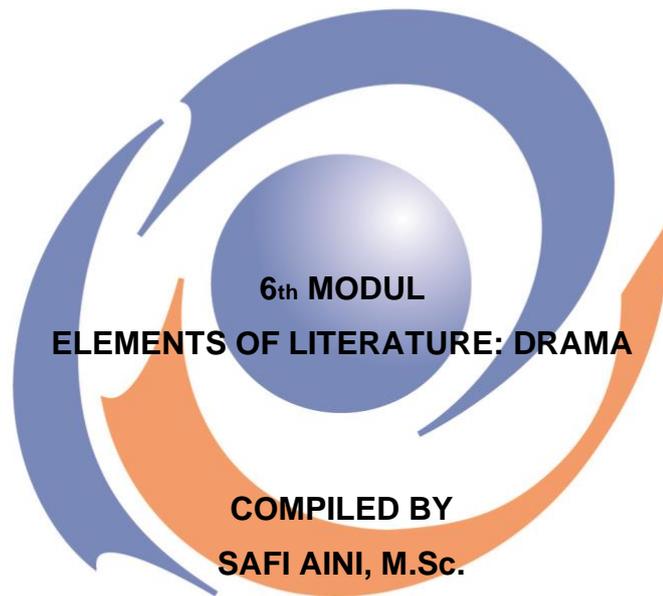


**MODUL INTRODUCTION TO LINGUISTICS
(PBI 321)**



6th MODUL

ELEMENTS OF LITERATURE: DRAMA

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ELEMENTS OF LITERATURE: DRAMA

A. Learning Objectives

After completing this course, students are expected to be able to identify, classify, and elaborate the elements of literature specifically drama.

B. Explanation

Drama may be defined as a mode of storytelling enacted by live performers before an audience. The Greek root of the word drama literally means "action happening before the eyes." In this sense, the drama differs from fiction in that the plot, characters, and setting must all be conveyed to the audience with the limitations of space and time inherent in this form. While a novel may stretch its plot across a nearly infinite length of time or pages and fill its story with as many characters as necessary, a play must simplify its structure to be enjoyed and understood within an audience's practical attention span and within the limited resources of a particular physical space. Because of these constraints placed upon the playwright, drama was prized as one of the highest forms of art by the Ancient Greeks.

From this classical heritage, drama has been an important form of popular entertainment, religious ritual, social commentary, and creative expression down to the present day. Even in our modern age, with the proliferation of technology and amusement, contemporary audiences still respond to the immediacy and intimacy of live performers engaged in action unfolding in front of them. While its form has changed over time, the basic elements of the drama have remained since the Greeks.

Drama is a story written to be performed in front of audiences. Dramas are usually performed in a theater or on a stage. The author's purpose of most

dramas is to entertain. In enacting the roles, actors portray the character's emotions and personalities. The story progresses through verbal and non-verbal interactions between the characters, and the presentation is suitably supplemented by audio and visual effects.

Through the characters involved, the story has a message to give. It forms the central theme of the play around which the plot is built. While some consider music and visuals as separate elements, others prefer to club them under staging which can be regarded as an independent element of drama. Lighting, sound effects, costumes, makeup, gestures or body language given to characters, the stage setup, and the props used can together be considered as symbols that are elements of drama. What dictates most other dramatic elements is the setting; that is the time period and location in which the story takes place.

There are three types of drama elements; literary element, technical element, and performance element. **Literary element** means what is needed to write a script or story. It involves **script, plot, character, story organization, setting, dialogue, monologue, and conflict**. **Technical** elements means what is needed to produce a play. It covers **scenery, costumes, props, sound and music, and make-up**. The last one is **performance element**. It is about what do the actors do on stage to make a character come alive. Its elements are acting, speaking, and non-verbal Expression.

Literary Elements

1. Plot

The order of events occurring in a play make its plot. Essentially, the plot is the story that the play narrates. The entertainment value of a play depends largely on the sequence of events in the story. The connection between the events and the characters in them form an integral part of the plot. What the characters do, how they interact, the course of their lives as narrated by the story, and what happens to them in the end, constitutes the plot. A struggle between two individuals, the relation between them, a struggle

with self, a dilemma, or any form of conflict of one character with himself or another character in the play, goes into forming the story's plot. The story unfolds through a series of incidents that share a cause-and-effect relationship. Generally, a story begins with exposing the past or background of the main and other characters, and the point of conflict, then proceeds to giving the central theme or climax. Then come the consequences of the climax and the play ends with a conclusion.

