Volume/Jahrgang 20, Issue/Ausgabe 1 (2026)
https://doi.org/10.33178/scenario.20.1.5

Motivation and engagement

A comparative study of Process Drama and Communicative Teaching in adult EFL learning

Marlene Kruger & Michaela Sambanis

This article investigates the effects of process drama on motivation and engagement in adult English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learning, utilising the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) for course design while considering its emphasis on social agency and existential competence development, as well as drawing on affective perspectives on language learning, and the Self-Determination Theory (SDT). Using a mixed-methods, pre–post experimental design, 38 adult students participated in either a process drama-based- or a communicative six-week B2.1 EFL course. Both groups reported comparable increases in motivation and engagement, highlighting the importance of collaboration through engaging tasks and meaningful interaction in non-threatening learning environments. However, qualitative findings reveal distinct drivers of engagement and motivation. The communicative group experienced learning as more cognitively guided as well as discussion- and question-oriented, whereas the drama-based group's focus was more participation-centred with positive affective experiences. The findings suggest that these affective learning experiences support intrinsically motivated engagement which could foster long-lasting effects. Longitudinal research is required to examine whether these positive affective factors translate into sustained engagement and motivation over time.

Keywords: Process drama; English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learning; learner engagement; language learning motivation; positive emotions.

1 Introduction

The article first establishes theoretical frameworks for examining motivation and engagement, including the focus on social agency and existential competence development in the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR), affective perspectives on language learning, and the Self-Determination Theory (SDT). It then reviews evidence of the influence of communicative teaching approaches on these constructs.

Thereafter, the importance of positive affective experiences is discussed, as well as how process drama could foster such experiences and align with the above-mentioned frameworks. It subsequently presents the comparative study design and findings, followed by a discussion of the shared and distinct effects of a drama-based- and communicative teaching

approach on motivation and engagement among adult English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students. Finally, the implications and limitations are considered.

The positive role of engagement and motivation in second language (L2) and foreign language (FL) learning has been widely recognised in various Second Language Acquisition (SLA) theories, such as the Monitor Theory[1] (Krashen, 1979) and theories influencing SLA scholars, such as sociocultural theory (Lantolf et al., 2014; Vygotsky, 1978) as well as motivation theories, such as the SDT (Deci & Ryan, 1985; Ryan & Deci, 2017). Moreover, how these constructs are shaped and how they could be enhanced in students have been widely investigated in the L2/FL teaching and learning field (Darvin & Norton, 2023; Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2021; Gardner, 2007, 2020; Hiver et al., 2024; Noels et al., 2019b; Wu, 2022). More broadly, the role of affect in language learning has gained increasing prominence in language teaching research and practice (Arnold, 2011; Dewaele & MacIntyre, 2014; Horwitz et al., 1986; MacIntyre et al., 1998), with its significance also recognised in the CEFR.

1.1 Social agency and existential competence development in the CEFR

The CEFR is one of the most prominent and widely used Council of Europe language teaching policy instruments.[2] At the core of the CEFR lies an action-oriented approach, which conceptualises students as social agents engaged in purposeful action in social contexts, allowing them to take ownership of their learning. The CEFR provides a flexible framework encouraging the use of communicative language activities, allowing active participation through socially constructed learning experiences. Communicative language activities are realised through tasks emphasising meaning-making, requiring students to mobilise competences to achieve specific objectives within particular domains, drawing on and developing both communicative and general competences (Council of Europe, 2001, 2017).

Existential competence, one form of general competence, highlights that students' communicative ability is influenced not only by knowledge and skills, but also by "selfhood

[1] The Monitor Theory has been extensively criticised and even dismissed by some researchers (for example Ellis, 2008; Gregg, 1986; McLaughlin, 1987).

[2] Even though the CEFR has had a significant impact across the globe, the Western bias of this document has to be acknowledged. The CEFR has been criticised for inconsistent level placement across institutions, vague and insufficiently detailed descriptors (Deygers et al., 2018), and practitioners' limited understanding of its principles and implementation, which restricts its pedagogical value (Díez-Bedmar & Byram, 2019).

factors" linked to personality, including "attitudes, motivations, values, beliefs, cognitive styles and personality types, contributing to personal identity" (Council of Europe, 2001, p. 105). Given that the CEFR considers cognitive and emotional factors, along with the full range of abilities employed by students as social agents (Council of Europe, 2001), utilising this framework for course design may help foster autonomy, motivation, confidence and speaking skills (Díez-Bedmar & Byram, 2019). Positive affective factors (e.g., motivation, attitude, mood, and self-confidence) have also been linked to successful language learning outcomes by researchers.

1.2 Affective perspectives on language learning

It has been suggested that affect is closely linked to cognition and may therefore facilitate or inhibit language learning (Niedenthal, 2007). Arnold and Brown (1999) define affect as aspects of emotion, feeling, mood and attitude that influence behaviour, including individual factors such as motivation, self-confidence and self-esteem. From this perspective, positive affect creates conditions that support meaningful involvement and effective language learning. Arnold (2011) emphasises the close relationship between affect and motivation, arguing that emotions can influence students' attention and involvement and help move them from setting learning goals towards acting on them. Thus, positive attitudes, motivation, mood and self-confidence may contribute to successful language learning by supporting students' readiness to invest effort and participate in meaningful language use (Arnold & Brown, 1999; Arnold, 2011).

MacIntyre and colleagues similarly emphasise that language learning outcomes depend not only on linguistic competence, but also on whether students are willing to use the language. Their Willingness to Communicate (WTC) model proposes that communicative behaviour is shaped by interacting linguistic, communicative and social psychological variables, including affective and motivational factors which influence students' readiness to enter into L2 communication (MacIntyre et al., 1998). MacIntyre (2007) develops this further by arguing that motivational tendencies become meaningful when enacted in specific situations, for example when motivation propels a student towards communication and is translated into the choice to speak. From this perspective, motivation may enhance students' willingness to communicate and translate their motivational energy into active participation, thereby providing an important link between motivation and engagement.

Oga-Baldwin and colleagues (2017) agree with this notion, as they propose that motivation refers to the direction and potential of students' energy, while engagement is the application of that energy to active learning. There are studies which support this viewpoint and have shown how changes in motivation creates changes in engagement (Anderman & Patrick, 2012; Noels et al., 2019a; Schunk & Mullen, 2012; Skinner et al., 2009). On the other hand, it has been indicated how multimodal engagement generates shifts in motivation (Egbert, 2020; Ludwig & Sambanis, 2023; Reeve, 2012), also supported by the SDT. These views highlight the interrelatedness of these constructs.

1.3 The self-determination theory and psychological needs in FL learning

The SDT is a macro-theory of human motivation (Deci & Ryan, 1985), composed of several interrelated mini theories (Deci & Ryan, 2012; Ryan & Deci, 2017), explaining how motivation varies in quality along a continuum based on personal needs, goals, and environmental factors (Ryan & Deci, 2000). A detailed investigation of the SDT falls outside the scope of this article. The focus is on one mini-theory, the concept of psychological needs, derived from the Basic Psychological Needs Theory. This theory posits that optimal intrinsic motivation, and other forms of autonomous motivation, are facilitated when the social context allows all three basic psychological needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness to be met. When individuals experience volition, capability, and connection to others, intrinsic motivation is fostered and sustained (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Ryan & Deci, 2017).

According to the SDT, intrinsic motivation is defined as engagement in an activity for the inherent enjoyment or interest it provides (Deci et al., 2017) and high intrinsic motivation is associated with positive outcomes across educational levels (Ryan & Deci, 2020). The theory has been widely applied in language teaching and learning research to examine how students' motivation is shaped and how it may be increased (Al-Hoorie et al., 2025; Noels et al., 2019b).[3] Autonomous motivation, including intrinsic motivation, has been linked to enhanced achievement and reduced anxiety in L2 classrooms (Alamer et al., 2025). Over the years, communicative teaching approaches have been developed which, when effectively

[3] For critical discussion of SDT in FL/L2 motivation research, see Al-Hoorie et al. (2025). Although SDT has generated substantial empirical support, its application to language learning remains debated, especially regarding the selective use of SDT mini-theories, reliance on cross-sectional self-report designs, and the limited translation of theoretical insights into concrete pedagogical applications.

implemented, could create learning experiences in accordance with the SDT, consequently increasing engagement and motivation.

1.4 Engagement and motivational outcomes in communicative approaches

It has been reported that Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) enhances motivation in higher education students (Mabkhot & Djurabaev, 2024) and improves writing motivation (Siregar et al., 2023). With task-based instruction, a well-known approach linked to CLT with communicative tasks as principal elements included in lessons (Ur 2014), university students' intrinsic motivation and self-efficacy in English as a Second Language (ESL) listening increased over time (Xu et al., 2025). Collaborative task-based instruction has likewise been shown to improve motivation in intermediate EFL students (Kouhsarian et al., 2023) as well as high school EFL students (Bećirović et al., 2022).

