

EFL Theater Course Students' Reflection on English Learning: Applications of Self-regulated Learning to Support the Adoption of Language Learning Strategies

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Abstract

This study explores English language learning difficulties, variations in learning regulation, language learning strategies, and reflective practices to improve English proficiency. The qualitative research approach is employed to analyze qualitative data from four interviews conducted at four stages of self-regulated learning in a theater course with 14 students in two group from a technological university. Quantitative data analysis includes the analysis of scores from the General English Proficiency Test (GEPT) speaking mock test and the SILL questionnaire. Initially, students faced motivation, learning strategy, script creation, and performance challenges. However, with improved self-regulation, they became more competent and responsible. They employed compensation, social, and memory strategies, driven by a sense of achievement, and invested more time and energy in English improvement. The Wilcoxon sign rank test indicated an asymptotic significance ($p\text{-value}=0.033$) in GEPT speaking mock test oral recitation scores. At the same time, there were no significant differences in the six categories of the SILL questionnaire before and after surveying. The small sample size and the subjective nature of self-reporting and self-assessment limit the study's findings. Additionally, although students were required to collaborate on script writing, no pretest for writing assessment was administered. Researchers should exercise caution when generalizing these findings.

Keywords: Self-regulated Learning, Language Learning Strategies, English Speaking Skills, Theater Activities

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1. Introduction

1.1 Research Background and Motivation

In 2021, the Taiwan Ministry of Education (MOE) launched the “Bilingual Education for Students in College (BEST)” program and selected four key cultivation universities for the Higher Education SPROUT (Sustained Progress and Rise of Universities in Taiwan) Project. Additionally, Taiwan’s Bilingual Nation 2030 policy aims to improve the English proficiency of civil servants by making English proficiency testing a requirement. Higher education is popular in Taiwan, but students at technological universities generally have a lower level of English proficiency. According to data from TOEIC’s official website, there is a noticeable gap in test scores between students at technological colleges or universities (average score of 448 points) and general university candidates (average score of 609 points) in 2020.

One of the common problems in teaching English courses is that students need to be more attentive and active in their learning and willing to participate in activities. They tend to sit passively in the classroom and listen to lectures but are often unwilling to express their opinions. This can make it difficult for the current curriculum implementation in Taiwan, which usually follows a teacher-centered approach, to improve students’ English proficiency effectively. To address these issues, teachers must review the theater course curriculum design and classroom activities, identify factors influencing students’ orientation, and explore exciting themes, content, or methods to engage students in learning. This can help guide and strengthen students’ use of learning strategies to effectively improve their speaking ability and address any problems with their on-stage performance. Teaching and learning require students to be invested and motivated to enhance their learning ability and focus on student-oriented learning.

1.1.1 Student Learning Status

Taiwan does not have an all-English environment, so English learning opportunities are often limited to the classroom. This means students have few opportunities to use English outside of class. While various online media resources are available, students may need guidance to find and understand their educational value.

Suppose students are familiar with language learning strategies (LLS). In that case, they can develop their language learning skills cognitively, emotionally, and behaviorally and become proficient in English even in an environment with limited practical practice opportunities. This research explores student language learning strategies, helping students consciously understand their learning status and increase their learning ability through self-regulated learning practices.

In recent years, this researcher/teacher has conducted Yang's (1992) Chinese version of Oxford's (1989) Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL) for EFL students of different courses and different grades. The 5-point Likert scale evaluates 50 questions, and the results showed that students scored below 3.5 on many questions. These results indicate that students must be taught essential language-learning strategies.

1.1.2 Problems Encountered by Students

Students encountered several problems. One problem was that foreign language courses need activities or topics that interest students. This creates a lack of inspiration where students feel they need more opportunities to apply and express themselves. As a consequence, students need more oral training.

Therefore, this research explores the effectiveness of incorporating theater performance into foreign language instruction and highlights how it can benefit students. Through participation and production in drama performances, students gain real-life language experiences, intercultural awareness, and communicative skills. Also, when students actively showcase their language abilities, they learn to improve their pronunciation, intonation, and speaking skills, as well as their learning strategies, creative thinking, and self-confidence. According to Supriya (2018), drama classes provide excellent learning opportunities because they teach students about language and help develop language skills. Drama can be especially effective in developing the oral language skills of English language learners and stimulating their interest in learning spoken English.

