oral expression can only be facilitated through drama (Er, 2003: p.253).

Phase 2: Background Preparations

As the second step, the researcher lets the class watch a silent movie and take notes for the interpretation and expression of some gestures and mimicry. This visual activity aims to broaden the minds and to center the attention on body language and non-verbal feeling transfer. The class is assigned to watch a second movie and to follow the same steps through imitation for the next class. As the follow up, the researcher lets the class do some gestures and mimicry as inspired from the film they have watched.

The third step includes some awe-inspiring film extracts to be exploited in the class. The task of the teacher candidates is to find out some extracts from the silent movies and to act in a similar fashion. The rationale here is to unveil the actor / actress spirit in the hearts so that the drama based activities in the class would have their roots at the time. At the fourth step, as a warm up, teacher candidates are asked to act a play part, preferably English, with the other group members, while also making up groups of four to

conduct the rest of the program. The groups' classification in a voluntary fashion is important, for the rest of the course is based on the performance and the peer support and evaluation. The group members get used to acting and watching other peers act, while also taking notes.

Phase 3: The Ball Gets Rolling

At the fifth step, participants are expected to write scripts inspired by the input they have been exposed to (silent movies, other movie fragments, theatre plays, etc.) and to act out the scripts before their peers. The benefit of such an activity is twofold: In a language class learners are encouraged to create a portion of writing of any genre they will choose, thus enjoying the pleasure of literature; moreover, they act out any of the roles they wish to voice in the classroom. In this sense, it can be said that this unique process enhances the feeling of ownership of learning, which becomes meaningful in this way, for if you make an effort for the learning process, you try to retain it.

The following step is the improvisations that people can "think themselves into" a role (Holden, 1981: p.1). By doing "let's pretend" (Holden, 1981: p.1) types of activities, the purpose is to transfer identity from one body to another as it often happens with children. It is crucial to bear in mind that once you release yourself towards creative approaches, the inspiration to follow comes out naturally. Considering that many people are not conscious of what they hold in their hands, the core procedure of this course aims to enable the discovery of the self, after which time, intact, thus, the unknown potential people realize in their own being if a need for teaching something arises. Using drama in elementary schools enables the students to cooperate (Üstündağ, 1998: p.30) and to share responsibility for the development of self-actualization, through which they establish creativity, trust, and independence.

Phase 4: The Application through the Incorporation of Drama into Language Teaching Methodology:

The next step is the incorporation of drama into approaches and methods in language teaching. The procedure to be followed at this stage depends on the content to be taught as the new trend towards teaching a language is based on eclecticism, a post-method era approach, which proposes that teachers who subscribe to the pluralistic view of methodology opt to use their own mixture out of the methods, though it should be borne in mind that these methods are consistent groupings of techniques and principles (Larsen-Freeman, 2000: p.183). In this part of the course, the researcher assigns the teacher candidates to use their imagination and create texts as their free mind allows them. The scripts having been created, the teacher designs a course procedure for the classroom practice. The texts (see Appendix 1) have been created by teacher candidates for use in language classes conducted with Suggestopedia. The function of these texts is twofold: They serve as sample fragments for the application of language teaching methodology; besides, they are embodied in the Drama Course Program designed by the researcher. In this way, the replica of the Drama Course in the ITE program is aimed to be applied in real language classrooms when teacher candidates start work as practitioners. After the texts have been created, the group of peers work collaboratively to adapt the text for use in the classroom with a specific technique. The guideline for the choice of techniques has been adopted from the book, Techniques and Principles in Language Teaching by Larsen-Freeman (2000). Adapted from (Larsen-Freeman, 2000), the basic principles of a class of desuggestopedia is sketched below:

The first principle is that the teacher is the authority in the class, and students are expected to respect this authority. Through desuggesting the psychological barriers, language learning is accelerated, and the feeling of security and less inhibition enable the learners to feel encouraged and become more impulsive and more reactive to the suggestions made by the teacher. As for the second principle, the students choose target names and occupations, and create biographies that they can go along with during the course. The classroom is bright and colorful, and posters hung here and there display grammar forms for peripheral learning. The text for the students contain long dialogues in the target language. The use of fine arts is important in this class. Vocabulary and grammar are emphasized in a daily context, with minimum, but explicit focus on grammar. The focus of the conscious attention is the use of language, not on the language forms. The third principle of this method is that speaking is emphasized and reading is also required in the target language. Students are asked to write imaginative texts in the target language. When necessary, the teacher is allowed to use the mother tongue to make the meaning clear. The teacher corrects the errors gently, with a soft voice.