However, among these reports of enhanced motivation and/or engagement, none are longitudinal and only two studies include control groups (Kouhsarian et al., 2023; Siregar et al., 2023).[4] Moreover, other studies indicate that motivation fluctuates or is not maintained over time. Yaghoubinejad et al. (2017) found that CLT implementation led to fluctuating motivation in adult EFL students, supporting a view of motivation as a dynamic, complex system. Reviewing 54 studies, Namkung and Kim (2024) reported that Task-based language teaching often boosts initial motivation and engagement, but longitudinal evidence is sparse and mixed, offering little support for the long-term stability of these effects. A six-week classroom study documented unstable motivational trajectories in an adolescent task-based classroom, including within- and between-lesson fluctuations (Mohammadzadeh & Alavinia, 2021). It has been indicated that for lasting FL gains, engagement and motivation must be sustained over time (Alamer et al., 2025). In light of this, it is essential to examine the factors that sustain motivation and engagement, as well as pedagogical approaches that may incorporate these factors into learning experiences and thus, maintain motivation and engagement over extended periods.

[4] Following Campbell and Stanley (1963), the inclusion of a control group strengthens internal validity by enabling comparison with outcomes under a particular teaching approach with outcomes in its absence, thereby reducing the plausibility of alternative explanations for any observed effect.

1.5 The role of positive affect in sustained engagement and motivation

According to the SDT, extrinsic motivation, driven by rewards or punishments, is typically short-lived, as it diminishes once the motivating stimulus is removed, rendering it a relatively unstable form of motivation. In contrast, intrinsic motivation, which is fundamentally driven by enjoyment and interest, is widely regarded as the most stable and enduring form of motivation (Ryan & Deci, 2017). Vansteenkiste et al. (2004) found that activities experienced as enjoyable in an autonomy-supportive learning environment led to more enduring motivation, deeper processing, greater learning and performance, as well as more dynamic engagement than externally pressuring approaches.

Other theories in educational psychology also support the notion that positive affective factors have longer-lasting effects on motivation and engagement. In the four-phase model of interest development, Hidi and Renninger (2006) propose that positive emotions such as enjoyment help transform initial situational interest into more sustained individual interest by encouraging continued and repeated engagement with the content. As the development of interest enhances motivation and leads to meaningful engagement (Renninger & Hidi, 2015), sustained individual interest could result in sustained motivation and engagement.

The Broaden and Build Theory of Positive Emotions[5] explores how enjoyable learning experiences broaden cognitive (attention and creativity) and behavioural (motivation) repertoires, leading to "upward spirals" of long-term resilience, wellbeing and engagement (Fredrickson, 2001; Fredrickson, 2013; Fredrickson & Joiner, 2002). Rahimi and Bigdeli (2014) refer to this theory as they highlight the significance of enhancing positive emotions in L2 learning to increase active engagement and participation. The new approach of *Positive Fremdsprachendidaktik/Positive Language Learning & Teaching* (Sambanis & Ludwig, 2025) expands the perspective and grounds the focus on positive emotions scientifically by referencing findings from Positive Psychology and Neuroscience. The practical guide *Happy Learning* (Sambanis & Ludwig, 2026) provides strategies to build resilience and foster optimism.

The control-value theory of achievement emotions connects emotions to motivational and cognitive processes in educational contexts. Pekrun (2006, 2024) suggests that positive

[5] It should be noted that the broadening component has been criticised recently (Roth et al. 2024).

activity-related emotions, such as enjoyment, arising from students' appraisals of control and value in academic tasks, are linked to greater motivation and engagement and are theorised to operate within reciprocal feedback loops. Enjoyment and motivation to learn have been found to correlate positively in the long-term (Pekrun, 2006), and longitudinal research proposes that there is reciprocal causation between emotions and achievement outcomes (Camacho-Morles et al., 2021; Pekrun, 2024). Taken together, these theoretical perspectives suggest that sustained motivation and engagement may be fostered through learning environments that repeatedly generate positive affective experiences. A process drama-based approach may create such environments.

1.6 Process Drama in FL classrooms: theoretical foundations

The use of drama as a learning medium has a long educational history, with approaches developed by scholars and practitioners such as Finlay-Johnson (1912), Cook (1917), Ward (1930), Slade (1954), and Way (1967), among others (Nicholson, 2011). This article focuses on process drama (O'Toole, 1992; O'Neill, 1995), which evolved from drama-in-education through the work of Dorothy Heathcote and Gavin Bolton (O'Toole, 2009).

In process drama, teachers and students adopt diverse roles to co-construct a dramatic world using various drama strategies (Gallagher, 2007). Within this improvisational context, themes and issues are explored collaboratively, requiring participants to engage in roles to analyse and examine the subject matter of the drama (Bowell & Heap, 2013). Theatrical skills towards the production of a play are not required; instead, emphasis is placed on understanding, reflection, and meaning making (Wagner, 1999). Students and teachers participate both within and outside the dramatic frame to negotiate meaning and further knowledge, drawing on multimodal engagement, socio-culturally mediated interaction, as well as prior knowledge (O'Toole & O'Mara, 2007). By granting students agency in shaping the dramatic action and solving problems, process drama creates a learner-centred environment that promotes higher-order thinking and student autonomy (Bolton, 2007; Gill, 2016; O'Toole, 2009). These principles closely align with the CEFR and the SDT which encourage learner-centred classrooms wherein students take ownership of their learning.

This collective process, consisting of collaboratively created and enacted narratives, encourages sociocultural awareness (Yuanyuan, 2019), develops multiliteracies (Gallagher &

Ntelioglou, 2011), builds community, as well as promotes intercultural- and communicative competence, supporting further learning (Athiemoolam, 2018; Gallagher, 2000; O'Neill, 2006; Piazzoli & Kennedy, 2014), and in turn meets the SDT needs for competence and relatedness (Wu, 2021). Given the range of approaches to process-oriented drama, the term drama-based is used from here on to refer to process-oriented methods or strategies grounded in drama.

1.7 Drama-based language teaching and positive affective outcomes in EFL

Over the past five decades, drama-based teaching has been widely used in ESL/EFL contexts (Baldwin & Galazka 2021; Belliveau & Kim, 2013; Kao & O'Neill, 1998; Lee et al., 2020a; Maley & Duff, 1982; Piazzoli, 2018; Podlozny, 2000; Schewe, 2013). When well-structured and facilitated effectively, it fosters a non-threatening FL classroom environment that may enhance confidence, as well as reduce anxiety and inhibitions (Dora To et al., 2011; Piazzoli, 2011; Stinson & Freebody, 2009). The protective framework of working in role and shifting teacher–student status further increase confidence to participate in FL contexts (Stinson & Freebody, 2009; Yuanyuan, 2019), which may consequently enhance WTC (MacIntyre et al., 1998). Combined with drama's multimodal nature, this confidence stimulates interest and engagement, positively influencing attitudes towards FL learning (Rothwell, 2011; Yilmaz & Dollar, 2017), thus potentially supporting existential competence (Council of Europe, 2001), and language learning (Arnold, 2011). Drama-based practices thus create enjoyable, affectively engaging FL learning experiences that increase attention, energy, and enthusiasm (Bournot-Trites et al., 2007; Rothwell, 2011), while motivating students through multimodal engagement driven by maintaining dramatic action and tension (Hulse & Owens, 2019; Liu, 2002). Taken together, drama-based teaching may meet the psychological needs outlined by the SDT (Ryan & Deci, 2017) and repeatedly create positive affective experiences, which in turn may not only enhance, but also sustain engagement and intrinsic motivation.

1.8 Empirical evidence and research gaps

Numerous studies report that drama-based teaching enhances engagement (Altweissi & Maaytah, 2022; Dora To et al., 2011; Piazzoli, 2012; Sarinastiti & Putri, 2024; Stinson, 2009; Uştuk, 2023) and motivation in ESL/EFL contexts (Adi & Susilowati, 2025; Gillies & Roger, 2025; Kadan, 2021; Lee et al., 2020b; Man et al., 2019; Man et al., 2021; Panda et al., 2024). However, a systematic review by Luo et al. (2024) reveals a notable lack of systematic research

on process drama in EFL/ESL learning. Existing studies offer limited insight into how process drama influences affective factors such as motivation, attitudes, and anxiety, and few include control groups. Of the twelve studies above reporting increased engagement and motivation, only three offer comparative evidence (Adi & Susilowati, 2025; Altweissi & Maaytah, 2022; Kadan, 2021). Many also rely on small samples, limiting the robustness of their conclusions. Furthermore, few studies situate findings in established L2/FL theoretical frameworks, which are crucial for interpreting findings. Consequently, systematic studies incorporating theoretical frameworks, comparative designs and larger samples are required to clarify how drama-based teaching shapes engagement and motivation in EFL learning.