1.2 Research Purposes

The researcher observed the students' behavior and found that they needed more motivation in most courses. The researcher recommended that the curriculum design committee include the theater course as a 4-credit required course in students' first

semester of the first year. The theater course strengthens the importance of oral speaking, allowing first-year students to experience stage performance to practice and improve their oral English year by year. Their oral abilities will be sufficient for them to apply for international exchange programs or full-term internship programs domestically or internationally in their fourth year.

This research aims to improve low-achieving students' English language learning abilities in the researcher's department. The theater course, recommended to be scheduled as a 4-credit compulsory course in the first semester of the first year, aims to strengthen the importance of oral speaking and allow students to experience stage performance. The hope is that by practicing and improving their oral English year by year, they can apply for international exchange programs or full-term internship programs domestically or internationally in their fourth year.

This research addresses the challenges students face in learning English, investigates effective learning strategies for these students, and explores how students self-regulate to improve their English speaking skills through theater performances. To achieve these goals, the researcher will focus on several areas:

- (1) To investigate the English learning difficulties that students encounter and use Vygotsky's (1978) Zone of Proximal Development (ZDP) to scaffold their learning and problem-solving abilities;
- (2) To use a combination of competitive and cooperative approaches to inspire students' self-regulation for learning;
- (3) To examine the language learning strategies that students employ and help them to improve their English; and
- (4) To allow students to learn active skills, such as oral English ability and expression of opinions, and apply those skills in real situations through group discussions and the production of English plays.

The specific research questions for this study are:

- (1) What English learning difficulties do the students find and try to improve?
- (2) What changes do the students make in the four phases of self-regulated learning?
- (3) What language learning strategies do the students use to help improve their English learning?

(4) What reflections do they have concerning their efforts to improve their English ability?

2. Literature Review

According to Hoehe and Thibaut (2022), the proliferation of technology in recent years has significantly impacted human habits and communication. Many educators have observed that students' concentration levels and learning abilities have declined, and their interactions with others have decreased. While technology has provided educators with access to a wealth of resources and teaching materials, students need to see the relevance of their learning in their daily lives. Keller's (1984) ARCS motivation theory emphasizes the importance of making learning relevant and helping students to feel confident in their abilities. Using language learning strategies (LLS) in EFL education helps students become more aware of their learning processes and take greater control of their learning. By teaching students self-regulation strategies (SRL), such as goal setting, monitoring, control, and self-reflection, teachers can empower students to direct their learning and improve their speaking through performances. Alvarado (2017) argues that drama activities can be particularly effective as they offer innovative techniques, engage students' interests, and encourage them to express themselves and communicate with others.

This research explores the theory of language learning and can be summarized as follows:

2.1 ARCS Motivation Theory

According to the course attributes of this study, group work is a critical element in helping students apply their learning strategies. The teacher uses the ARCS model to engage and motivate the students (Keller, 2010). This involves giving students responsibility for their learning, allowing them to choose their teaching methods and strategies, and providing support and guidance as needed. For example, the teacher may provide scaffolding to help students understand the importance of setting goals or offer opportunities to connect their learning to previous knowledge. In this way, students can work together to complete tasks such as topic discussions, script writing, and

production of props and sound effects. Students can build confidence and learn through hands-on experience by participating in these activities. To help sustain motivation, the teacher may also provide intrinsic enjoyment or extrinsic rewards, such as a final stage performance where students can showcase their efforts and feel a sense of accomplishment. The ARCS theory, proposed by John Keller (1984), combines psychology and instructional design insights to inform curriculum design and improve teaching.

