

## University Students' Perceptions of an Activity-Based EFL Drama Course at a Korean University

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This paper aims to investigate university students' perceptions of drama activities in terms of providing suggestions for constructing an effective drama class. A total of ten students who participated in Interactive English, an elective English course during the second semester of 2013 at a Korean university, took part in this study. The students' perceptions of the activities as written in their journals and in response to questionnaires were analyzed. The results show that the subjects perceived that (1) all the 10 activities used in the drama course improved their communication skills (2) all the 10 activities improved their confidence; (3) activities that involved Group Homework, Mantle Expert, Role Play and Nursery Rhymes enhanced students' cultural awareness of the target language; (4) awareness, competence, and thinking ability were considered effective results of a drama class. Regarding these results, it is suggested that an activity based drama course gave students the speaking opportunity to increase their confidence, the practice necessary to become self-aware, and through stories, myths and nursery rhymes, a taste of other cultures.

**Key Words:** College English, EFL/ESL drama class, Model for EFL drama class, ESL drama techniques, EFL drama activities.

### 1 Introduction

The primary goal of English courses in an EFL context is the development of communicative skills in English. In order to achieve this, communicative and authentic language use has been emphasized (Royka, 2002). However, conventional English classes in Korea hardly give students an opportunity to use language and develop fluency in it. This is because students lack the adequate exposure to native speakers who can converse with the students on authentic matters. An alternative is teaching English through drama because

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it provides contexts where authentic communication takes place. It gives a context for listening and meaningful language production, leading the students to use their own language resources, and thus, enhance their linguistic abilities.

Current theory in second language acquisition supports the assumption that drama activities can enhance communicative competence and thus facilitate language learning in general (Savignon, 1983). Many research findings have elucidated the value of drama approaches in the development of competence and confidence in language acquisition (Jung, 2008). Di Peitro (1987) regards drama as an effective teaching approach teaching language, because it enhances the learner's communicative competence and because of its ability to enhance oral skills. In addition, drama activities can provide authentic fullness between two social paradigms—the drama world and the real world, which reflect and interact with each other.

Within the extensive literature on drama, however, comparatively little research has focused on students' perceptions that can provide guidance for teachers. Also, insufficient attention has been paid to identifying and controlling the factors that might potentially influence Korean EFL students' characteristics of motivation or communicative competence. In such a situation where theories and practices of communicative competence are applied, it seems desirable to explore the students' perceptions of the communicative activities practiced in the classroom.

Thus, the aim of this study is to examine which activities students perceive as effective in enhancing their English language skills as a result of participating in a drama-based EFL course at a Korean University in terms of providing suggestions for drama classes. Thus literature on drama was reviewed and the class participants' journals were analyzed.

## **2 Literature Review**

### **2.1 Benefits of using drama**

There are several studies that support the benefits of drama in foreign language learning (Brumfit, 1991; Desiatova, 2009; Mayley and Duff, 2001; Philips, 2003). Based on Vygotskian theory (1978), development and learning takes place in a social context, which means that interacting with others in society helps students grow in language learning. Input hypothesis by Krashen (1985) emphasizes the importance of learning language in contexts, and comprehensible input could be achieved through meaningful and purposeful interactions in diverse contexts where learners can have different kinds of opportunities to negotiate meaning with other people. The opportunity to place themselves directly in the learning experience greatly improves their chances of better comprehension. How learners perceive each drama activity's effectiveness was classified in terms of communication

skills, psychological considerations, and cultural awareness.

### **2.1.1 Communication skills**

Drama provides the opportunity for students to use language meaningfully and appropriately for communication (Zyoud, 2012). Fernandez and Coil (1986) stated that drama encourages student sensitivity and imagination and thus makes learning more realistic and meaningful (Sam, 1990).

First, as Goodwin (2001) writes, "Drama is a particularly effective tool for pronunciation teaching because various components of communicative competence (discourse intonation, pragmatic awareness, nonverbal communication) can be practiced in an integrated way." The proper way to speak sentences or questions forms will add another element to communicating in English." Drama helps in proper pronunciation and intonation in English learning. With the help of drama, a learner is able to produce a variety of utterances, thus getting practice in the target language in an integrated and holistic fashion (Gill, 1996).

