Feature Articles

Page to Stage: An Empirical Study of Foreign Language Learning (FLL) and Motivation Through Playwriting, Readers Theatre, and Stage Production

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Abstract

This article describes a set of lessons used in a university EFL course and presents empirical, classroom-based research. The set of lessons, *Page to Stage*, was designed to teach English through the use of drama, dramatic activities, and theatre production—more specifically: dramatic adaptation of Japanese folktales, playwriting, readers theatre, and the rehearsal, memorization, and performance of original, student-written plays. At the end of the lesson and course, students were surveyed on their beliefs regarding the lesson's effects on their motivation, level of English, use of prosody, and confidence when speaking in public. The students' enjoyment of certain aspects of the lesson as well as the lesson as a whole was also surveyed. Results showed that the students saw self-improvement along all points, while they feel that their motivation and use of prosody improved most. Regarding enjoyment, students most enjoyed (from most enjoyable to least enjoyable) watching other students perform, working together in groups, using Japanese folktales as reference for the playwriting, the readers theatre, the final performance, and playwriting. Students least enjoyed memorizing the scripts in preparation for the final performances. Based on the results, a case is made for the benefits of drama, readers theatre, and theatre production in the EFL classroom.

Introduction

> All the world's a stage,
> And all the men and women merely players.
> They have their exits and their entrances,
> And one man in his time plays many parts.
> (Shakespeare, n.d. *As You Like It*, Act 2, Sc. 7, lines 46-49)

With a background in theatre and English literature, I enter every classroom with a similar sentiment: every classroom is a *stage*, and every student is an *actor* with the potential to *play many parts* and communicate in any situation.

As language teachers, we often find ourselves with the seemingly unsurmountable goal of engaging our students with a variety of authentic situations and opportunities to communicate. While this task could easily be overcome in English as a second language (ESL) environments where students are surrounded by native speakers of the target language, language teachers in English as a foreign language (EFL) or foreign language learning (FLL) contexts—contexts practically void of such interactions—must often recreate experiences that promote interaction and communication in our classrooms. According to Richard Via in *The Magic 'if' of Theatre*, "few would disagree that drama has at last established itself as a means of helping people learn another language. A great deal of our everyday learning is acquired through experience, and in the language classroom drama fulfills that experiential need" (1987, p. 110). As a language teacher who strives to create both autonomous and confident learners, I utilize the benefits of theatre to facilitate language experiences in which students use and rely on English as a tool rather than just studying it (Bang, 2003; Barnes, 1968; Hismanoglu, 2005; Livingstone, 1983; Via, 1976, 1987; Zafeiriadou, 2009).

Beyond the experiential benefits of drama, Maley and Duff (1978, p. 1-10, 2011, p. 1-2) put forth eleven additional benefits of using drama in the language classroom. They are as follows:

1. Drama integrates the four language skills in authentic ways: Careful listening and spontaneous verbal expression is integral.

2. Drama integrates verbal and non-verbal aspects of communication [physical and intellectual].
3. Drama integrates cognitive and affective domains [feeling and thinking].
4. Drama contextualizes language through a focus on meaning.
5. Drama is holistic and presents opportunities for catering to learner differences.
6. Drama fosters self-awareness (and awareness of others), self-esteem, and confidence.
7. The variety and the unpredictable nature of drama fosters and sustains motivation.
8. Drama allows for the transfer of responsibility for learning from teacher to learners.
9. Drama encourages an open, exploratory, and risk-taking environment where creativity and imagination can develop.
10. Drama has a positive effect on classroom dynamics and atmosphere.
11. Drama is low resource.

With these benefits in mind, my approach to English language teaching has always revolved around using drama and dramatic activities.

What is Drama?

In essence, drama is what is created when a person interacts with another person. Via (1987) defines drama as communication between two people, while Holden (1981) insists that drama is always present when people interact and must include the communication of meaning between the two participants. It is this aspect of drama that I am most interested in when implementing it in my language classes.

What is Theatre?

As opposed to drama, theatre is concerned with an audience in mind (Holden, 1981; Via 1976). According to Via (1987), theatre is "communication between people for the benefit of other people" (p. 110). And, like drama, theatre is also concerned with the conveyance of meaning, both between the participants, and the participants and the audience. In short, theatre is drama for the sake of an audience.