2 Study design

This study employed a mixed-methods, pre–post experimental design to compare the effects of a drama-based language teaching approach to a communicative language teaching (CLT) approach on multimodal development of EFL students. For this article, the effects these approaches have on motivation and engagement are investigated.

The research questions informing the study were:

1. Does a drama-based language teaching approach enhance motivation and engagement to a greater extent than a communicative language teaching approach?
2. Which factors are perceived to influence these constructs in each respective group?
3. What are the implications of the engagement and motivational drivers in each respective group?

Data were collected from an experimental group (drama-based EFL course) and a control group (communicative EFL course). Both courses were delivered concurrently on different days at a *Volkshochschule*[6] in Berlin, with group allocation based on participant availability. The researcher-teacher, Marlene Kruger, designed and facilitated both courses to control for teacher effects, as well as conducted all testing and interviews. The researcher-teacher is qualified and experienced in both process drama and CLT, holding a master's degree in Drama with a specialisation in drama in education and teaching practice, in addition to a TEFL certification. Over 15 years, the researcher-teacher has taught English to students of different ages and proficiency levels in several countries, using both approaches depending on learning

[6] A *Volkshochschule* is a German adult education centre offering a wide range of public courses.

contexts and institutional requirements. This extensive teaching experience was important in managing the dual role of teacher and researcher, as it enabled the researcher-teacher to implement each approach according to its principles, maintain consistency across courses, and prioritise students' pedagogical needs over the aims of the research.

2.1 Participants

Participants were recruited through collaboration with the *Volkshochschule* and outreach at community centres. The sample comprised 38 adult EFL students (drama-based: *n* = 19; communicative: *n* = 19), aged 18–51, with mixed gender representation. Females (drama-based: *n* = 11; communicative: *n* =14) slightly outnumbered males (drama-based: *n* =8; communicative: *n* =5), particularly in the communicative group. Descriptive statistics indicated comparable age distributions across groups (drama-based: range: 18 – 51; mean: 32.32; communicative: range: 21 – 45; mean: 34.74). Prior to the course, all participants completed a placement test (*Cornelsen Einstufungstest*) to ensure English proficiency was equivalent to level B1.2. All participants provided informed consent, and ethical approval was obtained from the Central Ethics Committee of Freie Universität Berlin.

2.2 Study context

Both courses ran for six weeks (30 instructional hours), with classes held from 18:00 to 20:30, and were designed on the flexible framework of the CEFR (Council of Europe, 2001, 2017), targeting development in overall proficiency from B1.2 towards B2.1. Accordingly, the learning objectives of both courses were based on the CEFR illustrative descriptors, and were realised through communicative tasks.[7] Identical language components, including reading texts,[8] vocabulary and grammar instruction, were incorporated into both courses. However, different teaching approaches determined the communicative tasks explored. The experimental group was taught using a process drama-based approach, in which key elements of process drama were integrated. Designed by the researcher-teacher, the course content incorporated a distinct theme and process drama in each session to maximise students' exposure to varied

[7] Some descriptors were excluded, namely: analysis and criticism of creative texts, reading as a leisure activity, and aspects of mediation and plurilingualism due to their focus on multilingualism.

[8] Drama-based participants generally read the texts, which also served as pre-texts, before class, as the establishment of context and initiation stage require more time.

language use and diverse sociocultural contexts while sustaining novelty. The control group was instructed using a communicative approach based on CLT principles.

The overarching theme of climate change and its sub-themes addressed in each session were consistent across both courses. Table 1 outlines the activities included in each course, together with the amount of time allocated to each stage.

Process Drama-Based EFL Course	**Communicative EFL Course**
▪ 30 min. – explain grammar ▪ 10 min. – read and repeat vocabulary; clarify ambiguous meanings ▪ 20 min – traditional grammar speaking exercises incorporating target vocabulary ▪ 5 min. – establish dramatic context and elaborate on pre-text ▪ 15 min. – initiation stage (selection of roles and role-building activities) ▪ 50 min. – the experiential stage consisting of speaking, reading and writing tasks (incl. process drama strategies, such as: variations of Tableaux, Role-on-the wall, Conscience Alley, Hot-seating, Writing-in-role, and Role-play) ▪ 20 min. – reflection stage (word collage, 'it made me think' phrase, class discussion, reading)	▪ 30 min. – explain grammar ▪ 10 min. – read and repeat vocabulary; clarify ambiguous meanings ▪ 20 min – traditional grammar speaking exercises incorporating target vocabulary ▪ 20 min. – reading task ▪ 50 min. – the application stage consisting of speaking and writing tasks (incl. communicative activities, such as: variations of writing tasks, presentations, discussions, describing experiences, debates, interviews, two concentric circles etc.) ▪ 20 min. – reflection stage (class discussion)

Table 1: Activities and time allocation in the process drama-based- and communicative EFL courses

2.3 Data collection

Pre- and post-tests included an overall proficiency test (EnglishScore), Can-Do self-assessments (CEFR), QCAE Questionnaire (Cognitive and Affective Empathy questionnaire), and a semantic priming task. Semi-structured interviews were conducted post-course only to enable participants to reflect on their overall experience of the course and its perceived impact on their language learning. Participation assessment forms, adapted from Dancer and Kamvounias (2005), were completed after each session by the researcher-teacher. All 38 participants completed the pre- and post-tests, including the semi-structured interview. To minimise response bias, participants were informed that interview responses would not reflect on the teacher's competence and they were encouraged to provide honest evaluations

of their learning experience, as the study aimed to compare the effects of two different teaching approaches.

2.4 Data analysis

The semi-structured interviews were analysed using a hybrid approach combining reflexive Thematic Analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2021) and Qualitative Content Analysis, allowing for both pattern identification and systematic categorisation across participant groups, with frequency-informed comparative procedures. The analysis aligns primarily with Thematic Analysis through systematic familiarisation, inductive category development, iterative refinement, and comparative interpretation of themes across groups (Braun & Clarke, 2021). Simultaneously, it incorporates key principles of Qualitative Content Analysis, particularly the segmentation of text into analytical units, categorical organisation, frequency-based inclusion criteria, and tabulation of responses. The combined approach aims to strengthen analytical transparency while retaining sensitivity to meaning and context.

All interviews were initially transcribed using AI software (Viscord). To ensure transcription accuracy, particularly given variable pronunciation and intelligibility among student participants, the researcher-teacher verified each transcript by listening to the audio recordings and correcting transcription errors. Participants were then organised into their respective groups, and their responses were segmented according to predefined interview topics aligned with the interview questions.[9] Prior to analysis, transcripts were edited for analytical clarity: fillers, repetitions, clarifying exchanges, and teacher comments were removed. While edited transcripts were used for analysis, verbatim, unedited transcripts were retained for the presentation of direct quotations. Relevant responses from different questions were cross-referenced and reassigned to appropriate topical categories when conceptually relevant. Following data familiarisation through repeated readings, topic-specific analyses were conducted. For each interview topic (e.g., motivation, engagement), a separate Excel file was created. Participant responses were inductively categorised: initial categories were generated from individual responses, expanded as new concepts emerged, and refined

[9] Each interview question addressed a specific topic, including: participants' overall experience of the course; its perceived impact on learning; participation and engagement; motivation; interaction; spontaneous and fluent speech; empathy; writing; and the course theme. Participants in the drama-based group were also asked about their attitudes towards drama-based teaching.

as subsequent responses were analysed. Categories represented recurring ideas rather than pre-established codes. Comparative analysis between the two groups was then conducted by calculating the frequency with which each category was mentioned by participants in each group. Categories were included in the reported results when they were mentioned by at least two more participants in one group than in the other. To support content-focused pattern identification and visualisation, verbatim, unedited transcripts, excluding interview questions and teacher comments, were imported into R, where word clouds were generated to illustrate salient lexical patterns across topics and groups.

3 Results

This study compares the effects of drama-based teaching and communicative teaching on engagement and motivation in EFL learning, identifying similarities and differences in the factors perceived to influence these constructs. The results draw on two interview questions addressing engagement ("How did the activities in the course influence your participation and engagement?")[10] and motivation ("Did the activities in the course enhance or lessen your motivation?"). Given the general nature of these questions, the absence of a category in a group does not indicate a lack of effect; rather, reported aspects reflect those most salient to participants and therefore most impactful. Motivation and engagement are analysed separately and jointly, due to their interrelated relationship. Tables report responses to each question, while word clouds combine responses to both.