In the case of EFL, the apparent lack of direct relevance of English learning is because English is not used in daily life in Taiwan (Su, 2015). This is also one of the most troublesome factors in our teaching field. Students do not consider learning English relevant to their lives. Based on Westwood's (2008:15) theory, intrinsic factors refer to "emotional factors such as motivation, self-confidence, self-esteem, and attitude." The most important internal factor for English learning difficulties is self-confidence. Students lack self-confidence, fear making mistakes, and rarely consult their teachers or peers about English problems (Hasibuan et al., 2013). This is why the ARCS theory of motivation is critical for teachers and students to consider and not ignore. In the process of group discussion and self-evaluation in this study, students will encounter many difficulties in English learning while completing drama course tasks; for example, they may find it challenging to complete drama course scripts and stage performances at the end of the semester.

2.2 Self-Regulated Learning (SRL)

Self-regulated learning (SRL) theory was derived from Bandura's self-efficacy theory, which was later incorporated into social cognitive theory (Zimmerman & Schunk, 2003). Learners' monitoring and evaluation of their behavior and responses, under their cognition, imitation, and self-correction, will regulate their learning and improve self-efficacy (Bandura, 1986). Therefore, self-regulated learners have positive expectations and motivation, can set goals, accept challenges, and persevere to overcome difficulties and solve problems (Paris & Byrnes, 1989).

The regulation of cognition and behavior that occurs when individuals pursue their goals (Vohs & Baumeister, 2016), that is, the monitoring and processing of cognitive processes, and the awareness and control of individual learning, emotion, motivation,

behavior, and environment (Nilson, 2013); it is a self-regulated learning process where active learning and active participation are meaningful (Panadero, 2017).

Given that SRL is a process that involves individuals actively setting goals, monitoring and adjusting their learning processes, and controlling their own cognitive processes, motivation, behavior, and environment. Researchers have proposed various models and frameworks for SRL, with some emphasizing the role of self-monitoring and metacognition and others emphasizing the role of emotions. SRL research models and frameworks have a specific theoretical basis and are valid in classroom learning or empirical research of other fields (Boekaerts, 1991; Kuhl, 2000; Puustinen & Pulkkinen, 2001; Zimmerman, 1986; Zimmerman, 2013). Some SRL studies emphasize self-monitoring (Schmitz & Perels, 2011) and learner management under metacognition, namely how cognitive processing operates while planning, performing, and evaluating a task. (Winne, 1995, 1996, 1997; Winne & Hadwin, 1998). Moreover, some studies emphasize the role of positive and negative emotions in SRL (Boekaerts, 2011).

Pintrich (2000) proposed a framework for SRL that includes four areas (cognition, motivation, behavior, and environment) and four phases (anticipation stage and goal setting, supervision stage, control stage, and response and reflection stage) for observing students' learning. His general framework provides a helpful way to conceptualize the academic achievement students may acquire in promoting SRL. SRL is effective in classroom learning and other fields of empirical research. Therefore, this research aims to investigate the self-regulation strategies used by EFL students in the context of Pintrich's integration framework.

2.3 Language Learning Strategies (LLS)

Every learner learns differently at every stage to achieve their goals, and the most important thing is to understand what to learn and how to perform the learning task (Hardan, 2013). This research project focuses on the Language Learning Strategy (LLS) theory and aims to explore the language learning effectiveness of international students at the University of Science and Technology. In language learning, learners use various strategies, some of which are effective while others are not.

The concept of LLS has a long history, with early research dating back to the 1970s (Hosenfeld, 1976; Naiman et al., 1978; Rubin, 1975; Stern, 1975). Many scholars continued to study strategic concepts in the 1980s (Chamot, 1987; O'Malley

et al., 1985; Wenden & Rubin, 1987) and in the 1990s (Cohen, 1998; O'Malley & Chamot, 1990; Oxford, 1990, 1996; Wenden, 1991). In this century, language learning strategies have remained essential in second language/foreign language learning research (Cohen, 2011; Cohen & Macaro, 2007; Griffiths, 2008, 2013; Oxford, 2011; Pawlak & Oxford, 2018). In the 1980s, most studies focused on descriptive research, and second or foreign-language learning scholars began shifting their focus from teacher-centered to learner-centered approaches.

Using learning strategies can help learners understand their learning more deeply. Therefore, learners use strategies of different dimensions to plan, understand what to learn, adapt to their own pace, master study skills, enhance self-learning (Chamot, 2004), and help learners consciously achieve their stated goals (Weinstein & Mayer, 1986).