Dramatic Activities in the Classroom

Dramatic activities are any activities that engage students in both drama and theatre. Within the context of the language classroom, the benefits of both drama and theatre coincide with the basic concepts of several holistic methods of language teaching including Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), Task-based Learning (TBL), and Total Physical Response (TPR) (Barbee, 2016; Davies, 1990). Nina Spada (2007) states that CLT validates drama as pedagogy in the language classroom, writing that CLT is "a meaning-based, learner-centered approach to L2 teaching where fluency is given priority over accuracy and the emphasis is on the comprehension and production of messages" (p. 272). In effect, learners become active participants in the language learning, and teachers facilitate self-learning and group interaction in authentic situations. The facilitation of authentic situations for communication is also an aspect of TBL, where students use English as a tool to complete the task rather than focus directly on the language itself. TPR comes into play because of the physical nature of dramatic activities. Because the entire body can be involved, from movement and body language to gestures and facial expressions, dramatic activities promote the concept of language use and learning through action (Davies, 1990).

Dramatic activities in the classroom can include but are not limited to mime, simulation, role-playing, improvisation, teacher-in-role, playwriting, and various types of theatre performances from monologues and scenes to readers theatre and full productions (Barbee, 2016; Davies, 1990). While the simpler dramatic activities from mime to improvisation are very low resource, i.e., they only require a room of human beings (Maley & Duff, 1978), using the more involved forms of theatre, including full theatre production, in an English class with second language learners can come with limitations from student motivation and level of English ability to space, policy constraints, and time (Barbee, 2016). Because of the limitations with time especially, I have rarely staged full theatre productions in my classes. Earlier in my teaching career, I reconciled not attempting such performances due to the belief that the value of dramatic activities in the classroom lies in the process not the product (Maley & Duff, 2011; Zafeiriadou, 2009). However, as Davies (1990) puts it, "if rehearsed drama activities are left unperformed, there may be a sense of incompleteness in the class" (p. 87). Colleen Ryan-Schuetz and Laura M. Colangelo (2004) also defend the use of full theatre production in language classes, stating that they give students

contextualized and authentic experiences using English in a variety of communicative activities including textual analysis and discussion, rehearsals, performances, and post-production reflections. With the intent of adding these benefits of full theatre production to one of my classes, I designed an EFL course and set of lessons that take students through the process of story analysis and playwriting, to readers theatre and a full theatre production. Because it is rare for such activities to be the focus of a language class (Davies, 1990; Ng, 2008), I also wanted to investigate the beliefs of the students after the final performance of the lesson. The research questions, the course, and the lesson are described below.

Research Questions

This classroom-based, action research seeks to investigate the following two research questions:

1. What are the students' beliefs and perceptions regarding the lesson's effects on their motivation, level of English, use of prosody, and confidence when speaking in public?
2. Because the lesson is multi-faceted, which aspects of the lesson, including the lesson as a whole, do students find enjoyable and to what extent?

These questions are investigated using an action research approach and a survey that was devised and implemented at the end of the course. Because of the nature of action research—the goal being simply to understand the effects of teaching on students (Johnson, 2012)—there is no experimental or control group, no variable is independent or dependent, and most importantly, there are no hypotheses to support. As teacher and researcher, my goal is to study the effects of my teaching and then adjust and improve my lessons for the benefit of my future classes and students.

Quantitative data was gathered through a post-lesson survey conducted in English and Japanese from 19 of the 20 students enrolled in the class. The survey consists of twelve 5-point Likert-scale questions (1= strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = indifferent, 4 = agree, 5 = strongly agree). Questions 1 to 4 address research question 1. Survey questions 5 through 12 address research question 2. The twelve survey questions are listed below:

1. I feel more motivated to learn and use English because of this lesson.

2. I feel that my overall level of English improved because of this lesson.
3. I feel that my use of the prosodic and non-verbal features of English improved because of this lesson.
4. I feel more confident when speaking English in public because of this lesson.
5. I enjoyed this lesson overall.
6. I enjoyed using Japanese folktales as a reference for playwriting.
7. I enjoyed playwriting.
8. I enjoyed reading the play for the readers theatre performance.
9. I enjoyed memorizing the script.
10. I enjoyed performing on stage for the final performance.
11. I enjoyed watching the other students perform their plays.
12. I enjoyed working with my group to write and perform our play.

Qualitative data was also gathered in the form of informal teacher observations during the weekly class meetings. Informal notes were taken regarding student interactions, language use, and perceived motivation. Information from these observations will be presented as they relate to survey findings in the discussion section of this paper. Students were also asked to complete an end-of-semester class evaluation and a reflection assignment; however, those results are not discussed within the scope of this paper because they cover the entire course as opposed to just the *Page to Stage* lessons.

