



## **Using Creative Drama to Teach a Foundation French Business Course**

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### **Abstract**

The French and English foreign language teacher-researcher of this study has been interested in conducting a novel research that focused on the integration of drama in a foundation French for business class. He aimed to help students to reduce the negative effects of shyness and fear that block the learning process (Zahid & Rohi, 2019, p. 1382). To conduct this investigation, a class of absolute beginners in “French for Business Purposes” has been selected as the participants for this study. The students, a class of college students from Ling Tung University, located in Taichung, participated in this investigation during the academic year of 2023. This study included a questionnaire, interviews, and field notes that were conducted by the teacher-researcher. While the participants answered questions about their perceptions on joining drama learning activities in class, the teacher-researcher wrote memos to reflect the teacher-researcher’s thought process in connecting and interpreting data recorded in the questionnaire, interviews, and field notes. The findings of this study indicate that although students are shy to speak foreign languages, they have a sense of curiosity that inspires them to explore new horizons. Most of the students think that learning French with drama activities is more enjoyable as they reflect a student-centered learning approach in which students can reproduce a preplanned script. The role of the teacher-researcher as a facilitator gives students more time to practice short dialogues and to prepare an audio file. That way, students gain more confidence in their speaking abilities and develop their willingness to communicate in French as a foreign language.

Keywords: French, Business Purposes, Drama, Questionnaire, Interviews, Field Notes

### **Introduction**

The teacher-researcher has been conducting research in English teaching and learning as a foreign language since 2012. In line with Alshraideh and Alahmadi (2020, p. 41), he has noticed that Taiwanese students often feel anxious about having to learn new vocabulary, having to express themselves in the classroom, as well as having to complete homework in a timely manner. As a matter of fact, shyness and fear of using English usually blocks learning (Zahid & Rohi, 2019, p. 1382) because anxiety has been ranked to be a crucial challenge to language learners (Oteir & Al-Otaibi, 2019).

Consequently, every student around the world and in every walk of life must have expressed a sense of apprehension and fear of speaking another foreign language at one point of time. More particularly, students' apprehension must be amplified when they enter the French classroom, blocking learning from the first day of class. Nevertheless, learning may occur when they are engaged in more dynamic learning activities created through the concepts of drama. For example, although the use of cell phones has been detrimental to students' academic achievements (Smale, Huchetson, & Russo, 2021, p. 50), Stern (1993; cited in Mohammadi & Hamidi, 2020), believed that drama reduces inhibition, increases spontaneity, and enhances motivation, self-esteem, and empathy.

### **Literature Review**

The word "drama" is a Greek word which means "to do" or "to act", implying that students must do some acting (Guliyera, 2011, p. 523). Likewise, Shraiber and Yaroslavova (2016, p. 59) wrote that "drama" means "action" or "a play" and reported that researchers often compare it with a blanket term covering "a wide range of oral activities that have an element of creativity present". Brown & Lee (2015, p. 277) wrote that Drama is a more formalized form of role-play, with a preplanned story line and script. Thus, it is apparent that modern drama comes in a great variety of forms and can be classified into three types: Drama in education, literature and theater sport, and drama for enhancing oral communication skills through reading activities. Drama in education is associated with developmental drama, creative dramatics, and educational drama. Drama learning activities focus on creative instruction rather than just a medium to motivate students to think out of the box and act in connection with themselves and their peers (Dawould et al., 2020, p. 11753). The next and probably the most well-known category of drama is theater acting. This type of drama has a positive impact of teaching English through drama on students' physical, emotional, social, and cognitive development (Bessadet, 2022, p. 525). Drama creates positive feelings which strengthens the temporal lobe, which is associated with slow cognitive decline and a healthier brain. The reason for this is that drama provides a calm and disciplined atmosphere which promotes efficient learning skills, school success and good memory retention (Latif et al., 2021, p.84). The third and final type of drama concerns drama for enhancing oral communication skills through reading activities. It is defined as an "art of communication" (Morgan, 1987:7; cited in Shafka, 2012, p.95). Shafka found that while students prefer reading drama rather than watching it, educators need to adapt their teaching style to the needs of the students in order to remove the psychological barrier between the students and the literature and participation (Shafka, 2012, p. 101). That way, educators can implement drama in real life, which is a contributive aspect dealing with the difficulties in learning and teaching of drama. Finally, drama plays are helpful in bridging the gap between cultural differences.