Rebecca Oxford has published numerous research papers on LLS since the 1980s and developed the Strategy Inventory for Language Learning Questionnaire (SILL), which other scholars widely use. Oxford (1990) divided LLS into two dimensions: direct and indirect, each with three categories. These two dimensions and their categories overlap and interact, and the two primary dimensions of direct and indirect strategies also influence and implicate each other.

The SILL questionnaire is a widely used measurement tool with high internal consistency and content validity (Amerstorfer, 2018; Oxford & Burry-Stock, 1995). It consists of 50 questions on a 5-point Likert scale, divided into six categories: cognitive strategies, memory strategies, compensation strategies, metacognitive strategies, affective strategies, and social strategies, which can specifically explore the learning status of learners. According to Oxford (1990, 3), these six language learning strategies are:

(1) Cognitive Strategies

Cognitive strategies allow learners to practice language learning and increase their understanding of a second language (L2). When learning sentences, learners can practice handwriting practice or pronunciation repeatedly and put the learned sentences into different occasions and help learners understand sentences. As they study, they try to write down important words or unfamiliar parts in their notebooks and analyze and summarize. These processes help learners.

(2) Memory Strategies

Memory strategies help learners store and use information, including sensory memory, short-term memory, and long-term memory, and these three parts are interrelated. Memory strategies help learners associate an L2 object or concept with another object or concept. Learners can remember learned words or sentences through sounds, images, or keywords.

(3) Compensation Strategies

Compensation strategies help learners understand problems in other ways. For example, when encountering a word that does not match, the learner guesses the word's meaning through the prefix, or when the learner reads the text using the meaning expressed by the preamble sentence, it can effectively help him find a solution when he encounters difficulties.

(4) Metacognitive Strategies

Metacognitive strategies refer to the processes learners use to integrate their language learning. Metacognition includes focusing and planning to learn. Learners who hear or see L2 conversations can tell themselves to focus on listening and one goal. Learners schedule their own study time, monitor their learning, and then evaluate the effectiveness of their learning.

(5) Affective Strategies

Affective strategies can help learners control their emotions, moods, and learning attitudes. For example, in the face of learning difficulties, emotional strategies will allow learners to use different ways to reduce their anxiety and restlessness and set rewards for motivating themselves to achieve their goals.

(6) Social Strategies

Social strategies refer to skills that help learners communicate with others, including asking others questions to get answers and clarify them, working in teams with other learners, understanding other languages and their cultural characteristics, or communicating or sharing with others.

Research shows that students can improve their language learning ability by using LLS (Oxford, 1990). Derakhshan et al. (2015) defined language learning strategies as conscious behaviors that learners use to learn a foreign or second language. Wu's (2008) findings suggest that higher proficiency EFL students utilize learning strategies

more frequently, particularly cognitive, metacognitive, and social strategies, which contribute to their language proficiency. According to Oxford and Crookall (1989), LLS emphasizes techniques that help learners learn the language. Before studying, students should plan, set goals, and manage their time. During the learning process, students can emphasize key points, take notes in the book, and put sentences and other information into different contexts. Through exercises such as sound, vision, and sentence patterns, students can more easily master new vocabulary or sentences. Finally, they should rearrange their notes to help them understand and recall what they have learned. Many studies have focused on training students to use these learning strategies, and most find that students experience significant changes after training (Gagne, 1985; Gu & Johnson, 1996; Taheri et al., 2020).

2.4 Drama/ Theater Activities and Oral Theories

Many studies have shown that improving oral skills is one of the most challenging aspects of foreign language learning (Shumin, 2002). Nguyen (2017) emphasizes that speaking skills consist of three main components: fluency, pronunciation and grammar, and social strategies. To improve fluency, Liu (2016) suggests using pictures or dramatic themes to encourage extended conversations and provide more practice opportunities. Chiu et al. (2010) found that drama activities were more engaging than traditional speaking training in the classroom and improved English speaking ability.