It should also be noted that students completed the surveys anonymously and gave written and oral permission for survey results and observations to be used in this research. Students also gave permission for their scripts and performance videos to be shown publicly and to future classes of students.

Course Description

Working at a private university in central Japan, I created an intensive EFL course titled *English Practicum 2: English through Theatre*. The course is held in the fall semester each year and meets twice a week across 15 weeks for 90 minutes each class. In total, that comes to 30

classes and 45 classroom hours. Department policy regarding *Practicum 2* classes requires that admitted students be high-intermediate to advanced English learners with the maximum number of students set at 20. English level is determined, and students are selected based on standardized English test scores and an interview screening. First, students are required to have a score of 750 or higher on the TOEIC test. Scores are self-reported by the students who submit printed copies of their official TOEIC scores to the department administration. Once scores are confirmed to meet the TOEIC requirement, students are invited to be interviewed by me. Each *Practicum 2* course instructor conducts their own subjective interviews. For the interviews, I screen for observable enthusiasm, a desire to perform in front of others, self-motivation, and a conversational level of English. The course description as written in the course syllabus (Barbee, 2018) is as follows:

> This class will focus on learning English though drama, dramatic activities, and theatre performance. Students must be able to speak loudly and clearly in a public setting. Because students will be asked to perform English with each other using gestures, body language, and emotional expression, students must use COMPASSION, COOPERATION, and CREATIVITY in order to be successful. Class activities will include monologue performance, scene performance, improvisation, role-playing, watching videos of theatre performances, reading aloud, playwriting, and theatre performance. Students will be evaluated on attendance, class participation, group cooperation, live performances, and homework activities.

As listed in the syllabus, there are eight student learning objectives. By the end of the class, students should be able to:

1. Respond appropriately in a variety of situations when interacting with others in English.
2. Effectively communicate in English with a loud and clear voice.
3. Effectively integrate prosodic and other non-verbal features of English including prosody, body language, and emotional expression.
4. Demonstrate a comprehensible level of English pronunciation and intonation.
5. See an increase in their motivation to learn and use English.
6. See an increase in their overall level of English.

7. See an improvement in their use of the prosodic and non-verbal features of English.
8. See an improvement in their self-esteem and confidence when speaking English in front of others.

Student learning objectives 1 to 4 are measured throughout the course using informal and formal assessment methods including observation, objective completion of written activities, objective and subjective performance of spoken activities, and formative and summative evaluations. Student learning objectives 5 to 8 are measured through informal observation and student responses to their reflection assignment and class evaluation at the end of the semester. Again, results of the reflection assignment and class evaluation as well as the formative and summative evaluations are not within the scope of this paper.

Lesson Procedure

While I have had the experience of producing many fully-staged plays and musicals with costumes, staging, and months of rehearsals, time for such lessons is hard to come by and they are rare in the language classroom as I mentioned before. With the availability of time (45 classroom hours, 30 classes across 15 weeks), I created a 10-week set of lessons (from here referred to as *Page to Stage*) that would have students write scripts, rehearse, and memorize dramatic scenes on stage by the end of the course. The *Page to Stage* lessons began in week 6 of the 15-week course. Activities within the first five weeks of the course prior to the *Page to Stage* lessons included self-introduction adlib and storytelling, monologue performances (pre-written), two-person scene performances (pre-written), improvisational games, and team-building activities. The three main activities of the *Page to Stage* lessons include (a) scene and one-act play writing, (b) a readers theatre performance, and (c) a final group performance of the one-act plays. An overview of the 15-week *Page to Stage* lesson plan can be seen in Appendix A.

As the *Page to Stage* lessons began, students were first given an introduction to playwriting, components of the dramatic story arc (exposition, inciting incident, rising action, climax, falling action, and resolution), and were asked to read and analyze several Western fairy tales. The list of the Western fairy tales can be seen in Appendix B. The story analysis activity

required students to read three Western fairytales of their choice from the list and identify the components of the dramatic story arc. Also in week 1, students were introduced to the prosodic features of speech (stress, pitch, intonation, pauses, pace, loudness, paralinguistic features, and vocal effect). This introduction was made through a lecture, *Prosodic Features of Speech: An Intro to Prosody,* that I created for the purposes of the class (a video of the lecture (Barbee, 2020) that I made in the second year of the course can be seen at https://youtu.be/CQwWI5-rzH8).