Second, drama helps students to learn new vocabulary and expressions properly in their actual environment. Drama activities help students, especially those with limited vocabulary, to communicate in the foreign language (Aldavero, 2008). Simply verbalizing words and sentences does not solidify comprehension; however, drama activities help to reinforce language previously learned (Fernandez & Coil, 1986; Mordecai, 1985; Sam, 1990). Sam (1990) concludes that drama helps students to extend, retain and reinforce vocabulary and sentence structure through role-play and communication games.

Third, drama enhances listening skills mostly because careful listening is a key feature in drama. According to Sam (1990), "Drama improves oral communication." Spontaneous verbal expression is integral to most of the activities, while many require reading and writing, both as part of the input and the output components of the activities. Thus drama can improve students' actual ability in both listening and speaking, skills that are essential in real world interactions.

### **2.1.2 Psychological consideration**

Mordecai (1985) stresses that the combination of drama activities while learning a second language brings about a fun, enriching and purposeful learning experience. A "fun" class improves the learning environment as the affective filter is lowered (Heldenbrand, 2003). Drama provides a relaxed and informal way to learn English. Thus, drama builds confidence in the learner's ability to speak English (Zyoud, 2012). Accordingly, drama fosters self-awareness, self esteem and confidence, through which language learning motivation develops. Motivation is likewise fostered and sustained through

the variety and sense of expectancy generated by drama activities. That is, the use of drama activities has clear advantages for language learning regarding motivation (May and Duff, 2001; Phillips, 2003).

### **2.1.3 Cultural awareness**

There is a strong connection between language and culture which the teacher can use to help present the English world to the class. Cultural awareness is easily communicated through drama (Heldenbrand, 2003). Miccoli (2003) goes so far as to say that language and culture are married: “learning a language cannot be divorced from cultural learning.” Being able to include familiarity with these cultural learning points helps to bring a stronger relationship between the language and its meaning to the students. Therefore, attempts to maximize students’ confidence and satisfaction during the time spent in the classroom should be performed, emphasizing student participation, interactions and understanding of the English language and related Western culture.

As can be seen in the three sections above, drama has psychological and communicative effects for EFL students. That said, they often don’t know how to use drama effectively and thus it is up to the EFL instructor to ensure that they learn not only its value but how it can be used effectively. Thus if the students are asked their perception about the effectiveness of the drama techniques, this can help them and the instructor to understand how to better use drama.

## **2.2 Various dramatic activities for the classroom**

Within the limitations inherent in any classroom situation, the materials and activities that follow are arranged so as to be real and meaningful in relation to the students’ experiences. Listed below are the dramatic activities used in this class, detailed here for teachers to incorporate into their teaching repertoire.

### **Conscience Alley**

Conscience Alley is when two lines are formed to create an “alley” and speak as the character’s conscience when one student walks slowly through the “alley.” In this activity, students are encouraged to create their comments before lining up to configure the “alley” (Ashton-Hay, 2005).

### **Group Homework**

Students work in groups of twos, threes, or at the most fours. They then must use the topic discussed in class, such as nursery rhymes, song themes, or a short story and make a story using the four elements of drama. These four elements, empathy, characters, situation, and problem must be seen in their

story. They cannot create a script, they must discuss and then act out multiple times to practice. Afterwards they perform their work in class for a grade. This is done three to four times during the course.

#### Improvisation

Landy (1982) defines improvisation as an unscripted, unrehearsed, spontaneous set of actions in response to minimal directions from a teacher, usually including statements of whom one is, where one is and what one is doing there. This strategy is used in all drama activities and is the key ingredient to creating an English-based drama course. As Maurer (1997) says, "Improvisation is considered the fifth skill. In many ways, it is the most important because it is the real test of whether students can use what they have learned without being told exactly what to do or say."

Improvisation is an excellent technique to use in the foreign language classroom as it motivates the learners to be active participants in authentic situations, thereby reducing their self-consciousness. One of the advantages of improvisation is the level of freedom that participants are able to exercise during the execution of the creative session.

#### Learning Nursery Rhymes

Students were given three nursery rhymes: "Mary Mary Quite Contrary," "Humpty Dumpty," and "The Itsy Bitsy Spider." Students were asked to brainstorm the meanings of each of these poems with two other students. Later the teacher elicited their guesses and asked them to explain their reasoning. Then the teacher explained the meaning behind each of them. Later the students used thought tracking and then open and close exercise to examine their own interpretation of these rhymes.