Regardless of the type of drama used in the classroom, students appreciate learning through the use of drama activities for all the enjoyment they provide.

Drama in education is useful to improve the use of grammatical forms in several ways. Thus, learners need to be made more aware of the differences in the use of different forms by exploring different “Englishes” in different contexts (Carter, 1998, p. 98). Students may be interested in completing writing tasks such as gap-filling, information gap, rewriting, and role-play, which could be useful to enhance language awareness of the different grammatical choices, the different “Englishes” involved (Carter, 1998, p. 99). More specifically, Chomsky believes that UG (Universal Grammar) is a special device of the human brain which can help people learn languages quickly. It is an unconscious and potential knowledge which exists in the human brain without learning and determines the existing appearance of the human language (Hulin & Na, 2014, p. 1). An example of this is provided by Carter (1998, p.99) is text modification and modeling. As students work in pairs, they interact with one another to practice saying a natural, informal, and friendly short conversation. The following task would be to rearrange the former discourse materials in order to model data on authentic patterns. That is to say, students may re-write a casual conversation into a more formal dialogue and practice it in a different social context. Although Universal Grammar has received rebuttals from “nativists” and “cognitive/social interactionists” (Long, 1977, p. 212) highly likely due to “delayed practice” which enable students to enhance the development of language proficiency, pronunciation and control of grammar (Postovsky, 1996, p. 67), Chomsky’s theory still stands as a method highly likely to help students improve their oral communication skills.

The terms “Literature and theater sport” imply that drama is concerned with the world of “pretending”; learners must project themselves imaginatively into another situation, outside the classroom, or into the skin and persona of another person (Holden, 1982; cited in Davies, 1990, p. 87). Drama engages all students’ learning styles and brings literature to life (Zahid & Rohi, 2019, p. 1382); even though students may be apprehensive about having to speak English in class, the game of theatre sports may provide an active fun activity which will put them in touch with new concepts and learning will take place. Bessadet (2022, p. 530) wrote that “using theatre as a means to learn the English language and discover its aesthetic values helped students transcend their fears of expressing themselves in front of an audience”. According to Zahid and Rohi, theatre sports demonstrate how powerful a motivating force role-playing can become for the actors as well as the audience. Mohammadi and Hamidi (2020, p. 2) referred to drama as “drama education”, “theater education”, “educational drama”, or “creative drama”. They also noted that, in the context of education, drama is mostly concerned with participants regardless of any function of communication to an audience.

Byrnes (2002) was teaching at the German Department at Georgetown

University, which decided to revamp its entire undergraduate program into an integrated content-oriented and task-based educational environment that explicitly targets upper levels of ability as its program goal. He wrote that a three-year project was created in the summer of 1998, and was entitled “Developing Multiple Literacies.” This project yielded higher awareness of about the nature of AL2 abilities and the pedagogical needs that must be met to and opportunities that can be pursued in order to foster students’ L2 to academic levels of performance in reading, writing, and speaking, using a range of media (Byrnes, 2002, p. 62). While the first goal of the German Department aimed to target those features, the second goal was to increase the participants’ awareness themselves as highly competent AL2 users of German who can enhance their language competency in certain strategic areas (Byrnes, 2002, p. 63). Students were expected to improve their reading comprehension of a complex text, write a summary of the text, and perform formal academic speaking on the basis of that text in response to questions that the teacher had provided (Byrnes, 2002, p. 65). As the institute created pedagogical tasks for the students to improve their German abilities with learner-centered teaching methodology, the students matched the demanding level of study required by the department. They studied German twenty-four hours a day for its duration, being very vigorous in their study. Then students made comments at the end of their learning experience (Byrnes, 2002, p. 67); they also revealed that they learned useful reading strategies, vocabulary-building strategies, and the need to speak slowly (Byrnes, 2002, p. 71). They gained confidence in using German, feeling more comfortable to read media in German language related to cultural issues. Finally, students thought that summative role-plays were very interesting as they provided an excellent synthesis of content and discourse strategies. They believed that role-plays were useful homework assignments as students were required to learn the language and opinions of their roles regarding a subject (Byrnes, 2002, p. 75).