2. Character

The characters that form a part of the story are interwoven with the plot of the drama. Each character in a play has a personality of its own and a set of principles and beliefs. Actors in the play have the responsibility of bringing the characters to life. The main character in the play who the audience identifies with, is the protagonist. He/she represents the theme of the play. The character that the protagonist conflicts with, is the antagonist or villain. While some characters play an active role throughout the story, some are only meant to take the story forward and some others appear only in certain parts of the story and may or may not have a significant role in it. Sometimes, these characters are of help in making the audiences focus on the play's theme or main characters. The way in which the characters are portrayed and developed is known as characterization.

3. Story Organization

The structure of the story comprises the way in which it is dramatized. How well the actors play their roles and the story's framework constitute the structure of drama. Direction is an essential constituent of a play. A well-directed story is more effective. Stagecraft defines how the play is presented to the audiences. The use and organization of stage properties and the overall setting of a play are a part of stagecraft, which is a key element of drama.

4. Dialogue

The story of a play is taken forward by means of dialogs. The story is narrated to the audiences through the interaction between the play's characters, which is in the form of dialogs. The contents of the dialogs and the

quality of their delivery have a major role to play in the impact that the play has on the audiences. It is through the dialogs between characters that the story can be understood. They are important in revealing the personalities of the characters. The words used, the accent, tone, pattern of speech, and even the pauses in speech, say a lot about the character and help reveal not just his personality, but also his social status, past, and family background as given by the play.

5. Setting

The time and place where a story is set is one of its important parts. The era or time in which the incidents in the play take place, influence the characters in their appearance and personalities. The time setting may affect the central theme of the play, the issues raised (if any), the conflict, and the interactions between the characters. The historical and social context of the play is also defined by the time and place where it is set. The time period and the location in which the story is set, affect the play's staging.

6. Monologue

A monologue is a long speech made by one person.

7. Conflict

The internal or external struggle between opposing forces, ideas, or interests that create dramatic tension.

Technical Elements

1. Scenery

The scenery is theatrical equipment such as curtains, backdrops, and platforms to communicate the environment. An example might be trees to show a forest environment.

2. Costumes

The clothing and other items an actor wears to help him or her “become” the character.

3. Props

Props are any article other than costumes or scenery used as part of a dramatic production. An example might be a table on the stage.

4. Sound and Music

This element includes the use of sounds and rhythm in dialogs as well as music compositions that are used in the plays. The background score, the songs, and the sound effects used should complement the situation and the characters in it. The right kind of sound effects or music, if placed at the right points in the story, act as a great supplement to the high and low points in the play. The music and the lyrics should go well with the play's theme. If the scenes are accompanied by pieces of music, they become more effective on the audiences.

5. Make-up

Make-up is the use of costumes, wigs and body paint to transform an actor into a character.

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Performance Elements

1. Acting

Acting is how speaking and moving help to create characters.

2. Speaking

Speaking is vocal expression, projection, speaking style and diction.

3. Non-verbal Expression

Non-verbal expression includes gestures, facial expressions, and movement.

C. Exercise

1. What is drama and what are its characteristics?

D. Answer Key

1. Drama may be defined as a mode of storytelling enacted by live performers before an audience. The Greek root of the word drama literally means "action happening before the eyes." In this sense, the drama differs from fiction in that the plot, characters, and setting must all be conveyed to the audience with the limitations of space and time inherent in this form. While a novel may stretch its plot across a nearly infinite length of time or pages and fill its story with as many characters as necessary, a play must simplify its structure to be enjoyed and understood within an audience's practical attention span and within the limited resources of a particular physical space. Because of these constraints placed upon the playwright, drama was prized as one of the highest forms of art by the Ancient Greeks.

The characteristics of drama are literary element, technical element, and performance element. **Literary element** means what is needed to write a script or story. It involves **script, plot, character, story organization, setting, dialogue, monologue, and conflict**. **Technical** elements means what is needed to produce a play. It covers **scenery, costumes, props, sound and music, and make-up**. The last one is **performance element**. It is about what do the actors do on stage to make a character come alive. Its elements are acting, speaking, and non-verbal Expression.

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