#### Mantle Expert

Students pretend they are experts in a field and give their opinions as though they are that person. For example, two students are in a domestic fight. The students choose a profession in which they could help this couple; such as love doctor on a radio show, TV talk show host, matchmaker, fortune teller, parents, bartender, . Then the students take turns discussing the issue with the couple.

#### Open and Close

Students create four frozen images in sequential order to communicate a story to their audience. Between changes from one frozen image to the next, the students performing tell the audience to close their eyes. Once the performing students are in a time position of their frozen image they ask the audience to open their eyes. This pattern continues till the last image is shown.

### Role Play

Role play is an activity which requires a person to take on a role that is real or imaginary. It involves the spontaneous interaction of participants as they attempt to complete a task. By stimulating reality, role play allows students to prepare and practice for possible future situations.

There are many types of role play: dramatic plays, story dramatization and sociodrama, seminar style presentation, debates and interviews. They range from those for beginners, such as role play for weaker students to advanced role play for more proficient students. Different types of role play demand different approaches: the way the role play is introduced, the description of the roles and the facilitation and debriefing sessions vary accordingly.

The main benefit of role play, from the point of view of language teaching, is that it enables a flow of language to be produced that might be otherwise difficult or impossible to create. It is important to consider the learners' level of language proficiency when implementing role play activities in the foreign language classroom.

### Telling a Fairytale in Two Minutes

In groups of four, students discuss a fairy tale to act out. Students choose a narrator. The narrator tells the story as the rest of the group adds anecdotes or acts it out. Students have two minutes to complete telling the story. This activity requires listening and speaking skills, as well as teamwork.

### Thought-Tracking

Thought-tracking is when one student makes a still image while the others are invited to speak their thoughts or feelings. The teacher assigns a situation. The class as a whole assigns characters. Essentially, the teacher-in-role is when the teacher assumes a role in relation to the pupils (Farmer, 2010).

### Zip Zap Zop

Everyone stands in a circle. The group is asked to repeat the words "Zip, Zap, Zop" three or four times all together. Then they are told that they have a bolt of energy in their hands and, to start the game, send the bolt out of their hands with a strong forward motion straight to someone else in the circle (using their hands, body, eyes, and voice) saying "Zip." They are informed to make sure they make eye contact with the person who passes the lightning. They should receive it with their whole body and pass it immediately to someone else saying "Zap." That person passes it on with a "Zop." The game continues "Zip, Zap, Zop." If there is a mistake, students are encouraged to simply resume playing without discussion. Challenge students NOT to make the game about them by using funny voices or taking a long time to choose the next person.

The activities detailed above show a great variety, whether it's group

participation in Conscience Alley, Group Homework, Zip Zap Zop, games that challenge their memories and minds like Nursery Rhymes, Mantle Expert, or games that have more of an individual focus with a push to develop spontaneous creativity such as Improvisation, Role Play and Thought Tracking. Using a variety of games in the classroom ensures not only that the students not get bored, but that they develop a variety of skills as well.

### **3 Research Method**

#### **3.1 Research questions**

The research questions for the study were (1) How do the students perceive the drama activities, in terms of communication skill, psychological aspects and cultural awareness? (2) Why do students perceive the activities to be effective?

#### **3.2 Participants**

The participants were 10 college students enrolled in 'Interactive English,' an elective English course offered during the second semester of 2013 at a Korean university. The majority of the students who chose to take this class were graduating seniors. However, there were freshman, sophomores and juniors enrolled as well. Students were majoring in Health Management, BioMedical Laboratory Analysis & Mortuary Science, Optometry, Health and Safety Environment, Visual Design, and Sports Outdoors. The average TOEIC score of the students at the time of enrollment was between 500 and 525.

#### **3.3 Instrument and procedure**

The instruments for the study were a questionnaire and student journals. The questionnaire consisted of 9 questions with answers on a 5 point Likert scale, with 1 referring to 'strongly disagree', 2 'disagree', 3 'neutral', 4 'agree', 5 'strongly agree'. The participants wrote their thoughts in the journal at the end of each class throughout the whole semester. Jung (2008)'s questionnaire was adopted and modified for the purposes of this research, which reflects how learners perceive each drama activities' effectiveness in terms of communication skills, psychological consideration and cultural awareness.