Scene and One-Act Writing

Students began to plan and write their individual scenes in week 7 and continued through week 8. Before writing their scenes, students divided themselves into groups of four and were given five traditional Japanese stories to choose from. The stories were found in several anthologies of English and bilingual (English and Japanese) Japanese folktales (a full list of the folktales and anthologies can be seen in Appendix C). Because each story had several, very different versions available, I decided to give each group four to five versions of the same story. This allowed students to compare each version—students found differences and similarities through reading and story analysis—and synthesize their own version while keeping the main aspects of the story similar to the original. The five Japanese folktales used for the lesson were:

1. *Kachi Kachi Yama* [Click Clack Mountain]
2. *Urashimataro* [The Fisherman and the Tortoise]
3. *Bunbuku Chagama* [Lucky Cauldron]
4. *Saru Kani Gassen* [Monkey-and-Crab Fight]
5. *Shitakiri Suzume* [The Tongueless Sparrow]

A list of the multiple versions of the five Japanese folktales used for reference in the scene writing activity can be seen in Table 1. Once chosen, groups read and discussed their folktales, and then divided the stories into equal sections per member. The students then adapted their section of each fairytale into dramatic scenes. When writing their scenes, students were encouraged to modernize or update their stories for contemporary audiences. At this point in the lesson, there was

also a class discussion regarding adding stage directions and prosodic markers such as tone, pace, loudness, emotional markers, and so on to their scenes. The individual scenes were due in week 8, and groups then combined the scenes into complete one-act plays. Students worked together to self-edit and make changes to their group's overall scripts. Groups submitted their one-act plays, I edited them further for minor language and continuity errors, and I then compiled them all into a class manuscript. The reason I choose to produce a class manuscript of all the plays is to show each group what the other groups have written and to create a sense of class cohesion and pride in their work (Full compilations of the one-act plays are on the webpage, *Page to Stage: An EFL through Theatre Lesson* (Barbee, n.d.), at https://www.matthewbarbee.com/page_to_stage.html. The 2019 compilation can be seen at https://www.matthewbarbee.com/uploads/1/6/8/9/16895428/2019_student_dramatic_folktales.pdf (Barbee, 2019)).

Table 1

Japanese Folktales Used for Reference in the Scene Writing Activity

List of Folktales	Anthology	Language Format
Click-Clack Mountain (Kachi-kachi yama) Fisherman and the Tortoise (Urashimataro) Lucky Cauldron (Bunbuku Chagama) Monkey-and-Crab Fight Tongue-Cut Sparrow	A Treasury of Japanese Folktales (Illustrated, Bilingual Edition)	English and Japanese (side-by-side) Suggested for beginning-intermediate English learners
The Quarrel of the Monkey and the Crab The Story of Urashima Taro, the Fisher Lad The Farmer and the Badger The Tongue-Cut Sparrow	Japanese Fairy Tales	English Suggested for advanced English learners
Click Click Mountain The Kettle of Happiness The Monkey and the Crab	Japanese Folk Tales (Vol. 1-5)	English and Japanese (with English to Japanese dictionary, English Audio CD included)

The Tongueless Sparrow Urashimataro		Suggested for beginning English learners
A Sparrow with Her Tongue Cut Out Kachi Kachi Mountain Monkey vs. Crab Urashima Taro	Long Ago Stories of Japan (Bilingual Edition)	English and Japanese (side-by-side) Suggested for intermediate English learners
Bunbuku Teakettle Click-Clack Mountain The Monkey and the Crabs The Sparrow's Tongue Urashimataro	Once Upon a Time in Japan (Vol. 1-3)	English (with English to Japanese dictionary) Suggested for beginning-intermediate English learners

Note. Suggested English level is based on informal observations from the teacher. See reference section for anthology publication information.

Readers Theatre

Readers theatre is defined by Patrick Chin Leong Ng (2008) as "an oral presentation of drama, prose, or poetry, by two or more readers . . . for an intended audience" (p. 93) and has a positive effect on students' communication skills (Ng, 2008). Within *Page to Stage*, the readers theatre portion of the lessons has students assign roles within their group and read their completed one-act plays in front of the other members of the class. Readers theatre was included in the set of lessons for several reasons. It is my hope that the readers theatre performances would:

1. allow students to familiarize themselves with their scripts
2. allow students to focus on prosody and other non-verbal aspects of language without the stress of memorization and a full-body commitment
3. lead to natural discussions of prosody and its connection to meaning
4. facilitate practice of oral communication skills, such as pronunciation, articulation, and volume, and lead to greater confidence (Ng, 2008)
5. allow for public praise and acknowledgment from other groups
6. instill cohesion and group pride in the scripts students had just written

On the day of the readers theatre performances, chairs were arranged in a large circle and groups sat together along the circle. Groups then took turns reading their one-act scripts. Because some scripts had more characters than there were group members, some roles were doubled up. As groups finished reading their scripts, time was allowed for praise, questions, and constructive feedback from myself and other students.