Another interesting teaching method to help students perform some collaborative exploration to encourage class discussions that bring opportunities with cognitive processes into the arena of a social interaction (Kern, 2000, p.136), is to have students perform their reading publicly (p. 141). Kern went on to explain that students work in small groups to convert short texts into “scripts” containing multiple voices, which they then read aloud and may act out with minimal actions. The teaching strategy is to combine reading practice and performing. Its goal is to enhance students' reading skills and confidence by having them practice reading with a purpose. Reader's theater gives students a real reason to read aloud, improving their oral reading fluency by building a strong sight word base; this gives students a more enjoyable experience. In addition to the studies cited above, Booth Olson (1984; cited in Kern, 2000, p. 214), explained how to guide students through a series of thinking, guiding, writing activities that culminate in an analytical essay on the theme of “setting as a reflection of character”. First, she sensitizes

students to the targeted theme with popular culture, selecting a television show that her students are familiar with and in which “setting” plays a key role, which is in line with Lindstromberg (1997, p. 74) and Latif et al. (2021, p. 81) who stated that media is an important influencer as it can expose and inspire the attitudes and emotions as well as spreading and creating awareness on various social issues. Before watching the show, she asks leading questions to her students at the beginning of class so that they may collaboratively produce a cognitive map that shows relationships among elements of the story setting. Students use their knowledge and past experiences to answer her questions. After that, students are asked to connect the settings of the shows with a familiar environment. For example, students may write descriptive statements in which they compare living environments and standards, then the teacher asks them to read their sentences aloud. Next, the teacher gives students copies of a poem to all the students and reads it aloud, underlining words and phrases that describe the setting. That way, her students may paraphrase the poem, identify themes, and find evidence in the poem to support their statements. Finally, the teacher may decide that students write an essay or a dialogue, which involves both transformed practice and critical framing. According to Kern (2000, p. 141), an extension of this activity would be to have students rehearse the play until the performance stage can be reached (Davies, 1990, p. 94). Thus, it has become obvious that “reader theater” and “theatre sports” are useful teaching methods and that the goal of the teacher is to help students improve their fluency when speaking a foreign language.

Finally, drama for enhancing oral communication skills leads to Lev Vygotsky's constructivist theory, which suggests that, when students read, they learn by connecting what they know to new learning. This is why teachers need to show the students the connections between what they know and what they are learning. This can be applied to reading fluency and reading comprehension. According to Jones (2016, p.19), Vygotsky sees all human actions being mediated through “cultural tools,” language being among the most important. He theorized that language is an essential tool for young learners as they could have thoughts to begin with, for solving problems, and for being a member of the community. Freire (1974; cited in Kern, 2000, p. 36), wrote about literacy education as teaching that must always be connected to the students' own life experiences. Therefore, Vygotsky and Freire's theories imply that students can learn a great deal about a second or foreign language, cultures, and societies as well as particular sets of values reflected in the way texts are constructed and in the way literacy is used in those societies, beliefs, values, attitudes, and ways of thinking. Besides, previous academic research has demonstrated that reading activities are essential to learn a second or foreign language, they are even more important than reading activities to learn one's mother language. The reason for this is that a learner of another language will be able to retain some of the knowledge gained in a course of study by continuing to read in that language

for many years after graduating from the course. Students who learn a foreign language and who do have any opportunities to practice it with native speakers, reading will open up a world of literature and culture representing that country in a manner that would not otherwise be possible (Celce-Murica & Olshtain, 2000, p. 118). According to Kern (2000, p. 129) it is important to structure learners' tasks and interaction instead of just simplifying texts. The reason for this is that students are more likely to learn new knowledge when they are given more opportunities to ask questions and clarify their understanding of a complex text in an interactive context. In his study on teaching French reading, Kern (2000, p. 135), wrote that the teacher's role is to engage learners in a cyclical process of predicting reading, and thinking by carefully selecting several stopping points in the text and asking two principal questions at each juncture "What do you think is going to happen next?" and why?". Students can perform some collaborative exploration to encourage class discussions that bring opportunities with cognitive processes into the arena of a social interaction (p. 136). Finally, one of the teaching methods used by Burling (1996, p. 91) in his French class besides teaching grammar points and sentence structures, was to help students with pronunciation. To do this, Burling asked students to make an audio file of the text they had to read. Then students could listen to the tapes as they followed the written text on paper. The goal was to aim for accurate French pronunciation so that they could be understood by French native speakers. The main point of teaching reading to students is to give them enough confidence to engage themselves in social interactions with native speakers of a foreign language.