The nine questions are as follows:

- (1) Expressing yourself in English
- (2) Enriching your vocabulary
- (3) Enhancing cultural awareness
- (4) Improving pronunciation and intonation

- (5) Gaining self-confidence
- (6) Becoming less embarrassed in front of a group
- (7) Encouraging students to participate actively
- (8) Enhancing/Improving your listening skills
- (9) Enhancing/Improving your speaking skills

At the end of each class students were to write in their journals. The journals were measured for the frequency with which students answered in response to each specific question. Each class, the instructor gave students these four questions to answer in order to elicit more specific responses from the students:

- (1) How you felt about each activity?
- (2) Why you felt that way?
- (3) Problems you had with this activity.
- (4) How you coped with the problem?

### **3.4 Class description**

At the beginning of each class, students were asked to clear a large empty space in the front of the room by moving tables and chairs to the back of the classroom. Then the students and instructor created a large circle with the chairs, also known as the “drama circle.” The lecture for this class had students sit in groups without tables, or stand and talk in circles, or work with a partner while standing up. Students were encouraged to work with someone they didn't know well. Also, the instructor made sure to mix students into groups with pairs of students from different majors and different ages.

The class warm-up included bonding activities and by practicing drama skills, while the instructor introduced the topic or situation and elicited or taught language functions and vocabulary that could be used in relation to the topic. Then the teacher guided the students through a series of activities that related to the topic. After all the activities were finished, the instructor might have students perform an improvisation for the class based on the assigned topic.

Thus the regular class procedure included an introduction of the topic or activity, the students performing the activity with the instructor's aid and input, and then, at the end of the class, the students discussed any problems they had communicating and the instructor helped with pronunciation, vocabulary, or grammar. The students were then required to reflect on themselves, the class, and what they had learned by writing in their notebook. The notebook was collected so the teacher could provide feedback on what the students had gained or not gained in the lesson. Although this research was for a drama-based EFL course, one might find it useful to teach debating skills at the beginning of the course or possibly as a language/drama skill

component.

## 4 Results and Discussion

### 4.1 Research question 1

A questionnaire consisting of nine questions and students' journals were analyzed to answer the first research question: How do they perceive the drama activities, in terms of communication skill, psychological side and cultural awareness? Ten activities were analyzed as follows.

Table 1 below shows their responses to the activity Zip Zap Zop.

Table 1. Zip Zap Zop (n=9)

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Total	29	29	35	30	40	43	44	39	34
Average	3.22	3.22	3.89	3.33	4.44	4.78	4.89	4.33	3.78
SD	1.20	1.20	1.36	1.00	0.73	0.44	0.33	0.87	1.20

The questions with the highest responses were seven (4.89), six (4.78), and five (4.44). This means that they felt the activity helped them to gain self-confidence, be less embarrassed in front of a group and actively participate. The questions with the lowest responses were a tie between one and two (3.22), which means the students felt that this activity didn't do much to help express themselves in English or enrich their vocabulary. Comments from student responses were as follows.

- I prefer that zip zap zop would be used at the beginning of the course. (Student 1)
- Zip Zap Zop is such a funny game to warm up and explaining the story using the body is really helpful to understanding the meaning of a story. (Student 4)
- Zip zap zop was good and fresh and new and got more active role and explaining. (Student 7)
- Zip zap zop sound z is little bit strange for korean. so it helps pronounciate more clearly.
- Zip zap zop me decide to pronounciate clearly. (Student 8)

Table 2 below shows their responses to the activity Telling a Fairytale in Two Minutes. The questions with the highest responses were nine (4.80), six (4.70), and one (4.70). This means that the students felt that the activity helped improve their speaking skills, be less embarrassed in front of a group and express themselves in English. The questions with the lowest responses was three (3.70) by a rather large margin, which means that the students felt

that this did not help them enhance their cultural awareness as much as it helped them in other areas, which is actually quite surprising as fairytales often explain cultural or historical aspects. Comments from student responses were as follows.