Theatre Production

After receiving formal and informal feedback for their readers theatre performances, groups began preparing for the final theatre production. Tasks involved in the preparation for final performances included casting, read-through, blocking (the physical mapping of the movement on stage), independent rehearsal, teacher-guided rehearsal, costuming, set arrangement, and memorization. Through each task, students used English to discuss ideas, direct each other, follow teacher direction, and perform.

On the two days of the final performances in weeks 14b and 15a, students arrived in class early for vocal warmups and set up the classroom for audience seating. Groups took turns performing their plays and performances were video recorded. Performances were recorded for scoring purposes and for student self-reflection. Student performances were scored using a descriptive rubric and written feedback in the form of comments on the rubric was given. Students were also tasked with providing written, peer feedback in the form answering what they most enjoyed about each groups' performance and how they could improve. Sample videos of the one-act plays can be found on the webpage, *Page to Stage: An EFL through Theatre Lesson* (Barbee, n.d.), at https://www.matthewbarbee.com/page_to_stage.html.

On the last day of class (week 15b), students were asked to complete the end-of-lesson survey and class evaluation. The results from the end-of-lesson survey are presented below.

Results

Results of the survey (as seen in Table 2, Table 3) are reflective of students' perceptions of the effectiveness and enjoyment of different aspects of the *Page to Stage* lesson. Perceived effectiveness of the lesson was measured along four points, (a) increased motivation to learn and use English, (b) improvement in overall level of English, (c) improved use of the prosodic and non-verbal features of English speaking, and (d) increased confidence when speaking in public.

Table 2

Means and Standard Deviations of Student Responses to Likert-Scale Survey Statements

Survey Statement	M	SD
1. I feel more motivated to learn and use English because of this lesson.	4.42	0.61
2. I feel that my overall level of English improved because of this lesson.	3.84	0.76
3. I feel that my use of the prosodic and non-verbal features of English improved because of this lesson.	4.16	0.69
4. I feel more confident when speaking English in public because of this lesson.	3.68	0.82
5. I enjoyed this lesson overall.	4.74	0.45
6. I enjoyed using Japanese folktales as a reference for playwriting.	4.21	0.79
7. I enjoyed playwriting.	3.37	1.12
8. I enjoyed reading the play for the readers theatre performance.	4.05	0.97
9. I enjoyed memorizing the script.	2.32	1.06
10. I enjoyed performing on stage for the Final Performance.	3.95	0.97
11. I enjoyed watching the other students perform their plays.	4.74	0.56
12. I enjoyed working with my group to write and perform our play.	4.68	0.67

Note: 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = indifferent, 4 = agree, 5 = strongly agree

Table 3

Frequencies of Student Responses to Likert-Scale Survey Statements

Survey Statement	**Total Agree**	(5)	(4)	(3)	(2)	(1)	**Total Disagree**
	%	%	%	%	%	**%**	**%**
Q1	**94.7**	47.4	47.4	5.3	0.0	0.0	**0.0**
Q2	**63.2**	21.1	42.1	36.8	0.0	0.0	**0.0**
Q3	**84.2**	31.6	52.6	15.8	0.0	0.0	**0.0**
Q4	**57.9**	15.8	42.1	36.8	5.3	0.0	**5.3**
Q5	**100.0**	73.7	26.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	**0.0**
Q6	**78.9**	42.1	36.8	21.1	0.0	0.0	**0.0**
Q7	**52.6**	15.8	36.8	15.8	31.6	0.0	**31.6**
Q8	**68.4**	42.1	26.3	26.3	5.3	0.0	**5.3**
Q9	**15.8**	0.0	15.8	26.3	31.6	26.3	**57.9**
Q10	**84.2**	26.3	57.9	0.0	15.8	0.0	**15.8**
Q11	**94.7**	78.9	15.8	5.3	0.0	0.0	**0.0**
Q12	**89.5**	78.9	10.5	10.5	0.0	0.0	**0.0**

Note: (5) = strongly agree, (4) = agree, (3) = indifferent, (2) = disagree, (1) = strongly disagree. The survey statement numbers, Q1 – Q12, refer the same respective survey statements in Table 2.