The texts created in Appendix 1 are samples for the imaginary writing products composed in line with the principles of Suggestopedia as a language teaching method. They have been designed to illustrate how the rain forms in the atmosphere and how a cocoon becomes a butterfly. Moreover, through the texts, Simple Present Tense and Present Continuous Tense are revisited as well as some new words such as "dense", "evaporation", "alienated", "cocoon", and "spin". The forms are dealt with incidental learning fashion. After the class is over, and the students hand out the imaginary free writing products (Üstündağ, 1998: p.30) as a spontaneous piece of writing, one of which is assumed to be the one named, "The Rain", and the other is " The Butterfly" as a few noteworthy texts the teacher chooses to use in the class. The next class starts with the teacher's reading the text by using some sound effects, such as rain and lightning. After this phase, other students are asked to read the text and to feel the phenomenon of the rain formation. As the third step, the teacher makes 10 groups of students and assigns each group to draw a picture for each scene described in the writing. The story formed through the illustration is gathered and hung on the walls of the classroom. The addition of the imaginary writing product as an extension to the course can add a slight condiment to the methodology, topped with the cream of arts and crafts.

The texts given at Appendix 2 have been created for children and adults in line with the principles of Total Physical Response Method. The main purpose here is to eliminate stress and language anxiety through the dramatization of the given language portion. People who use TPR believe in the importance of having their students enjoy their experience while communicating in a foreign language (Larsen-Freeman, 2000). According to TPR, as the course progresses and when some students are ready to speak, individual students direct their teacher and other students. Although it relies on the basic principles of TPR, this application aims to work with students at higher levels to let them enjoy the learning procedure through the dramatization of the text.

As the overall contribution of this application, it can be said that since students are expected to create texts and act it out, they will benefit from writing, reading, listening and speaking. The role of the teacher is modeling. The teacher first starts the command and acts it out, and then asks the students to listen to the text and act accordingly. The theatrical aspect of the drama lets students get rid of the stress and fear of making errors such as pronunciation, word choice or grammar. Besides, action through listening or reading allows room for the comprehension and imitation of the given situation. If the text

is accompanied by costumes and the music or any other audio-visual effect (in our case the cracking noise of an egg, bird chicks or a mobile phone tune), the richness and the depth of the aura effect is doubled. Learning through watching or the joy of collaboration are the parts and parcels of these acts; however, at one point, there is also a need for the orally created texts; in other words, verbal interaction is also of primary importance. The swing from TPR to other methods could be useful at this point. Dialogues based on the created texts like the conversation between the bird and the chick, or the owner of the mobile phone's attempts to buy a new one could be given as the situation to enable the practice of an extended topic.

As vocabulary and grammatical structures are embedded in the imperatives (Larsen-Freeman, 2000), the method lets learners acquire the language in line with the first language acquisition.

4. Findings and Discussion

Drama as an independent discipline can be incorporated into language teaching methodology, for it is a perfect tool for the expression of the self both verbally and non-verbally. It is a fact that the changed teaching models have diverted the language learning for daily life through experience, not mechanical, traditional ways (Genç, 2009: p.1). As it can be molded in every language teaching method, it serves as a spine for language that requires social interaction. Although the earlier and less inclusive form of situational dialogues and the teaching based on this version can be said to form the basis for drama, the creative dimension and more acting skill required has topped drama as a substantial contribution to language teaching. Thanks to drama, students learn the language as a form of pleasure, and their self-esteem improves; the child becomes free form shyness and timidity (Er, 2003: p.253). As it is known to increase the motivation and interest, drama can be counted as the opportunity to unveil the talent and confidence (Aytaş, 2013: p.48) in the self. Moreover, the given fictitious contexts prepare the students for the common practices required by language tasks; thus allowing the students to transform the language skills; particularly oral ones to daily lives. Since it is learner centered, it activates peer collaboration, as a result of which, it arises challenge among the learners. Through the competitive tasks, interactive language is produced with the use of rich vocabulary that arises out of the need for improvisation that good dramatization calls for.

As a follow up research, teacher candidates who had taken drama course at the ITE program and started their practicum at schools have been asked to state their views of the application of drama to the young learner classes. It was commonly stated that they were able to apply the content and practical knowledge of this course to the real life conditions at educational settings. As reported by the teacher candidates, when they taught the course with the help of drama, they were able to teach the subject matter content and vocabulary without much difficulty, and the learners were involved cognitively in the course more than they generally did. A participant states that drama lets the knowledge be retained permanently, for it is fostered through more than one sense organs (p.10). In this sense, "drama enhanced curriculum" (Hui et.al, 2011: p. 24) lets the learners benefit from these applications.

Teacher candidates also reported that when their mentors used drama during the input provision, the inductive method worked a lot better, for they were able to arouse the interest of the learners, as well as triggering multiple intelligences. In this way, more interaction both with their mentor and peers became possible (p.13). Moreover, the other stages of the course would be a good environment for the use of drama; particularly, the production stage, at which learners improved the communicative competence (p.22). This

result is consistent with the field research conducted by Elaldı and Yerliyurt (2016: p.10) who found out that senior preservice preschool teachers had positive views as for the effect of the drama activities in their field experience. Besides, to the field notes of the researcher during the practicum observation, it has been observed that when drama is used in language classrooms, learning is fostered through game based activities or the other practicalities of using drama. This kind of learning leads to effective classroom practices, for it boosts motivation, and thanks to such procedures, the learners can improve their creativity as well as their aesthetic and artistic values (Karaman, 2017: p.163), (p.21).