- Fairytale activity was fun and a little difficult, but it improved my English. (retell and act out a fairy tale in 2-3 minutes) (Student 7)

Table 2. Telling a Fairy Tale in Two Minutes (n=10)

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Total	47	46	37	44	46	47	45	46	48
Average	4.70	4.60	3.70	4.40	4.60	4.70	4.50	4.60	4.80
SD	0.67	0.70	1.42	0.97	0.70	0.67	0.85	0.84	0.63

Table 3 below shows their responses to the activity Group Homework.

Table 3. Group Homework (n=9)

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Total	40	38	36	39	39	41	39	38	41
Average	4.44	4.22	4.00	4.33	4.33	4.56	4.33	4.22	4.56
SD	0.88	0.83	1.22	0.87	0.87	0.73	0.87	0.83	0.73

The questions with the highest responses were a tie between six and nine (4.56), followed by one (4.44). Thus the students felt that they were better able to express themselves in English, less embarrassed in front of a group and that the activity improved their speaking skills. The questions with the lowest responses were also above 4: three (4.00), and two and eight in a tie (4.22). This means that they felt this activity enriched their vocabulary, enhanced their cultural awareness and improved their listening skills. Comments from student responses were as follows.

- I think the highlight in the class should be our homework. So I did my homework after I arrived at the class. Even though we have a problem to practice our teamwork. I think it's not bad comparing to the time to communicate with each other. We were scheduled to practice our teamwork at 1 pm today, but yesterday, I lost my cellphone, check cards and my id. I was panic and I have no way to connect with them. We modified our story a little. (Student 4)

Table 4 below shows their responses to the activity Conscience Alley. The questions with the highest responses were a three-way tie between six, seven and nine (4.56). This means that the students found that they were less embarrassed in front of a group, encouraged to participate actively and that

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their speaking skills were improved. The questions with the lowest responses were a tie between three and four (3.89), meaning that students felt that their cultural awareness was enhanced and that their pronunciation and intonation were improved to some degree.

Table 4. Conscience Alley (n=9)

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Total	36	39	35	35	37	41	41	39	41
Average	4.00	4.33	3.89	3.89	4.11	4.56	4.56	4.33	4.56
SD	0.71	0.71	1.36	1.17	1.05	0.73	0.73	0.87	0.73

Table 5 below shows their responses to the activity Mantle Expert.

Table 5. Mantle Expert (n=10)

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Total	44	44	43	41	44	45	46	46	44
Average	4.40	4.40	4.30	4.10	4.40	4.50	4.60	4.60	4.40
SD	0.84	0.84	1.25	0.88	0.70	0.71	0.70	0.70	0.70

This activity had the highest responses of all the activities in the study. The questions with the highest responses were a tie between seven and eight (4.60), followed by six (4.50). This means that students felt that they were encouraged to participate actively, were less embarrassed in front of a group and felt that their listening skills were enhanced. The questions with the lowest responses were four (4.10), and three (4.30). This means that students felt their cultural awareness was enhanced or their pronunciation and intonation were improved. Comments from student responses were as follows.

- I enjoyed mantle of expert activity. (Student 9)
- As mantle of experts we can act as advisors we can make sentence and was fun. (Student 8)
- I think that hearsay is not always the truth. The fact is different to memory. I can't understand why they said always break up with man. Nobody knows person's thinking before he or she tell us. (Student 3)
- Mantle of expert, the processing of giving advice and asking questions is very meaningful. (Student 1)
- We did mantle of expert activity. It was exciting because it was a new activity and we shared our opinion so actively. It seemed like real situation. I want to do it again. (Student 5)

Table 6 below shows their responses to the activity Role Play.

Table 6. Role Play (n=10)

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Total	39	47	43	41	41	42	45	43	44
Average	3.90	4.70	4.30	4.10	4.10	4.20	4.50	4.30	4.40
SD	0.57	0.67	1.25	0.57	0.99	0.92	0.71	0.82	0.70

The questions with the highest responses were two (4.70), seven (4.50), and nine (4.40). This means that they felt their vocabulary was enhanced, that they were encouraged to participate actively and that their speaking skills were enhanced. The questions with the lowest responses were one (3.90), and four and five with a tie (4.10). Students feel that the activity helped them express themselves in English, improve their pronunciation and intonation or gain self-confidence as much as it helped them to enhance their vocabulary and speaking skills or to participate actively.

Table 7 below shows their responses to the activity Improvisation.