According to the results, the highest percentage of students at 94.74% strongly agreed or agreed that the lesson increased their motivation to learn and use English with a mean score of 4.42 (*SD* = 0.61) on a Likert scale of 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The second highest aspect regarding lesson effectiveness dealt with students' beliefs that their use of prosody and non-

verbal features of English improved showing that 84.21% of students strongly agreed or agreed with this point (M = 4.16, SD = 0.69). While still positive, but a little lower, a majority of students agreed or strongly agreed that their level of English and confidence in public speaking increased as well (63.16% and 57. 89% respectively).

Overall, students answered that they enjoyed the *Page to Stage* lessons as a whole (M = 4.74, SD = 0.45) with 100% of students answering positively. Students equally enjoyed watching the final stage performances with a 94.74% positive response (M = 4.74, SD = 0.56) and working together in groups (89.47% positive, M = 4.68, SD = 0.67). Regarding the enjoyment of the different activities within the lesson, students most enjoyed using the Japanese folktales as a reference for playwriting (M = 4.21), the readers theatre (M = 4.05), and the staging the final performance (M = 3.95) in order of most enjoyable. In general, students seemed divided regarding the activity of playwriting (M = 3.37), with a total of 52.63% of students answering that they enjoyed it, while a total of 47.37% of students did not; 15.79% of students were indifferent. The activity that students least enjoyed, with a score of 2.32, was memorizing the scripts. Just under 60% of students said that they strongly disliked or disliked having to memorize the final performances.

Discussion

In presenting my data, I must be careful to say that due to the nature of action research and the small sample size of this study (n = 19) results cannot be generalized (Johnson, 2012). However, I do believe that such discussions are important within the greater conversation of the pedagogical value of theatre in the classroom.

From the results of the survey, students overwhelmingly enjoyed the *Page to Stage* lessons, as well as watching other students perform and working together in groups. Meanwhile, students less enjoyed playwriting and memorization. As a teacher, I am glad to see that the students enjoyed the lesson, but I could have predicted that they would least appreciate writing and memorization. Even in my nondramatic English classes, students also tend to cringe when it comes to writing and memorization. Results show that these aspects of the *Page to Stage* lesson—perhaps all classes in general—could be improved for students. The lesson also had positive effects on the motivation,

English speaking ability, and confidence of my students, but there is certainly still room for improvement.

While practically unquantifiable, qualitative data from observations show that the amount of English used outside of the direct performances, was greater than during the performances, which was the goal and reason for including theatre production in the set of lessons. Like the goal of task-based learning, I intended for students to use English not for the sake of learning English, but rather as a means to complete a task, or set of tasks (Davies, 1990; Ryan-Shuetz & Colangelo, 2004), which in this case was the set of tasks leading to the readers theatre and the final performances in front of audiences. It was amazing to watch students immerse themselves in the minutiae of character and story analysis while also discussing the best side of the stage for a character to enter. In one particular class, students spent close to 45 minutes debating how to have their *tanuki* (a magical character in one of the plays) transform from a teakettle into said *tanuki*. The time for class instruction had to be shortened in the end, but the experience of having that debate and using English organically was priceless.

It should be noted here that most of the English used in class was not used while the students were seated behind desks. After the readers theatre performances, students almost never used their chairs or desks for the rest of the semester. In many language classrooms, students often complete assignments and have conversations seated behind desks. These types of interactions certainly exist outside of the classroom, but I would be remiss to say that life happens behind a desk. During the rehearsal process, students were free to move around the classroom and express themselves physically. From my observations, it is this aspect of theatre and working together in groups that students most enjoyed. Rarely would students become boisterous and "loud" while sitting, but once they were allowed to use their entire range of physical expression, the classroom became alive with energy, excitement, and, most importantly, language. Perhaps the anxiety and natural pressure of performing on a stage prevented some students from fully enjoying acting in the final performances (Ryan-Schuetz & Colangelo, 2004), but from my observations those anxieties were rarely seen when rehearsing without an audience.

While the scope of this study does not cover students' perceived anxieties, it does show that students most enjoyed watching the final performances and working together in groups.

Dornyei (1994) presents the idea of *group specific motivational components* in which emphasis is placed on group activities as a strong motivational factor for students. In the EFL classroom, having students set objectives and committing to them requires students to work together, and hopefully creates a sense of unity where students feel like they are supporting their classmates and being supported by them. This group cohesion is a motivating factor for students (Dornyei, 1994), and it is this sense of group cohesion and togetherness that I strove to achieve across every aspect of the lesson.