Another advantage of drama is stated to be a resource for the creation of new situations, which goes hand in hand with situational language teaching (p.8). Besides, through drama, teachers start to gain skills for a creative teaching style as suggested by Hui et.al (2011: p. 43), and as also observed by participant 12, who point out to the potential creative teaching skills improved thanks to the power kindled through cooperation. Most participants mention the importance of teacher involvement in the courses conducted with drama as in, "when the teacher starts a task using drama, a surge of joy and pleasure arises in the class, particularly if the teacher is also active in the task" (p.4). This situation is sketched by p.10 as, "when there is a new path from the normal, expected routine, there is an increase of motivation for the teacher and the learner, for children love transforming into other identities."

Although teachers might think that when they use drama, they can be underestimated by their students, this is not the case in the real sense. Students who see their teachers as role models, try to imitate them and feel relaxed to participate in the tasks designed. Therefore, ITE programs should place more emphasis on the use of drama to lift the shame and timidity over the teachers in the first place so that they can get acquainted with the application of this invaluable tool in their classrooms. Apart from the classroom procedures, course books and other supplementary materials designed to elicit language products via drama makes the foundation for the use of this technique in the young learner classes. Therefore, as stated by Clipson-Boyles (1998), the primary curriculum design with the notion of drama forms the cultural heritage as well as contextualizing and activating the language; besides, it helps the learning process by active involvement and it is a valid medium for the expression and communication of the ideas. Actually, drama acts as the glue, which sticks the teacher and the learner as is stated by p.7: "Regardless of type of activity on the agenda of the teacher, children volunteer to do the task assigned; all of a sudden, they are charged with energy and motivation". The only negative criticism arising out of this research is that drama cannot be applied to all phases of a course, but mostly to the practice and production stages. However, when the input is taken into consideration, drama activates pave the way for a good listening comprehension skill, in which teachers can use modified linguistic input to have access to the level of their learners.

5. Conclusion

The course design proposed in this study aims to draw a sketch for a substantial course sample already designed and applied with at the ELT Department of a state University. This procedure can be fostered through other language teaching methodologies and further suggestions are sure to shed light on the incoming Drama Courses. As a result, practical application of drama as a technique or as a tool in language teaching can be infused into language teaching methodology, out of which two samples have been elaborated. In this way, language learning experience becomes enjoyable, dynamic and

natural. Therefore it "creates sensitivity and a sense of awareness" (Sam, 1990). The design of the course established on the philosophy of constructivism involves the language learner as the participants contextualized in the foreign language classrooms, while also redefining the roles of the teacher, the learner, and the language teaching techniques as the triangle participants of the 21st century language classrooms.

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Appendix 1: Texts Created by Teacher Candidates for Suggestopedia Method

The Rain

"You are a cloud, and you are floating freely in the sky. Suddenly, you feel some changes in your body. You start to fear, because you are getting denser; you are filled with water particles because of evaporation. You are filled up now, and you can hardly approach other fellow clouds. In the meantime, you see another cloud and head towards it. Gosh! It is a negatively charged cloud! You collide with it, and you cannot keep the evaporated water any more. Now, you release the droplets of rain, and they reach the ground. Yes, you are relaxed, and the weather has cleared up, and the sun is shining."

The Butterfly

"You are beginning to spin a cocoon, spinning, spinning, until you have been covered in. Now, you are tired, and want to rest there for a while. You have stored enough food to stay in Wait... Wait... Wait...Yes, now it is about time to come out. Final steps to destination. You are coming out of the cocoon excitedly. Your new body is strange to you. You are so alienated, surprised and pleased. Look at your wings as light as feather, look at your color, now different from before, and look up at the sky and fly to your freedom.

Appendix 2: Texts Created by Teacher Candidates for Total Physical Response Method

Cracking the Egg Open

You are a newborn, little sparrow. After you wait patiently in your own little world, your egg cracks, so you look around cheerfully with your pointed beak. You feel cold, because your feathers are short, you try to warm yourself in the corner of your nest, shivering. Suddenly, you see a bird approaching you. You make an attempt, but you cannot, because you are not strong enough to walk. Come on, stand up, stand up.... You are hungry, and spot the worms the bird has delivered. With a last attempt, you reach for the food. You start to eat the worms with the help of your beak. And you start to sing with joy.

Adventures of an Outdated Android

You are an android mobile phone. Your owner is addicted to you. Initially, you were pleased with this situation. However, you are old now and you cannot carry your body. You are hungry for sleep. Your owner charges you, but you wish to sleep all the time. Ouch no! She is taking you. You are turned on. Say hello to your first application. Your battery is full. Your adventure is starting: social media. Ah, now, gallery and again social media. When you think 'Is this all about the internet?' you find yourself in a channel. Yes! Now, your mood changes. You are smiling. You know the song played now. You're wrapped up in the rhythm of the song; however, silence falls in a minute. You are turned off!