Scriptwriting and performing on stage lead to more active oral learning (Supriya, 2018), and drama performance is effective in promoting oral practice (Benucci, 2015; Bjornstad & Karolle, 2000; Gill, 2013; Greenfader & Brouillette, 2013; Liu, 2010; Meilyaningsih, 2015; Reed et al., 2014; Sirisrimangkorn, 2018; Youn, 2020a, 2020b). Janudom and Wasanasomsithi (2009) outlined principles and steps for developing a Drama activity, including working on a script, rehearsing, producing a play, and evaluating the performance. These guidelines provide an effective method for incorporating Drama activities into the EFL classroom.

In drama practice, students can employ social strategies and develop new understandings through creative work and personal participation. The potential of theatre connects students' learning to their daily life (Wong & Looi, 2010) and creates opportunities for them to use the language in real-life scenarios. Su (2015) emphasizes that effective language learning is not just about the language itself but also about using

strategies. Fleming (2017) discusses the importance of drama in the curriculum, strategies, and content for teaching and learning drama practice, such as dialogue teaching, interaction, cohesion, and diversity.

Using drama in the ESL/EFL classroom offers numerous benefits for training oral ability, such as enhancing language skills and empowering students for lifelong language proficiency and authentic communication (Boudreault, 2010), covering dialogue teaching, interaction, cohesion, and diversity (Fleming, 2017; Boudreault, 2010), facilitating real-life connections (Wong & Looi, 2010), improving the effectiveness of language learning strategies (Su, 2015), and promoting teaching and learning in contextualized language use (Fleming, 2017).

This research aims to use engaging theater activities and LLS to guide oral learning in real-world situations. Groups will construct concepts, set themes, write scripts, and integrate language learning into their scenarios, with the ultimate goal of helping students overcome their learning difficulties, increase motivation, develop learning strategies, and improve their English speaking ability. Thus, drama in language teaching effectively creates a livelier and more engaging classroom environment and provides opportunities for practicing and applying language skills.

3. Research Methodology

This research employed both qualitative and quantitative approaches. Rossman and Rallis (2003) explain that qualitative research aims to understand the behaviors and thoughts of the research subjects during the learning process. The qualitative research design for this study includes curriculum observation, student interviews after class, student reflections in class, and teacher reflections in class to collect data and gain a deeper understanding of students' use of LLS and their thoughts. The research also included two questionnaires for statistical analysis, but due to the small number of subjects, nonparametric statistical methods were used for analysis and interpretation.

3.1 Research Subjects

In the first semester of the 2019 academic year, two freshman classes of 72 students from the Department of Applied Foreign Languages at the university of

Science and Technology took the theater course. Of these two classes, 54 students took the Foreign Language theater course in English, while 18 students, formed in two groups, chose to take the theater course in Japanese taught by a full-time Japanese teacher. The 54 students who took the English theater course were randomly divided into six groupings, each with 8-10 students, and taught by four full-time English teachers. The researcher taught two of these groups, which were also randomly assigned to the researcher, and these students were the study subjects.

In this research, student information is identified by code numbers. For example, the first student in Group A is coded as A1. The interview code is added after the student code to distinguish between interviews with the same student. For example, A1-1 represents the first interview of the A1 student. According to Gay et al. (2009), a sampling ratio of at least 10% is recommended for general descriptive studies. In this research, the sample size of 13 out of 72 students in two classes is 18.06%, which exceeds the recommended sampling ratio.

3.2 Research Methods and Instruments

This research employed both qualitative and quantitative methods, and the project aligned with communicative language teaching by emphasizing meaningful and authentic communication through drama, using activities for small groups. Learners were expected to practice and enhance their speaking skills, including intonation, fluency, register, pitch, language functions, and emotional expression. Therefore, The following instruments were utilized to conduct the research and to outline the research methodology.

3.2.1 *The Oxford Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL)*

The learners' data from the SILL survey, which measures their preferred learning strategies, was analyzed using statistical methods such as descriptive statistics, mean t-test, and independent sample t-test. The participants filled out the Chinese version of the Oxford Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL) at the beginning and end of the semester using Google Sheets. Nine students completed the questionnaire, comprising five from Group A and four from Group B. These students were A2, A3, A4, A5, A7, B1, B4, B5, and B8. The results of the quantitative analysis are presented in the next chapter.