Conclusion

Ultimately, while more empirical studies should be conducted, the benefits and positive effects of drama and theatre activities for language learners is clear. Drama allows students to be themselves as it draws on their natural instincts to be expressive and communicate with the world around them. Perhaps all classrooms can be stages and all students actors, but this does not always happen organically. As language teachers in FLL classrooms, it is up to us to facilitate such experiences, and drama, in its ability to enhance established curriculum and engage students in a virtual experience in authentic language, can be the vehicle to do just that.

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Appendix A

Page to Stage Lesson Plan

Week	Assignment/Activity	Type of Activity
6a	Introduction to scene writing	lecture
	Introduction to dramatic story arc and character development	reading/reading-a-loud worksheet activity[a]
	Read Western fairytales and story analysis	
6b	Introduction to prosody, Prosody activity	lecture
	Make groups and select Japanese folktales	listening/speaking reading
7a	Plan dramatic adaptations of Japanese folktales	group discussion[b]
	Begin writing adapted dramatic scenes individually	writing
7b	Continue writing adapted scenes individually	writing
	Discussion: Adding prosody and stage directions to a script	group discussion[b] listening/speaking
8a	**DUE: Scene writing**	lecture
	Group editing workshop	group discussion[b]
	Make corrections to scenes	writing
	Combine scenes into one-act plays	
8b	Watch: Movie of a live stage performance (1a)	watching a video/listening
	Discussion: Scene excerpt with stage directions	group discussion[b] worksheet activity[a]
9a	Watch: Movie of a live stage performance (1b)	watching a video/listening
	DUE: Final one-act plays	
	Teacher edits the one-act plays[c]	
9b	Teacher returns final one-act plays manuscript[c]	lecture
	Introduction to readers theatre, first read-through	reading/reading-a-loud

10a	Prosody activity Rehearsal: Readers Theatre	group discussion[b] listening/speaking rehearsal[d]
10b	**Performance: READERS THEATRE**	group performance (unmemorized)
11a	Introduction to final performance Casting and read-through Rehearsal: Group one-act plays	lecture rehearsal[d] memorization
11b	Watch: Movie of a live stage performance (2a) Rehearsal: Group one-act plays	watching a video/listening worksheet activity[a] rehearsal[d] memorization
12a	Watch: Movie of a live stage performance (2b) Rehearsal: Group one-act plays	watching a video/listening worksheet activity[a] rehearsal[d] memorization
12b	Rehearsal: Group one-act plays (teacher guided)	rehearsal[d] memorization
13a	Rehearsal: Group one-act plays (teacher guided)	rehearsal[d] memorization
13b	**DUE: Movie reports (x2)** Discussion of movie reports Rehearsal: Group one-act plays	group discussion[b] rehearsal[d] memorization
14a	Final Rehearsal: Group one-act plays	rehearsal[d] memorization
14b	**Performance: GROUP ONE-ACT PLAYS**	group performance (memorized)
15a	**Performance: GROUP ONE-ACT PLAYS**	group performance (memorized)

15b	Lesson and Class Evaluation	evaluation survey
	Reflection and Discussion	post-survey discussion

Note. There is some overlap in the exact type of activity due to some activities involving multiple language skills. **Bold text** indicates points of formal student evaluation.

[a] worksheet activities include both formal and informal writing activities, they generally include reading comprehension, practical application, and critical thinking questions.

[b] group discussions include all group members (4-5 members per group). Language skills include listening, speaking, and discussion.

[c] activities in which the teacher is solely responsible.

[d] rehearsals include all group members (4-5 students per group). Language skills include listening, speaking and discussion.

Appendix B

Play Adaptations of Western Fairytales

List of Fairytales	Anthology	Language Format	Pub. Info.
Chicken Licken Goldilocks Humpty Dumpty Little Red Riding Hood The Elves and the Shoemaker The Enormous Turnip The Gingerbread Man The Lazy Cow The Little Red Ren The Magic Porridge Pot The Pied Piper of Hammelin The Stone Soup The Talking Tree The Three Gilly Goats Gruff The Three Little Pigs The Ugly Ducking	Fairytales on Stage	English (short plays based on Western fairy tales) Suggested for intermediate English learners	Meighan, J. (2016). *Fairytales on stage: a collection of children's plays based on famous fairy tales.* Jem Books.

Note. Suggested English level is based on informal observations from the teacher.