Table 7. Improvisation (n=10)

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Total	46	44	39	44	47	47	48	43	45
Average	4.60	4.40	3.90	4.40	4.70	4.70	4.80	4.30	4.50
SD	0.70	0.70	1.29	0.84	0.67	0.67	0.63	0.67	0.71

The questions with the highest responses were seven (4.80), and six and five with a tie (4.70). This means that they felt this activity helped them actively participate, be less embarrassed in front of a group and gain self-confidence. The questions with the lowest responses were eight (4.30), and a tie between four and two (4.40), which means that students felt that this activity helped them improve their listening skills, pronunciation and intonation, and enrich their vocabulary. Comments from student responses were as follows.

- Open and close and Improve I can gain confidence by using body language. I still feel my language not good compared to other students, but today I felt my English has improved. (Student 6)
- Improv activity required to be more active and speak loudly. (Student 8)
- Improv makes think what can I act or speak. so it really looks like drama. It is very useful to me.

Table 8 below shows their responses to the activity Thought-Tracking. The questions with the highest responses were five (4.70), and a tie between seven and eight (4.70). This means that students felt that they gained self-confidence, were encouraged to actively participate and that it improved their listening skills. The questions with the lowest responses were two (4.20) and three (3.80), which means that students felt that this activity help enrich

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their vocabulary or enhance their cultural awareness. Question three was a lot lower than the others. Comments from student responses were as follows.

Table 8. Thought Tracking (n=10)

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Total	43	42	38	42	47	45	47	47	46
Average	4.30	4.20	3.80	4.20	4.70	4.50	4.70	4.70	4.60
SD	0.67	0.63	1.23	0.63	0.67	0.71	0.48	0.48	0.52

Table 9 below shows their responses to the activity Nursery Rhymes.

Table 9. Nursery Rhymes (n=18)

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Total	77	84	82	80	74	80	81	84	77
Average	4.28	4.67	4.56	4.44	4.11	4.44	4.50	4.67	4.28
SD	0.57	0.49	1.04	0.86	0.83	0.78	0.71	0.59	0.75

All of the responses were averaged more than 4. The questions with the highest responses were a tie between two and eight (4.67), and three (4.56), which means that students strongly perceived that this activity enriched their vocabulary, improved their listening skills and enhanced their cultural awareness. The questions with the lowest responses were five (4.11), and a tie between one and nine (4.28). This means that the students feel that this activity helped them gain self-confidence, express themselves in English or improve their speaking skills. A comment from the student responses was as follows.

- Interpretations of the nursery rhymes were so interesting especially story about bloody Mary. I thought it was just about plants. (Student 3)

Table 10 below shows their responses to the activity Open and Close.

Table 10. Open and Close (n=9)

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Total	35	37	39	36	42	46	48	42	40
Average	3.50	3.70	3.90	3.60	4.20	4.60	4.80	4.20	4.00
SD	1.43	1.34	0.88	1.51	1.32	0.70	0.42	1.14	1.33

The questions with the highest responses were seven (4.80) and six (4.60), which means that the students felt that this activity helped them to be less embarrassed in front of a group and encouraged them to actively participate. The questions with the lowest responses were one (3.50), four (3.60), and two (3.70). This means that the students felt that this activity didn't help much in

improving their pronunciation and intonation or enriching their vocabulary. Comments from student responses were as follows.

- Open and close and Improv I can gain confidence by using body language. I still feel my language not good compared to other students, but today I felt my English has improved. (Student 6)

Table 11 below tabulates the improvement of each activity based on the three aspects of communication skills, psychological considerations and cultural awareness. Accordingly, from the analysis above, most of the activities were deemed to be effective. All 10 activities helped students to gain communication skills and improve in psychological areas. Activities that were found to be strong in enhancing cultural awareness were Group Homework, Mantle Expert, Role Playing and Nursery Rhymes.