Previous literature has attempted to show that students greatly benefit from modern drama as "drama in education", "literature and theater sport", and "drama for enhancing oral communication skills" when educators implement these learning activities in the classroom. Students' anxiety is greatly reduced, giving them more space to express their ideas and emotions and enjoying speaking in front of an audience.

### **Methodology**

In line with Guliyera's international conference on Foreign Language teaching and applied linguistics (2011, p. 523), the purpose of this study was to explore the two problems generally faced by teachers of foreign languages. Guliyera wrote:

"We, teachers of English as a foreign language, are faced with two problems. The first problem is how to get students to actually speak English and not just memorize grammar rules to make good marks on exams. The second is to help them speak more clearly by slightly reducing their accents if clarity seems to be a problem. The drama method is where both of these can be solved together."

Based on Guliyera's statement, the researcher of this present study aimed to bring forward an answer to the dilemma of teaching French as a foreign language for business purposes to absolute beginner Taiwanese college students, and giving them enough confidence to speak clearly. To do so, the methodology of this study was extracted from Yasar's (2006, p. 34) ethnographic case study, with the difference that the main purpose of this study was to provide the students' perspectives on educational drama and theatre sport. This study sought to understand the role of classroom dynamics and interpersonal relationships in drama activities and classroom context. Framed by drama in education and theater sport, this study was designed to explore the following questions:

1. Is drama suitable to teach French for business purposes to absolute beginners?
2. Can drama give students enough confidence to speak French clearly?

This section consists of 4 sections. First, I will define the term "qualitative research" and explore the reasons why the teacher-researcher decided to use this research method. Second, I will describe the context of the classroom, including the teacher's background, the participants' characteristics, and the content of the course. Third, I will look into the methods that I have used to collect data for both research questions. Finally, I will explain the methods of data analysis through which I can ground my interpretations in the available data.

### **The Qualitative Research**

Qualitative research is a form of research in which the researcher collects and interprets data, making the researcher as much a part of the research as the participants and the data they provide (Corbin & Strauss, 2015, p. 4). Researchers usually choose qualitative rather than quantitative because they want to explore the inner experiences of the participants, to explore areas not yet thoroughly researched, and to take a holistic and comprehensive approach to the study of phenomena (Corbin & Strauss, 2015, p. 5). In line with Yasar (2006, p. 36), the teacher-researcher of this study aimed to capture the socially constructed nature of a classroom environment in which drama was used to help students interact together when speaking French as a foreign language. In this research, the teacher-researcher sought to document the concrete details of the drama activities used in his classroom to gain in-depth understanding of the participants' learning experience.

### **Ethical Considerations of this Research The Participants and the Site**

One of the teacher-researcher's missions in teaching foreign languages in Taiwan is to help students improve their productive skills. He feels fortunate to have been assigned a class titled "French for business purposes" to teach French as a foreign language and to integrate drama learning activities in the classroom. Thus, this new course presented a unique opportunity to me to update my teaching practice and the process of making meaning through drama activities.