Appendix C

Japanese Folktales Used for Reference in the Lesson

List of Folktales	Book Title	Language Format	Pub. Info.
Click-Clack Mountain (Kachi-kachi yama) * Fisherman and Tortoise (Urashimataro) * Lucky Cauldron (Bunbuku Chagama) * Luminous Princess Marriage of a Mouse Monkey-and-Crab Fight * Old Man Who Made Trees Blossom Old Men with Wens One-Inch Boy (Issunboshi) Peach Boy (Momotaro) Strong Boy (Kintaro) Tongue-Cut Sparrow *	A Treasury of Japanese Folktales (Illustrated, Bilingual Edition)	English and Japanese (side-by-side) Suggested for beginning-intermediate English learners	Yasuda, Y. (2010). *A treasury of Japanese folktales.* Tuttle Publishing.
How an Old Man Lost His Wen Story of the Son of a Peach My Lord Bag of Rice The Adventures of Kintaro The Bamboo-Cutter and the Moonchild The Goblin of Adachigahara The Happy Hunter and the Skillful Fisher The Jelly Fish and The Monkey The Quarrel of the Monkey and the Crab * The Sagacious Monkey and the Boar The South Pointing Carriage The Stones of Five Colors and the Empress The Story of Prince Yamato Take	Japanese Fairy Tales	English Suggested for advanced English learners	Ozaki, Y. T. (Ed.). (1970). *Japanese fairy tales*. Tuttle Publishing.

The Story of Princess Hase			
The Man who Did Not Wish to Die			
The Story of the Old Man and Flowers			
The Story of Urashima Taro *			
The Farmer and the Badger *			
The Tongue-Cut Sparrow *			
The White Hare and The Crocodiles			
A Crane's Gratitude	Japanese	English and	Woodward, B.
Amazake (Sweet Rice Wine)	Folk Tales	Japanese	(Ed.). (2005).
Click Click Mountain *	(Vol. 1-5)		*Nihon mukashi*
Dumpling Scaredy Cat		(with English to	*banashi*
Mouse Wrestling		Japanese	[Japanese folk
No Face		dictionary)	tales] (Vol. 1).
Old Man Blossom			The Japan Times.
Old People's Mountain		(English Audio	
One Inch		CD included)	
Peach Boy			
Runny Nose		Suggested for	
The Carrot, the Burdock, and the Radish		beginning	
The Farting Wife		English learners	
The Kappa for Rain			
The Kettle of Happiness *			
The Man with the Lump			
The Monkey and the Crab *			
The Mouse's Wedding			
The Princess of the Moon			
The Stone Buddhas			
The Tiger in the Screen			
The Tongueless Sparrow *			

The Village of Tall Tales The Witch and the Young Priest Urashimataro *			
A Sparrow with Her Tongue Cut Out * A Straw Millionaire Grandfather Flowers Issun Boshi Kachi Kachi Mountain * Momotaro Monkey vs. Crab * The Bamboo Princess The Crane Gives Back The Golden Boy The Mouse's Wedding The Old Man with the Lump Urashima Taro *	Long Ago Stories of Japan (Bilingual Edition)	English and Japanese (side-by-side) Suggested for intermediate English learners	Valentine, C. (2011). *Long ago stories of Japan* [Bilingual ed.]. IBC Publishing.
Baby Grandma Bamboo Hats for Jizo Bunbuku Teakettle * Click-Clack Mountain * Earless Ho-inchi Gonbei the Duck Hunter Grandfather Cherry Blossom Hachisuke and the White Fox How the Old Man Lost His Wen Issun Boshi, the Inch-High Samurai Kintaro Momotaro, The Peach Boy Old Folks Mountain	Once Upon a Time in Japan (Vol. 1-3)	English (with English to Japanese dictionary) Suggested for beginning-intermediate English learners	Kawauchi, S. (Ed.) & McCarthy, R. F. (Trans.). (1985). *Once upon a time* (Vol. 1). Kodansha English Library.

Princess Flowerpot

Sleepyhead Taro

Tanabata

Tengu's Vanishing Cloak

The Bamboo Cutter's Tale

The Gratitude of the Crane

The Magic Bandanna

The Monkey and the Crabs *

The One Straw Millionaire

The Snow Woman

The Sparrow's Tongue *

The Tanuki Band of Shojoji

The Tengu Who Loved Sake

Urashimataro*

Why the Jellyfish Has no Bones

Note. Suggested English level is based on informal observations from the teacher.

* Folktales used in the course