Table 2 summarises participant responses in relation to motivation and engagement. Based on student perceptions, both the communicative- and drama-based groups reported an equal increase in motivation. The responses related to participation and engagement indicate a slightly greater increase in the drama-based group. These perceptions are broadly supported by the participation assessment forms. Total participation scores are comparable (drama-based: 138.2; communicative: 138.34).

MOTIVATION	**Yes**	**Unsure/Neutral**	**No**
Communicative	79%	16%	5%
Drama-based	79%	16%	5%

[10] Although the interview question is open-ended, participants' responses indicated whether the course positively, neutrally, or negatively affected their engagement.

ENGAGEMENT	Yes	Unsure/Neutral	No
Communicative	79%	10.5%	10.5%
Drama-based	84%	11%	5%

Table 2: Participant Responses by Group for Motivation and Engagement

3.1 Shared motivation and engagement factors across groups

Several factors contributing to increased motivation and engagement were reported equally across groups as shown in Table 3. It is pertinent to note that nearly an equal number of participants across groups reported increased motivation as an effect of participation, as well as increased participation as an effect of motivation, underscoring the interrelatedness of these constructs. Another point of considerable interest is that enhanced confidence is highlighted as a driving factor of motivation (drama-based group) and engagement (communicative group) by different groups. Whenever one group emphasised that enhanced confidence increased one of the constructs, the other group made no comments on it.

MOTIVATION	SHARED MOTIVATION AND ENGAGEMENT FACTORS
Communicative & Drama-based	1. Speaking tasks 2. Group activities 3. Non-threatening classroom environment 4. Recognizing weaknesses and shortcomings 5. Pre-preparation 6. Participation (drama-based: *n* =2; communicative: *n* =3) **Effect of motivation:** Active participation
ENGAGEMENT	
Communicative & Drama-based	1. Pair work 2. Pre-preparation 3. Using key vocabulary in speaking tasks 4. Comfortable asking questions

Table 3: Shared Motivation and Engagement Factors in Communicative and Drama-based Groups

Figure 1 and 2, combining motivation and engagement responses, further illustrate similarities between groups. The similarities can be identified by looking at shared words and their relative prominence (size). Commonly highlighted aspects included: activities, motivation,

speaking, vocabulary, person/people, learning, topic, and enhancement. As word clouds represent lexical frequency rather than interpretive depth, they are not analysed in detail. However, these overlaps, supported by similarities in the table, may indicate that both groups perceived the learning experience as based on communicative tasks that contextualise language components, and encourage collaboration as well as verbal communication.

CONTROL GROUP



Figure 1: Word Cloud – Communicative group

EXPERIMENTAL GROUP

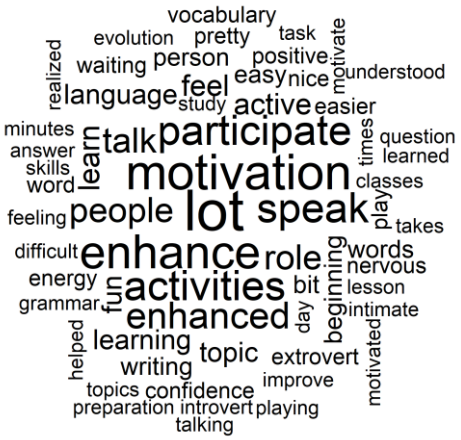


Figure 2: Word Cloud – Drama-based group[11]

3.2 Hindering factors affecting engagement and motivation

Despite these similarities, notable group differences emerged in both negative responses (see Table 4) and reported reasons for positive changes in motivation and engagement (see Table 5). Regarding negative responses summarised in Table 4, participants in both groups reported limited time for self-study and low energy as demotivating factors (drama-based: *n* =3; communicative: *n* =2). As participants attended both courses after work, their adult responsibilities and daily-life demands may have negatively influenced their motivation and engagement.

[11] Fillers and unrelated terms (yeah, uh, um, English, German, Portuguese, time, class, home, 100, 1st) are excluded from both Word Clouds.

Overall, two more participants from the communicative group reported hindering factors across categories (drama-based: *n* =7; communicative: *n* =9). Notably, certain hindering factors mentioned by the communicative group, such as theme and vocabulary, were consistent across groups. This may indicate that, although these factors were also present in the drama-based course, participants did not experience them as hindering, because their engagement was more strongly supported by other features of the drama-based approach.

MOTIVATION	HINDERING FACTORS
Communicative	1. Tired and lack of energy at the end of the day 2. Inadequate time for self-study 3. Uninteresting theme 4. Insufficient opportunities to ask other participants questions 5. Writing 6. Vocabulary
Drama-based	1. Tired and lack of energy at the end of the day 2. Inadequate time for self-study
ENGAGEMENT	
Communicative	1. Theme 2. Engagement with all students (interpersonal issue with a classmate) 3. External time pressures
Drama-based	1. Role-play inhibited speaking 2. External time pressures

Table 4: Hindering Factors Affecting Motivation and Engagement in Communicative and Drama-based Groups

3.3 Positive factors influencing engagement and motivation

Positive factors also differed by group as illustrated in Table 5. Communicative group factors such as, equitable questioning and course theme, were also present in the drama-based course. Similar to the findings above, it highlights the distinct impact of each approach on engagement and motivational drivers.

MOTIVATION	POSITIVE FACTORS
Communicative	1. Improved skills, knowledge and understanding **Effect of motivation:** 1. Inspired to continue learning English post-course
Drama-based **ENGAGEMENT**	1. Enjoyed the learning process 2. Enhanced self-confidence **Effect of motivation:** 1. Increased speaking in English
Communicative	1. Many opportunities to speak 2. Increased self-confidence 3. Equitable questioning 4. Theme
Drama-based	1. Enjoyment-related aspects (“fun”, “enjoy”, “interesting”) 2. Positive effect of activities 3. Dramatic action requires responses 4. Role-play

Table 5: Positive Motivation and Engagement Factors Across Communicative and Drama-based Groups

The comparison word cloud visually reinforces these differences (see Figure 3). While both groups emphasise collaborative communicative tasks, language-learning components and verbal communication (see Figure 1 & 2), the communicative group focuses more on responding to questions, discussing themes, structured conversation, vocabulary and understanding content. The drama-based group, on the other hand, highlights role-based activities, active, participation, play and positive emotional factors (fun, energy, positive) (see Figure 3). The implications of these differing engagement and motivational drivers, particularly regarding their sustainability over time, should be explored.



Figure 3: Comparison Word Cloud[12]

4 Discussion

This section discusses the findings in relation to existing literature and relevant theoretical perspectives. It first presents this study's key findings and contextualizes them within existing empirical research. Thereafter, it considers the shared and distinct factors influencing motivation and engagement across groups, their implications in the language classroom, and directions for future research.

4.1 Overview of key findings and comparison with existing literature

As explained in the introduction, there are various language teaching approaches which, when effectively implemented, could enhance motivation and participation in EFL learning, such as drama-based teaching and communicative approaches, such as CLT. This study substantiates this claim, as based on classroom observations and student perceptions, it was found that motivation and engagement were enhanced equally across both groups. This result does not align with most studies offering comparative evidence on the impact of drama-based teaching on engagement and motivation in ESL/EFL learning (see 1.8 Empirical Evidence and Research Gaps). Considering that the number of these studies with control groups is limited, it was found that a bigger increase in motivation and engagement in the experimental- (drama-

[12] Fillers and unrelated terms (yeah, uh, um, English, German, Portuguese, lot, time, home, 100, 1st) were excluded from the Comparison Word Cloud.

based) than control group (communicative or other teaching approach) is reported. Many of these studies, however, had small samples and lack longitudinal evidence or a systematic approach which may negatively influence the robustness and validity of their findings. Moreover, variations in how CLT was implemented across the studies examining this approach may have affected their findings. Previous research suggests that CLT implementation is often hindered by ambiguity in its definition and inconsistencies in teachers' understanding (Savignon, 2018), the persistence of teacher-centred and form-focused practices (Cook, 2001; Kalogirou, 2016), insufficient attention to social context (Bax, 2003), and limited opportunities for meaningful, real-life interaction (Wingate, 2016).

4.2 Shared factors and their practical implications for language teaching

A noteworthy observation of the results is that, despite equal increases in motivation and engagement across groups, there are both shared and distinct factors influencing each group. Factors emphasised equally by both groups (see 3.1 Shared Motivation and Engagement Factors across Groups) suggest that a teaching approach that encourages active participation and collaboration in a non-threatening learning environment, in which language components are applied through engaging communicative tasks which support student agency and self-confidence, could have a positive impact on motivation and engagement in language learning. This viewpoint is supported by the CEFR, affective perspectives on language learning and the SDT, which emphasise the importance of attending to personality and affective factors (Council of Europe, 2001; Arnold & Brown, 1999), creating a low-anxiety learning environment (MacIntyre, 2007), as well as providing meaningful communicative tasks that promote collaboration, connection, and autonomy (Council of Europe, 2001, 2017; Ryan & Deci, 2017). Together, these conditions may not only enhance motivation and engagement, but also foster language learning.