The participants of this study were 59 Taiwanese students (50 females and 9 males) enrolled in the Department of Applied Foreign Languages, at Ling Tung University of Science and Technology, in the academic year of 2023. The course, titled "French for business purposes", was the focus of this research and was one of the elective classes provided to all the students at the Department of Applied Foreign Languages. The class was held once a week for two hours. As Chinese students are well-known to remain quiet in class, the teacher-researcher aimed to make students speak French as much as possible while learning new vocabulary and sentences in class. The teacher-researcher wanted to use drama in the classroom because drama not only has positive effects on language learning (Brown & Lee, 2015, p. 277), but also brings a positive impact on the students' physical emotional, social, and cognitive development (Bessadet, 2022, p. 525). Drama creates positive feelings with a calm and disciplined atmosphere, promoting efficient learning skills, school success and good memory retention (Latif et al., 2021, p.84). The age range of the participants in this study was between 21 and 23 years old with an average age of 21.8 years old. The teacher-researcher obtained the consent of the students who volunteered to meet the teacher-researcher face-to-face for a short interview.

### **The Role of the Teacher-Researcher**

The Foreign teacher-researcher has always wondered how some professors may publish several research papers within a year. It seems that they are always running against the clock. In contrast, the teacher-researcher of this study wants to publish a journal once a year because he wants to do it, not because he has to (Corbin & Strauss, 2015, p. 14). This way, the teacher-researcher can dedicate himself to conduct one research at a time to produce quality work, so that teachers and students alike can grow. At the same time, it is true that preparing interviews and questionnaires are time consuming and energy draining because the person who conducts surveys must pay attention to ask pertinent and relevant questions. For this reason, every researcher should pay attention to remain friendly, patient, compassionate, rational, kind, reasonable,

passionless, calm, and impassive during all the length of the study.

### **Data Collection**

The purpose of data collection was to demonstrate the negotiated nature of drama and provide several perspectives on drama experience in this context. In the process of exploring the research questions, the main focus was to get insiders' view of how drama worked or did not work for this particular class, in this particular context. For this context, the research strategy was to observe and get the students' perspectives and opinions on learning French as a foreign language for Business purposes. Thus, the foreign teacher-researcher made a careful record of his observations during the fall semester of 2023. He also administered the questionnaire after all the participants had completed their final exam. He also conducted interviews with 20 participants who agreed to attend a face-to-face meeting. The respondents' answers were recorded on the teacher's cell phone, transcribed and translated in English for the data analysis. These interviews were conducted like an informal conversation to entertain the participants' standpoints. The teacher-researcher remained as neutral as possible as the participants recounted their narratives. This was because the teacher needed them to divulge as much information as possible. The more details the participants gave away, the more information the foreign teacher-researcher had for the data analysis. As a result, the interviewer often appeared to be agreeing with everything the respondents wanted to say, which was for the purpose of encouraging disclosure. If the teacher had challenged them during the interview, it would have prevented them from opening up.

### **Conceptual Ordering, Credibility, and Trustworthiness**

Conceptual ordering refers to the organization of data into discrete categories. This research was based on measurements mainly under the concept of learning French through novel drama activities. Students were asked to rate their motivation and confidence from "strongly agree" to "Strongly disagree" when confronted with speaking French. In this study, the teacher-researcher used different strategies to make this research more credible and trustworthy. On the one hand, the data was drawn from various sources (interviews, field notes, and a questionnaire) for triangulation data to avoid misinterpretation. On the other hand, the teacher-researcher also used three strategies to achieve a higher level of trustworthiness. These strategies included a "prolonged engagement and persistent observation in the field", "triangulation", and "rich thick description" (Creswell, 1998, pp. 201-203; cited in Corbin & Strauss, 2015, p. 343).

### **Data Analysis**

As teachers need to focus on a learner-centered teaching method, the aim of this qualitative study was to understand the experiences of the students who had attended a novel French class in which the teacher had implemented weekly dramatic activities. The data was collected through interviews, field notes, and questionnaires. The collection of the data was completed by the spring semester of 2024. The body of the data consisted of audiotapes from individual interviews with the students, field notes and subsequent analytical memos.

### **Course Content**

This “French for business purposes” course was opened to create some variety out of concern for students’ freedom of choice and students’ retention. Through this course, students would become familiar with basic French expressions in formal business settings, including greetings, self-introductions, short formal conversations, and taking leave. The course objectives were to get students to:

- Demonstrate the ability to understand basic questions relating to personal details.
- Demonstrate the ability to provide information on personal details.
- Develop the ability to say or read short sentences related to business situations.
- Develop the ability to perform a short dialogue in a business context.