Table 11. Students' Perception of the Improvement of 10 Activities

Improvement Activity	Communication Skills			Psychological Considerations			Cultural Awareness		
	High	Mid	Low	High	Mid	Low	High	Mid	Low
ZZZ	X			X			X		
TFT	X			X			X		
GH	X			X			X		
CA	X			X				X	
ME	X			X				X	
RP	X			X				X	
IMP	X			X				X	
TT	X			X				X	
NR	X			X				X	
OC	X			X			X		

#### 4.2 Research question 2

Following are journal entries written by students about assorted and non-specific comments about the reason why they perceive the drama activities to be effective. First, activities in a drama class make the students listen and say something. For example,

- Conveying message is good. Making apology situation is very good. Apologizing drama is very funny. Conveying message is a good time to know listening skill is very important Apologizing drama is we can improve conversation skill. (Student 7)

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- Sometimes, my classmate said their opinion. I couldn't understand so I asked again. Anyway we had a lot of talking each other. It was fun. I have to improve my English Speaking Skill. (Student 9).

Second, they think they are becoming more active and focused and self-aware through the drama activities. This student still has some issues when it comes to speaking, but their awareness is an important (first) step.

- Delivering the sentence I heard from the person next to me makes me realize that how strange I pronounce, so I could correct the pronunciation. (Student 4)
- All of students in class want to talk in English but don't know what can I express the words, before starting this class. If you teach us some expression, or sentence, class atmosphere go better I think. (Student 10)

Third, students think the drama activities make them think and use critical thinking skills for communication.

- Improv and discussing are the best activities. I had to think and think again. It was different to know and to explain. So it can improve my language skills and creative thinking ability. (Student 3)
- It is interesting to make up the story and I think it's good because I use a lot of my brain to create ideas. (Student 9)
- Improvisation makes me think more and more. (Student 8)
- I noticed know that I'm starting to think in English more. (Student 6)

Fourth, students came to feel friendly and at ease with each other through the activities as time passed.

- While playing games, I felt my English is limited but any other friends are good friend, but other friends are not shy they are very brave. So I'll be brave and speak English (Student 6)
- You know improving speaking English needs to just try to speak. So, through this activity we can speak to others, then we can practice English. (Student 8)
- I gain confidence even when students laugh at me, we feel friendly. (Student 6)
- Even if this class is very interesting, when I talk to people, I'm so nervous. (Student 2)
- Practicing speaking aloud is a good for me. I learned how to speak loud and with confidence in English. The teacher taught that speaking loudly gives confidence, I learned a lot. (Student 9)

To sum up, the responses why the students perceive drama activities to be

effective are summarized as follows: (1) All the activities make them speak for communication; (2) Creative thinking ability can be fostered by making up a story; (3) Self awareness can be fostered by the practice of watching themselves and watching others; (4) Confidence can be fostered by speaking loudly in a psychologically safe environment.

The responses of the students reflect the rationale of using drama activities in an ESL class in the aspect that it creates a psychologically safe environment, thus having a role in drama alleviates the burden of committing language mistakes. Good activities are those that allow the students an opportunity at problem solving, leadership, teamwork, and abstract thinking.

## **5 Conclusion**

A large percentage of Korean students lack confidence in speaking due to the limited speaking opportunities in most EFL classrooms in Korea. This, combined with a cultural ideology of not making mistakes and giving perfect answers, creates an atmosphere where Korean EFL learners may have adequate reading and listening skills, but lack an equivalent proficiency in their writing and speaking skills. The goal of drama is to communicating effectively. Everyday conversation has the same goal. Thus drama provides students with an opportunity for speaking that mimics real life situations and conversations yet occurs in a controlled environment. That the students are using drama allows them to be less self-conscious.

The effective drama classroom provides the right environment for learners to actually participate with vocabulary in a real English language environment. The goal for this research was to explore drama techniques, activities and approaches that could be used in a university drama course that would enhance students' speaking and listening skills. Drama allows the students to focus not only on the content of language but increase their proficiency in communication. It gives them the speaking opportunity to increase their confidence, the practice necessary to become self-aware, and, through stories, myths and nursery rhymes, a taste of other cultures.

The limitation of the present study was the size of the respondents. The researchers feel most of the same conclusions might be reached if the present research were conducted on a larger scale. Therefore, it is the researchers' recommendation that more drama university classes be taught in the EFL context in Korea and that drama techniques be applied to non drama university classes such as university conversation classes. Such classes and the students taking them will benefit from the advantages provided by drama in learning English as a foreign language. In conclusion, Korean EFL learners who learn English in a drama class or through drama techniques may see improvement in their confidence, greater psychological effects such as awareness and decreased self-consciousness and an increase in the cultural awareness of English speaking countries.

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