4.3 Distinct effects of a drama-based- and communicative teaching approach

Despite the shared factors these theories align with, there are significant differences across groups with respect to hindering- (see 3.2 Hindering Factors Affecting Engagement and Motivation) and positive factors (see 3.3 Positive Factors Influencing Engagement and Motivation). These differing factors underscore the distinct effects of each teaching approach on student motivation and engagement in EFL learning. As demonstrated in the results above,

the communicative group's responses were more discussion-focused, question-centred, and cognitively driven, with particular emphasis on developing skills and understanding, asking and answering questions, engaging with themes, and participating in structured conversations. These factors are reflected in participants' accounts of how the activities influenced their motivation.[13]

One participant linked increased motivation to "participation, the discussions" and the "improvement of my English skills" (p24), while another highlighted how receiving "answers to all my questions during the studying process" supported motivation (p35). A further participant associated enhanced motivation with the course theme, explaining that the focus on environmental issues increased motivation "to participate in the course and prepare before the course" (p21). The communicative group's reported effect of motivation further underscores the distinct impact of the two approaches. Participants indicated that increased motivation encouraged continued learning, reflecting the group's cognitively driven focus. As one participant explained, the activities "inspired me to learn this language more" and to continue revising vocabulary and grammar (p19).

In contrast, the drama-based group reported that enhanced motivation led to increased speaking in English, indicating greater WTC. This is illustrated by one participant's account of how the course strengthened motivation "to use the language, not only in the course, also after the course" (p10). Regarding other factors, participants in the drama-based group described more participation-centred and positive affective experiences, with particular emphasis on active involvement, role-play, enjoyment, and the positive effects of the activities. These factors are reflected in participants' accounts of the ways in which the activities shaped their motivation.

One participant linked enhanced motivation to the activities being "fun" and "like a game", which in turn "enhanced my participation" (p25). Another described being "really involved" in the situations and "applying the learning, but not like strict. It was like, I was curious and I was like discovering and learning and reading and then acting, but in, um, for me, easy, easy way" (p36). Role-play was likewise associated with increased motivation, with one participant

[13] The participant's number is indicated by (pX).

explaining that having “my own role” meant “I had to participate and I felt it's, it's interesting” which in turn led to the desire “to speak more” and “participate more” (p39).

The positive affective experiences are highlighted by terms including, “fun”, “positive”, “enjoy”, “interesting” and “curious”, suggesting that the activities fostered interest and enjoyment, which may, in turn, support the development of intrinsic motivation. This viewpoint aligns with the SDT and other theories of educational psychology (see 1.5 The Role of Positive Affect in Sustained Engagement and Motivation) which propose that interesting and enjoyable learning experiences foster intrinsic motivation, and that such autonomous motivation may persist over time. Pekrun (2024) extends this position by suggesting that sustained positive emotions contribute to the maintenance of motivation. Through continued participation in an unfolding dramatic process, students may experience recurring enjoyment, interest, and social connectedness, allowing positive emotions to be sustained and, in turn, supporting more enduring motivation and engagement in the FL classroom.

4.4 Directions for future research

As noted above, the positive emotions associated with drama-based EFL learning may sustain engagement and motivation. However, longitudinal studies are required to determine whether levels of engagement and motivation differ over time between drama-based and communicative groups. Although longitudinal research has examined motivation and engagement in language learning (for example Dörnyei & Csizér, 2002; Oga-Baldwin et al., 2017), future research could compare the long-term effects of both drama-based and communicative approaches to provide empirical support for the hypothesis that motivation and engagement are sustained longer in the drama-based group, while also investigating in greater depth the specific factors that drive long-term motivation and engagement in each group, given that motivation is a complex and dynamic system. Furthermore, evaluation could include not only reported experiences but also quantitative measures, such as validated motivation scales, the frequency and duration of participation, and achievement assessments, to track changes in motivation and engagement over time.

5 Conclusion

This article examined how drama-based- and communicative teaching approaches influence engagement and motivation in EFL learning, using the CEFR for course design while foregrounding its focus on social agency and existential competence development, in addition to drawing on affective perspectives on language learning, and the SDT as guiding frameworks. The results indicate that both approaches can successfully enhance students' motivation and engagement in the short term, as overall levels of reported motivation and engagement are comparable across groups. The findings support existing claims that a teaching approach which fosters collaboration in a non-threatening environment, promotes verbal communication, and applies language components through engaging communicative tasks that support learner agency and confidence, may create engaging and motivating language learning experiences. Accordingly, both approaches appear to positively influence affective factors in language learning and meet the psychological needs of the SDT to some degree.

At the same time, the qualitative results reveal significant differences in how and why motivation and engagement were enhanced in each group. While the communicative group tended to emphasise cognitive gains, structured discussions, equitable questioning, course theme and continued learning intentions, the drama-based group highlighted positive effects of activities, active participation, role-based activities, positive emotions, and increased willingness to communicate in English beyond the classroom. The positive affective learning experiences, which drama-based teaching create, closely align with the SDT's view on intrinsic motivation as well as with other educational psychology theories that link positive emotions to deeper, more sustainable engagement and motivation. Longitudinal classroom research by Oga-Baldwin et al. (2017) substantiates this claim, as they found that engaging, supportive learning environments, which foster enjoyable learning experiences, sustain motivation and engagement.

Given the dynamic nature of motivation, longitudinal research is therefore required to examine whether the positive affective factors associated with drama-based approaches translate into more sustained engagement and motivation over time, in addition to examining in more depth the specific factors which drive changes in engagement and motivation. Such research would contribute to a more nuanced understanding of how different language

teaching approaches can effectively foster long-term engagement and motivation in EFL contexts.

Disclosure of interest

The authors declare no potential conflicts of interest.

Declaration of GenAI and AI-assisted technologies

In the preparation of this work, the authors used ChatGPT for language editing. The tool was used for stylistic refinement of selected sentences throughout the article. After using this tool, the authors reviewed and edited the content as needed, and takes full responsibility for the content of the publication.

Ethics Approval & Consent to Participate

Ethical approval for the study was obtained from the Central Ethics Committee of Freie Universität Berlin (approval no. ZEA24014) prior to the commencement of the research. All procedures performed in this study involving human participants were conducted in accordance with relevant ethical standards.

Informed consent was obtained from all individual participants included in the study. Participants were provided with detailed verbal and written information about the research project, and signed a written informed consent form prior to their participation.

Funding

The authors declare that financial support was received from the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD), in the programme Research Grants - Doctoral Programmes in Germany (number 57645448) and from Oppenheimer Memorial Trust (OMT), South Africa under international scholarship (number 2023-1528). These funding sources had no involvement in the study design, data collection, analysis, interpretation of data, or in the decision to submit the article for publication.

Bibliography

Adi, A. Z. P., & Susilowati, E. (2025). Drama implementation to increase learning motivation on English club students SMPIP Assalamah Ungaran. *Philosophica: Jurnal Bahasa, Sastra, dan Budaya, 8*(1), 21-38.

Alamer, A., Robat, E. S., Shirvan, M. E., & Ryan, R. (2025). Self-determination theory and language learning: A multilevel meta-analysis. *Educational Psychology Review*, *37*(2), 59. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10648-025-10038-y

Al-Hoorie, A. H., Oga-Baldwin, W. Q., Hiver, P., & Vitta, J. P. (2025). Self-determination mini-theories in second language learning: A systematic review of three decades of research. *Language Teaching Research, 29*(4), 1603-1638. https://doi.org/10.1177/13621688221102686

Altweissi, A., & Maaytah, R. Y. (2022). The effect of using educational drama on developing speaking skill of the sixth graders in the English language. *The Universal Academic Research Journal, 4*(1), 10-21. https://doi.org/10.17220/tuara.2022.01.02

Anderman, E. M., & Patrick, H. (2012). Achievement goal theory, conceptualization of ability/intelligence, and classroom climate. In S. Christenson, A. Reschly, & C. Wylie (Eds.), *Handbook of research on student engagement* (pp. 173-191). Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4614-2018-7_8

Arnold, J. (2011). Attention to affect in language learning. *Anglistik. International Journal of English Studies*, *22*(1), 11-22.

Arnold, J., & Brown, H. D. (1999). A Map of the Terrain. In J. Arnold (Ed.), *Affect in Language Learning* (pp. 1-24). Cambridge University Press.