This course was selected for this study for two main reasons. First, students were absolute beginners in French and the teacher-researcher wanted to know if students would get near immediate confidence in speaking basic French sentences using drama as a learning strategy. Second, Chinese students are usually expected to learn a language through the memorization of vocabulary and grammar rules. Therefore, the teacher-researcher wanted to see if students would learn French easily and with confidence when learning the language by memorizing useful French expressions through practice, reviewing in class, and making audio files to upload on the school portal for the sake of keeping a record of their work and grading.

### **Data Analysis and Findings**

#### **Analysis of Field Notes**

The field notes taken by the teacher-researcher in the fall semester of the year 2023, were used to do open coding and axial coding, which led to selective coding. The

teacher-researcher connected the categories of the axial coding to form one theory. Therefore, the findings drawn from the field notes indicate that students are usually reluctant to speak openly in class to answer questions about daily life and common knowledge, to say useful sentences and short dialogues in class and in front of their classmates, and remain quiet without answering the teacher's questions. Nevertheless, educators can try to reverse this trend by making students express simple and short sentences to make them feel safer and engaged in class. The best way to do this is to give firm directions while showing a higher level of patience. For example, sentences and expressions that were recorded were "Please write down a complete sentence on your worksheet", "choose a word that you like", say "Here", "Joyeux Noël" (Merry Christmas), or "Bonne année (Happy New Year)" when you hear your name during attendance taking. Likewise, students must be given firm directions to take notes on their handouts and complete basic sentences in French by doing word matching and associations to create a new sentence. Students need to see that the purpose of the task has a rewarding value.

### **Analysis of Interviews**

Data revealed that most students have never participated in drama activities except for some students who have joined COSPLAY activities or drama activities when they attended elementary school many years ago. This is highly likely due to the Taiwanese teaching style of rote learning of sentence patterns and sentence structures. As a result, most students are shy to, and even afraid of, speaking in public or in front of the classroom. Fortunately, most students are interested in trying a different teaching approach that is helpful for an expeditious study: Drama activities must not only be part of the curriculum, but also provide an interesting teaching approach that is helpful for developing daily life communication skills. As students are not used to performing in public with drama activities, not to mention under the supervision of a French native speaker, students should be provided with a "safe space" that gives them a feeling of ease that promotes their willingness to speak French in the classroom by acting out short dialogues. This can be achieved when students gain the ability to understand short dialogues easily and gain the ability to reproduce the correct sentences and pronunciation in a short period of time without too many challenges, creating a long-term retention of their French learning content.

### **Analysis of the Questionnaire**

The questionnaire was administered in Chinese after the participants had completed their final exam. Out of 59 students enrolled in this class, 55 students (93%) responded to the questionnaire. Overall, the great majority of the participants (80%)

avored the use of drama activities in the classroom and 85% of the participants thought that drama activities present more advantages than disadvantages. First, 85% of the respondents thought that learning French with drama activities is more enjoyable when student-centered learning activities are implemented in the classroom. It is interesting to point out that only 42% of the participants prefer learning French in traditional ways. Second, results of the questionnaire show that not only 87% of the students enjoy learning new vocabulary and sentences through drama, but also 89% of the participants find it easier to remember them. Finally, drama activities are a good way to promote interrelationships between classmates. Drama learning activities open up new opportunities to develop human relationships. Results show that 81% of the participants perceive role-plays as a more interesting learning method to learn new vocabulary. In addition, nearly 90 % of the respondents have come to realize that drama is a good way to learn French with the support of their classmates; Students usually enjoy cooperating with their group members to develop their communication skills.

### **Discussion**

This study found that most students go under three main stages of development to learn French: Hesitancy and reluctance, curiosity in new teaching approaches, and willingness to communicate. As most students have never had any previous experience in joining drama activities or have joined drama activities many years ago, while attending elementary school, they are reluctant to express their ideas in the classroom; they have not learned to project themselves imaginatively into another situation (Holden, 1982; cited in Davies, 1990, p. 87), and tend to shift their attention to their cell phone use, which may be detrimental to their study (Smale, Huchetson, and Russo, 2021, p. 50). It is also well-known that the Taiwanese education system has used rote learning of sentence structures and patterns extensively as a favored teaching method of both Chinese and English languages. It may also be worth keeping in mind that “delayed practice” Long, 1977, p. 212; Postovsky, 1996, p. 67) may be an underlying reason for the students’ quietness.