Athiemoolam, L. (2018). The value of drama-in-education as a decolonising pedagogy through embodied drama strategies in a higher education classroom. *Journal of Education (University of KwaZulu-Natal), 72*, 55-72. https://doi.org/10.17159/2520-9868/i72a04

Baldwin, P., & Galazka, A. (2021). *Process Drama for Second Language Teaching and Learning: A Toolkit for Developing Language and Life Skills*. Bloomsbury Academic. https://doi.org/10.5040/9781350164789

Bax, S. (2003). The end of CLT: a context approach to language teaching. *ELT Journal*, *57*(3), 278-287. https://doi.org/10.1093/elt/57.3.278

Bećirović, S., Dubravac, V., & Brdarević-Čeljo, A. (2022). Cooperative learning as a pathway to strengthening motivation and improving achievement in an EFL classroom. *SAGE Open, 12*(1), 1-13. https://doi.org/10.1177/21582440221078016

Belliveau, G., & Kim, W. (2013). Drama in L2 learning: A research synthesis, *Scenario: A Journal of Performative Teaching, Learning, Research*, 7(2), 7-27. https://doi.org/10.33178/scenario.7.2.2

Bolton, G. (2007). A history of drama education: A search for substance. In L. Bresler (Ed.), *International handbook of research in arts education* (pp. 45-66). Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4020-3052-9_4

Bournot-Trites, M., Belliveau, G., Spiliotopoulos, V., & Séror, J. (2007). The role of drama on cultural sensitivity, motivation and literacy in a second language context. *Journal for Learning through the Arts, 3*(1), 1-35. https://doi.org/10.21977/D93110058

Bowell, P., & Heap, B. S. (2013). *Planning process drama: Enriching teaching and learning.* Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203125335

Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2021). *Thematic analysis: A practical guide*. SAGE. https://doi.org/10.4135/9781036232078.n9

Camacho-Morles, J., Slemp, G. R., Pekrun, R., Loderer, K., Hou, H., & Oades, L. G. (2021). Activity achievement emotions and academic performance: A meta-analysis. *Educational Psychology Review, 33*(3), 1051-1095. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10648-020-09585-3

Campbell, D. T., & Stanley, J. C. (1963). *Experimental and quasi-experimental designs for research*. Rand McNally.

Cook, H. C. (1917). *The play way.* Heinemann.

Cook, V. (2001). *Second language learning and language teaching*. Oxford University Press.

Council of Europe (2001). *Common European framework of reference for languages: Learning, teaching, assessment*. Cambridge University Press.

Council of Europe (2017). *Common European framework of reference for languages: Learning, teaching, assessment: Companion volume with new descriptors*. Council of Europe.

Dancer, D., & Kamvounias, P. (2005). Student involvement in assessment: A project designed to assess class participation fairly and reliably. *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education, 30*(4), 445-454. https://doi.org/10.1080/02602930500099235

Darvin, R., & Norton, B. (2023). Investment and motivation in language learning: What's the difference?. *Language teaching*, *56*(1), 29-40. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0261444821000057

Deci, E. L., & Ryan, R. M. (1985). *Intrinsic motivation and self-determination in human behavior.* Plenum. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4899-2271-7

Deci, E. L., & Ryan, R. M. (2000). The 'what' and 'why' of goal pursuits: Human needs and the self-determination of behavior. *Psychological Inquiry, 11*(4), 227-268. https://doi.org/10.1207/S15327965PLI1104_01

Deci, E. L., & Ryan, R. M. (2012). Self-determination theory. In P. A. M. Van Lange, A. W. Kruglanski, & E. T. Higgins (Eds.), *Handbook of theories of social psychology* (Vol. 1, pp. 416-436). Sage. https://doi.org/10.4135/9781446249215.n21

Deci, E. L., Olafsen, A. H., & Ryan, R. M. (2017). Self-determination theory in work organizations: The state of a science. *Annual Review of Organizational Psychology and Organizational Behavior, 4*, 19-43. https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-orgpsych-032516-113108

Dewaele, J. M., & MacIntyre, P. D. (2014). The two faces of Janus? Anxiety and enjoyment in the foreign language classroom. *Studies in Second Language Learning and Teaching*, *4*(2), 237-274. https://doi.org/10.14746/ssllt.2014.4.2.5

Deygers, B., Van Gorp, K., & Demeester, T. (2018). The B2 level and the dream of a common standard. *Language Assessment Quarterly, 15*(1), 44-58. https://doi.org/10.1080/15434303.2017.1421955

Díez-Bedmar, M. B., & Byram, M. (2019). The current influence of the CEFR in secondary education: Teachers' perceptions. *Language, Culture and Curriculum, 32*(1), 1-15. https://doi.org/10.1080/07908318.2018.1493492

Dora To, L. W., Phoebe Chan, Y. L., Lam, Y. K., & Tsang, S. K. Y. (2011). Reflections on a primary school teacher professional development programme on learning English through process drama. *Research in Drama Education: The Journal of Applied Theatre and Performance, 16*(4), 517-539. https://doi.org/10.1080/13569783.2011.617099

Dörnyei, Z., & Csizér, K. (2002). Some dynamics of language attitudes and motivation: Results of a longitudinal nationwide survey. *Applied Linguistics*, *23*(4), 421-462. https://doi.org/10.1093/applin/23.4.421

Dörnyei, Z., & Ushioda, E. (2021). *Teaching and researching motivation: New directions for language learning* (3rd ed.). Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781351006743-2

Egbert, J. L. (2020). The new normal? A pandemic of task engagement in language learning. *Foreign Language Annals, 53*, 314-319. https://doi.org/10.1111/flan.12452

Ellis, R. (2008). *The study of second language acquisition.* Oxford University Press.

Finlay-Johnson, H. (1912). *The dramatic method of teaching*. Ginn.

Fredrickson, B. L. (2001). The role of positive emotions in positive psychology. *American Psychologist, 56*(3), 218-226. https://psycnet.apa.org/doi/10.1037/0003-066X.56.3.218

Fredrickson, B. L. (2013). Positive emotions broaden and build. In J. M. Olson, & M. P. Zanna (Eds.), *Advances in experimental social psychology* (Vol. 47, pp. 1-53). Academic Press. https://doi.org/10.1016/B978-0-12-407236-7.00001-2

Fredrickson, B. L., & Joiner, T. (2002). Positive emotions trigger upward spirals toward emotional well-being. *Psychological Science, 13*(2), 172-175. https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-9280.00431

Gallagher, K. (2000). *Drama education in the lives of girls: Imagining possibilities.* University of Toronto Press. https://doi.org/10.3138/9781442674066

Gallagher, K. (2007). Conceptions of creativity in drama education. In L. Bresler (Ed.), *International handbook of research in arts education* (pp. 1229-1239). Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4020-3052-9_84

Gallagher, K., & Ntelioglou, B. Y. (2011). Which new literacies? Dialogue and performance in youth writing. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy, 54*(5), 322-330. https://doi.org/10.1598/JAAL.54.5.2

Gardner, R. C. (2007). Motivation and second language acquisition. *Porta Linguarum: revista internacional de didáctica de las lenguas extranjeras*, (8), 9-20. https://doi.org/10.30827/Digibug.31616

Gardner, R. C. (2020). The socio-educational model of second language acquisition. In M. Lamb, K. Csizér, A. Henry, & S. Ryan (Eds.), *The Palgrave handbook of motivation for language learning* (pp. 21-37). Springer International Publishing. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-28380-3_2

Gill, C. (2016). Maximising Asian ESL learners' communicative oral English via drama. *Advances in Language and Literary Studies, 7*(5), 240-246. https://doi.org/10.7575/aiac.alls.v.7n.5p.240

Gillies, H., & Roger, P. (2025). Behind the mask: Using a drama-based English-as-a-foreign-language program to explore and develop second-language identity and motivation in a Japanese undergraduate context. *Language Teaching Research*. https://doi.org/10.1177/13621688251372908

Gregg, K. R. (1986). The input hypothesis: Issues and implications. *TESOL Quarterly, 20*, 116-122. https://doi.org/10.2307/3586393

Hidi, S., & Renninger, K. A. (2006). The four-phase model of interest development. *Educational Psychologist, 41*(2), 111-127. https://doi.org/10.1207/s15326985ep4102_4

Hiver, P., Al-Hoorie, A. H., Vitta, J. P., & Wu, J. (2024). Engagement in language learning: A systematic review of 20 years of research methods and definitions. *Language Teaching Research, 28*(1), 201-230. https://doi.org/10.1177/13621688211001289

Horwitz, E. K., Horwitz, M. B., & Cope, J. (1986). Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety. *The Modern Language Journal*, *70*, 125-132. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-4781.1986.tb05256.x

Hulse, B., & Owens, A. (2019). Process drama as a tool for teaching modern languages: supporting the development of creativity and innovation in early professional practice. *Innovation in Language Learning and Teaching, 13*(1), 17-30. https://doi.org/10.1080/17501229.2017.1281928

Kadan, Ö. F. (2021). The effects of creative drama on achievement and motivation levels of the 7th graders in English language classes. *Participatory Educational Research, 8*(3), 88-104. https://doi.org/10.17275/per.21.55.8.3

Kalogirou, K. (2016). Step into drama and teach English affordably. *Scenario: A Journal of Performative Teaching, Learning, Research*, *10*(1), 33-48. https://doi.org/10.33178/scenario.10.1.3

Kao, S. M., & O'Neill, C. (1998). *Words into worlds: Learning a second language through process drama.* Greenwood Publishing Group.

Kouhsarian, M., Ghoorchaei, B., Mazandarani, O., & Shomoossi, N. (2023). How collaborative learning impacts motivation and vocabulary learning: The Case of Iranian High School Learners. *Research in English Language Pedagogy (RELP), 11*(2), 1-20. https://doi.org/10.30486/RELP.2023.1979883.1438

Krashen, S. D. (1979). A response to McLaughlin, "The monitor model: some methodological considerations". *Language Learning, 29*, 151-167. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-1770.1979.tb01056.x

Lantolf, J. P., Thorne, S. L., & Poehner, M. E. (2014). Sociocultural theory and second language development. In B. VanPatten, & J. Williams (Eds.), *Theories in second language acquisition* (2nd ed., pp. 207-226). Routledge.

Lee, B. K., Enciso, P., & Brown, M. R. (2020a). The effect of drama-based pedagogies on K–12 literacy-related outcomes: A meta-analysis of 30 years of research. *International Journal of Education & the Arts, 21*(30). https://doi.org/10.26209/ijea21n30

Lee, K. K., Abbott, M., & Chen, N. (2020b). Increasing students' willingness to communicate: Drama-based approaches to language instruction in English for academic purposes classes. *TESL Canada Journal, 37*(3), 75-87. https://doi.org/10.18806/tesl.v37i3.1346

Liu, J. (2002). Process drama in second- and foreign-language classrooms. In G. Bräuer (Ed.), *Body and language: Intercultural learning through drama* (pp. 51-70). Ablex Publishing.

Ludwig, C., & Sambanis, M. (2023). Mind needs body! Practicing positive psychology in English language teaching. *Scenario: A Journal of Performative Teaching, Learning, Research, 17*(1), 88-97. https://doi.org/10.33178/scenario.17.1.5

Luo, S., Ismail, L., Ahmad, N. K., & Guo, Q. (2024). Using process drama in EFL education. *Heliyon, 10*(11), e31936. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.heliyon.2024.e31936

Mabkhot, H., & Djurabaev, O. (2024). Communicative language teaching, student motivation, and cognitive attitudes: Analyzing the moderating role of language contact. *Fonseca, Journal of Communication, 28*(2), 256-274.

MacIntyre, P. D. (2007). Willingness to communicate in the second language: Understanding the decision to speak as a volitional process. *The modern language journal*, *91*(4), 564-576. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-4781.2007.00623.x

MacIntyre, P. D., Clément, R., Dörnyei, Z., & Noels, K. A. (1998). Conceptualizing willingness to communicate in a L2: A situational model of L2 confidence and affiliation. *The modern language journal*, *82*(4), 545-562. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-4781.1998.tb05543.x

Maley, A., & Duff, A. (1982). *Drama techniques in language learning: a resource book of communication activities for language teachers*. (2nd ed.) Cambridge University Press.

Man, C. F., May, A. L. J., Sharif, S., Singh, S., & Singh, B. (2019). Exploring the use of drama-based activities as a learning tool in English oral proficiency development among students from non-Malay-medium nation schools: A preliminary study. *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences, 9*(6), 1202-1215. http://dx.doi.org/10.6007/IJARBSS/v9-i6/6082

Man, C. F., Sharif, S., May, A. L. J., Talin, R., & Singh, S. S. B. (2021). The effects of drama-based activities as a language learning tool on learners' motivation in Non-Malay-medium national schools in Malaysia. *Indonesian Journal of Applied Linguistics, 10*(3), 603-614. https://doi.org/10.17509/ijal.v10i3.31742

McLaughlin, B. (1987). *Theories of second-language learning.* Edward Arnold.

Mohammadzadeh, A., & Alavinia, P. (2021). Motivational fluctuations during task-supported language teaching: The case of young Iranian EFL learners. *Iranian Journal of Language Teaching Research, 9*(2), 85-107.

Namkung, Y., & Kim, Y. (2024). A review of learner motivation and engagement research in task-based language teaching. In S. Li (Ed.), *Individual differences in task-based language teaching* (pp. 198-227). John Benjamins. https://doi.org/10.1075/tblt.16.07nam

Nicholson, H. (2011). *Theatre, education and performance.* Palgrave Macmillan. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-0-230-34502-7

Niedenthal, P. M. (2007). Embodying emotion. *Science*, *316*, 1002-1005. https://doi.org/10.1126/science.1136930

Noels, K. A., Adrian-Taylor, S., Saumure, K., & Katz, J. W. (2019a). Motivation and the support of significant others across language learning contexts. *Journal for the Psychology of Language Learning, 1*(1), 106-141. https://doi.org/10.52598/jpll/1/1/7

Noels, K. A., Lou, N. M., Vargas Lascano, D. I., Chaffee, K. E., Dincer, A., Zhang, Y. S. D., & Zhang, X. (2019b). Self-determination and motivated engagement in language learning. In M. Lamb, K. Csizér, A. Henry, & S. Ryan (Eds.), *The Palgrave handbook of motivation for language learning* (pp. 95-115). Palgrave Macmillan. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-28380-3_5

O'Neill, C. (1995). *Drama worlds: A framework for process drama*. Heinemann.

O'Neill, C. (2006). Foreword. In J. J. Schneider, T. P. Crumpler, & T. Rogers (Eds.), *Process drama and multiple literacies: Addressing social, cultural, and ethical issues* (pp. ix-xii). Heinemann.

O'Toole, J. (2009). Drama as pedagogy. In J. O'Toole, M. Stinson, & T. Moore (Eds.), *Drama and curriculum: A giant at the door* (pp. 97-116). Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4020-9370-8_6

O'Toole, J. (1992). *The Process of Drama: Negotiating art and meaning*. Routledge.

O'Toole, J., & O'Mara, J. (2007). Proteus, the giant at the door: Drama and theater in the curriculum. In L. Bresler (Ed.), *International handbook of research in arts education* (pp. 203-218). Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4020-3052-9_13

Oga-Baldwin, W. L. Q., Nakata, Y., Parker, P., & Ryan, R. M. (2017). Motivation, engagement, and persistence in language learning: A longitudinal study of young learners. *The Modern Language Journal*, *101*(3), 546-565.

Panda, R. B., Sahu, G., Singh, M., & Mahakur, B. (2024). Exploring the effectiveness of drama-based learning in elementary education: Students' Perceptions and Subject Preferences. *Voices of Teachers and Teacher Educators, 13*(1), 1-10.

Pekrun, R. (2006). The control-value theory of achievement emotions: Assumptions, corollaries, and implications for educational research and practice. *Educational Psychology Review, 18*(4), 315-341. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10648-006-9029-9

Pekrun, R. (2024). Control-value theory: From achievement emotion to a general theory of human emotions. *Educational Psychology Review, 36*(83). https://doi.org/10.1007/s10648-024-09909-7

Piazzoli, E. (2011). Process drama: The use of affective space to reduce language anxiety in the additional language learning classroom. *Research in Drama Education: The Journal of Applied Theatre and Performance*, *16*(4), 557-573. https://doi.org/10.1080/13569783.2011.617104

Piazzoli, E. (2012). Engage or entertain? The nature of teacher/participant collaboration in Process drama for additional language teaching. *Scenario: A Journal of Performative Teaching, Learning, Research, 6*(2), 28-46. https://doi.org/10.33178/scenario.6.2.5

Piazzoli, E. (2018). *Embodying language in action: The artistry of process drama in second language education*. Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-77962-1

Piazzoli, E., & Kennedy, C. (2014). Drama: Threat or opportunity? Managing the dual affect in process drama. *Scenario: A Journal of Performative Teaching, Learning, Research, 8*(1), 52-69. https://doi.org/10.33178/scenario.8.1.5

Podlozny, A. (2000). Strengthening verbal skills through the use of classroom drama: A clear link. *Journal of Aesthetic Education, 34*(3–4), 239-275. https://doi.org/10.2307/3333644