Despite these impediments, most students have a sense of curiosity that inspires them to explore new horizons. In joining this French class, students have actually expressed the need for innovative teaching methods that provide a safe learning environment to act in connection with themselves and their peers (Dawould et al., 2020, p. 11753). To do that, the teacher-researcher has used different media to introduce the French culture and basic learning content (Celce-Murica & Olshtain, 2000, p. 118; Booth Olson, 1984; cited in Kern, 2000, p. 214; Jones, 2016, p.19) that expose students to positive attitudes and emotions to motivate and persuade them to read short dialogues in front of an audience (Lindstromberg, 1997, p. 74; Latif et al., 2021, p.81). To answer the first research question “Is drama suitable to teach French for business purposes to

absolute beginners?” This study found that 85% of the students think that learning French with drama activities is more enjoyable as it reflects a student-centered learning approach as they can reproduce a preplanned script (Brown & Lee, 2015, p. 277). As a matter of fact, drama provides a calm and disciplined atmosphere which promotes efficient learning skills (Latif et al., 2021, p. 84). In line with Kern (2000, p. 141), the participants of this study can perform their reading publicly, which would be much easier for students to practice their reading skills in French in front of the classroom. In addition to this, students were asked to make an audio recording by reading short dialogues learned in class (Burling, 1996, p. 91). This study also answered the second research question. The teacher-researcher found that drama actually gives students enough confidence to speak French clearly because students have time to improve their speaking skills, boosting their willingness to speak French as a foreign language. A successful development in the students’ willingness to participate in drama activities can only be achieved with the facilitator teaching approach because educators need to adapt their teaching style to the needs of the students in order to remove the psychological barrier between the students and the literature and participation (Shafka, 2012, p. 101). The teacher not only develops positive teacher-student relationships, but also can make students speak French with expeditious learning. While 81% of the students perceive role-plays as a more interesting method to learn French, nearly 90% of the students agree that learning new vocabulary, gap filling, and information gap activities are important to develop human interrelationships (Carter, 1998, p. 99; Hulin & Na, 2014, p. 1). This finding is in line with Stern (1993; cited in Mohammadi & Hamidi, 2020), who wrote that drama reduces inhibition, increases spontaneity, and enhances motivation, self-esteem, and empathy.

To conclude, college students go through three stages when learning a new foreign language: In the first stage, reluctance, time and patience must be provided by the educator to start the scaffolding process. In the second stage, curiosity in new teaching approaches, educators must use different media to introduce the foreign culture and learning content. The final stage, willingness to speak, educators must provide enough time to students to prepare their written or oral productions and to create a portfolio or an audio file which will promote their confidence and willingness to communicate in French as a second foreign language.

### **Conclusion**

It has thus become clear that the respondents of this study perceive drama as a good way to learn French by cooperating with their classmates with a scaffolding teaching method that can build students’ confidence in developing their French communication skills (Guliyera, 2011, p. 523; Bessadet, 2022, p. 530). Educators can use a great variety of engaging oral activities for any function of communication that give them a sense of achievement (Shraiber and Yaroslavova, 2016, p. 59; Zahid & Rohi,

2019, p. 1382; Mohammadi and Hamidi, 2020, p. 2) and that can foster students' L2 to academic levels of performance in reading, writing, and speaking, using a range of media (Byrnes, 2002, p. 62; Davies, 1990, p. 94).

### Limitations

There are some limitations to this study for three main reasons: First, the author of this research is the sole author and has not found any Taiwanese native speakers as co-writers. Second, the teacher-researcher is a French native who has an intermediate level in Chinese. If he had had an advanced level in Chinese, he could have asked in-depth questions. Finally, students tend to remain quiet and are not used to expressing their inner thoughts and feelings, not to mention to a foreign teacher. Thus, it is recommended that following up studies investigate the kinds of texts that are more suitable for Taiwanese students to perform drama more efficiently in classroom settings.

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