Rahimi, A., & Bigdeli, R. A. (2014). The broaden-and-build theory of positive emotions in second language learning. *Procedia – Social and Behavioral Sciences, 159*, 795-801. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2014.12.451

Reeve, J. (2012). A self-determination theory perspective on student engagement. In S. L. Christenson, A. L. Reschly, & C. Wylie (Eds.), *Handbook of research on student engagement* (pp. 149-172). Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4614-2018-7_7

Renninger, K. A., & Hidi, S. (2015). *The power of interest for motivation and engagement.* Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315771045

Roth, L. H. O., Bencker, C., Lorenz, J., & Laireiter, A.-R. (2024). Testing the validity of the broaden-and-build theory of positive emotions: a network analytic approach. *Frontiers in Psychology, 15*, 1405272. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2024.1405272

Rothwell, J. (2011). Bodies and language: Process drama and intercultural language learning in a beginner language classroom. *Research in Drama Education: The Journal of Applied Theatre and Performance, 16*(4), 575-594. https://doi.org/10.1080/13569783.2011.617106

Ryan, R. M., & Deci, E. L. (2000). Intrinsic and extrinsic motivations: Classic definitions and new directions. *Contemporary Educational Psychology, 25*(1), 54-67. https://doi.org/10.1006/ceps.1999.1020

Ryan, R. M., & Deci, E. L. (2017). *Self-determination theory: Basic psychological needs in motivation, development, and wellness.* Guilford Publications. https://doi.org/10.1521/978.14625/28806

Ryan, R. M., & Deci, E. L. (2020). Intrinsic and extrinsic motivation from a self-determination theory perspective: Definitions, theory, practices, and future directions. *Contemporary Educational Psychology, 61*, Article 101860. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cedpsych.2020.101860

Sambanis, M., & Ludwig, C. (2026). *Happy learning – How to learn languages successfully*. Hueber.

Sambanis, M., & Ludwig, C. (Eds.) (2025). *Positive Fremdsprachendidaktik*. Narr. https://doi.org/10.24053/9783381128921

Sarinastiti, I., & Putri, L. N. (2024). Improving Students' Engagement in Learning English through The Use of a Small-group Project (Drama). *Journal of Millennial Education, 3*(1), 21-28.

Savignon, S. J. (2018). Communicative Competence. In J. I. Liontas, & M. DelliCarpini (Eds.), *The TESOL Encyclopedia of English Language Teaching* (pp. 1-7). John Wiley & Sons. https://doi.org/10.1002/9781118784235.eelt0047

Schewe, M. (2013). Taking stock and looking ahead: Drama pedagogy as a gateway to a performative teaching and learning culture. *Scenario: A Journal of Performative Teaching, Learning, Research, 7*(1), 5-27. https://doi.org/10.33178/scenario.7.1.2

Schunk, D. H., & Mullen, C. A. (2012). Self-efficacy as an engaged learner. In S. L. Christenson, A. L. Reschly, & C. Wylie (Eds.), *Handbook of research on student engagement* (pp. 219-236). Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4614-2018-7_10

Siregar, R., Hasibuan, A., Barus, E., & Sembiring, M. (2023). Communicative language teaching impact on students' cognition and writing motivation in translation practice. *Journal of English Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics, 5*(2), 48-56. https://doi.org/10.32996/jeltal.2023.5.2.6

Skinner, E. A., Kindermann, T. A., & Furrer, C. J. (2009). A motivational perspective on engagement and disaffection: Conceptualization and assessment of children's behavioral and emotional participation in academic activities in the classroom. *Educational and Psychological Measurement, 69*, 493-525. https://doi.org/10.1177/0013164408323233

Slade, P. (1954). *Child drama.* University of London Press.

Stinson, M. (2009). 'Drama is like reversing everything': intervention research as teacher professional development. *RiDE: The Journal of Applied Theatre and Performance, 14*(2), 225-243. https://doi.org/10.1080/13569780902868820

Stinson, M., & Freebody, K. (2009). The contributions of process drama to improved results in English oral communication. In R. E. Silver, L. Alsagoff, & C. C. Goh (Eds.), *Language learning in new English contexts* (pp. 147-165). Bloomsbury.

Ur, P. (2014). Where do we go from here? Method and pedagogy in language teaching. *ExELL*, *2*(1), 3-11. https://doi.org/10.1515/exell-2016-0001

Uştuk, Ö. (2023). 'This made me feel honoured': a participatory action research on using process drama in English language education with ethics of care. *Research in Drama Education: The Journal of Applied Theatre and Performance, 28*(2), 279-294. https://doi.org/10.1080/13569783.2022.2106127

Vansteenkiste, M., Simons, J., Lens, W., Sheldon, K. M., & Deci, E. L. (2004). Motivating learning, performance, and persistence: the synergistic effects of intrinsic goal contents and autonomy-supportive contexts. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 87*(2), 246. https://psycnet.apa.org/doi/10.1037/0022-3514.87.2.246

Vygotsky, L.S. (1978). *Mind in society: the development of higher psychological processes*. (M. Cole, V. John-Steiner, S. Scribner, & E. Souberman, Eds.). Harvard University Press

Wagner, B. J. (1999). *Dorothy Heathcote: Drama as a learning medium.* (Rev. ed.). Heinemann.

Ward, W. (1930). *Creative dramatics*. Appleton.

Way, B. (1967). *Development through drama.* Longman.

Wingate, U. (2016). Lots of games and little challenge – a snapshot of modern foreign language teaching in English secondary schools. *The Language Learning Journal*, *46*, 442-455. https://doi.org/10.1080/09571736.2016.1161061

Wu, H. (2021). A self-determination theory perspective: How the 'Drama in Education' Can Boost Students' Motivation of Learning. In *Proceedings of the 2021 4th International Conference on Humanities Education and Social Sciences (ICHESS 2021)* (pp. 698-701). Atlantis Press. https://doi.org/10.2991/assehr.k.211220.119

Wu, X. (2022). Motivation in second language acquisition: A bibliometric analysis between 2000 and 2021. *Frontiers in Psychology*, *13*, 1032316. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2022.1032316

Xu, J., Qiu, X., & Yang, L. (2025). Unraveling the dynamics of English communicative motivation and self-efficacy through task-supported language teaching: a latent growth modeling perspective. *International Review of Applied Linguistics in Language Teaching, 63*(1), 367–389. https://doi.org/10.1515/iral-2023-0038

Yaghoubinejad, H., Zarrinabadi, N., & Ketabi, S. (2017). Fluctuations in foreign language motivation: An investigation into Iranian learners' motivational change over time. *Current Psychology, 36*, 781-790. https://doi.org/10.1007/s12144-016-9467-6

Yilmaz, G., & Dollar, Y. K. (2017). Attitudes of Turkish EFL learners towards the use of drama activities in English. *Hasan Ali Yücel Eğitim Fakültesi Dergisi, 14*(1), 245-277.

Yuanyuan, C. (2019). Enhancing EFL students' English competency through drama: A Case Study in a Primary School in China. *English Language Teaching, 12*(7), 68-74. https://doi.org/10.5539/elt.v12n7p68

6 Appendix

Interview questionnaire

1. Which part of the course did you enjoy?

2. Which part of the course did you dislike or even despise?

3. Experimental group: Did the type of activities in the course differ from other language courses you have attended? Tell me more about this experience of partaking in different type of activities than usual. Control group: Tell me more about this experience of partaking in activities in the course.

• Experimental group: How did you feel about partaking in these activities (for ex. uncomfortable, interested, willing to adopt or embrace, nervous, excited, excluded)? Did these feelings change throughout the course?

4. How did the activities impact your language learning (for ex. positive, negative, hinder, enhance, easier or more difficult to acquaint yourself with vocabulary and/or grammar, listening, writing, communicative skills)?

5. How did the activities in the course influence your participation and engagement? 6. Did the activities in the course enhance or lessen your motivation?

7. How did the activities affect your interaction with other people (for ex. positive, negative, increased, made it easier to interact, inhibited your interaction, uncomfortable to interact, more confidence to interact)?

8. Did the activities in the course enable you to have more spontaneous and fluent speech?

9. Do you think the course has strengthened your ability to “put yourself in someone else’s shoes”, in other words, view the world from another person’s perspective?

• If so, describe how.

10. How did the activities in the course affect your writing (for ex. make it easier or more difficult to construct your writing, more creative, hinder your writing, generate more ideas, organise your writing, writing process)?

11. Describe how the theme of the course influenced your experience. Did the course alter your perspective on climate change? If so, explain how.

NB

The following words were taught during the course: despise, differ, partake, adopt, embrace, exclude, hinder, enhance, acquaint, engage, lessen, inhibit, alter, strengthen, construct.