3.2.2 *Student Interviews, Course Videos, and Observations*

The researcher conducted four interviews throughout the semester, employing a set of questions based on Pintrich's (2000) four-stage framework of self-regulated learning (SRL). These interviews aimed to explore students' utilization of specific learning and study strategies (LLS), with a particular focus on the monitoring and control stages. The researcher also inquired about how students adapted their LLS when necessary. Open-ended questions in a semi-structured questionnaire were utilized to gather information about the student's learning status during these interviews.

(1) Interview Location

The interviews took place in a classroom, research room, or discussion room in the library.

(2) Interview Content

The interview content included curriculum design, classroom environment, script teaching materials, teamwork, learning interaction, learning strategy application, oral English progress, and achievement evaluation.

The researcher utilized course videos and observations to assess the effectiveness and improvement of the research course. These methods captured various aspects of the course, such as group discussions, body movement training, facial expression training, English pronunciation teaching, and the teacher's explanations. The recordings served as valuable qualitative data for analysis, providing insights for both the teacher and students to reflect on the learning process, effectiveness, and areas of improvement.

3.2.3 *Oral Speaking Test Assessors and Short Text Reading Materials*

The researcher adopted the GEPT Intermediate-Level Speaking mock test from the LTTC Language Training and Testing Center's website to evaluate students' English-speaking abilities. Students were given pretests at the beginning and posttests at the end of the semester, and statistical methods were used to compare their scores and assess improvements and significant differences. Eleven students participated in the second oral test: four from Group A (A4, A5, A7, A8) and seven from Group B (B1, B2, B3, B4, B6, B7, B8). The recorded files of the student interviews during the oral test were analyzed for content, including the pronunciation of English words and linking sounds.

(1) The GEPT Intermediate Level Speaking Mock Test used in this research consists of three short passages. The first passage has 69 words, the second has 42 words, and the third has 60 words, for a total of 171 words. Test-takers are required to read all three passages within 2 minutes, which is a rate of about 86 words per minute.

(2) Two professional language teachers conducted the oral tests and evaluations: Associate Professor Yi-Xiang Kuo, an English teacher at the General Education Center of the National Defense University, and Macarena Peña, an Argentinean teacher with many years of experience teaching English in various countries around the world.

Table 1 summarizes the number of students who completed the oral exams' pre-and posttests, the SILL questionnaires' pre-and posttests, and the four interviews based on the above information.

Table 1

Statistics on the number of students who completed the three surveys in this research

Items	Completed	
Two oral tests	11	(A4, A5, A7, A8, B1, B2, B3, B4, B6, B7, B8)
Two SILL Questionnaires	9	(A2, A3, A4, A5, A7, B1, B4, B5, B8)
Four interviews	13	(A2, A3, A4, A7, A8, B1, B2, B3, B4, B5, B6, B7, B8)

Not all students completed the entire survey. The sample size for the quantitative analysis was limited to those who completed all three surveys, namely A4, A7, B1, B4, and B8.

3.3 Implementation Procedures

The implementation procedures consisted of the following steps: (1) obtaining consent for the research, (2) administering the pretest of oral English, (3) administering the pretest of the SILL questionnaire, (4) the researcher's observation and reflection, (5) receiving feedback from students, (6) conducting four-stage SRL structure interviews, (7) administering the posttest of the SILL questionnaire, (8) administering the posttest of oral English, (9) sorting the data, (10) establishing files, and (11) analyzing the questionnaire. Next, the procedure continued with (12) analyzing and discussing various data, such as students' goal setting and revision status and their use of LLS, and (13) discussing students' English learning difficulties based on the data.

The theater practice focused on task design, which allowed students to divide labor and work cooperatively. Tasks such as script writing, creating sound effects,

making props, and designing costumes were assigned to individual students. The scriptwriting process included setting the scene, choosing a theme, and selecting characters. The most important aspect of this process was the teacher's guidance and prompts to help students create a storyline and schema based on the chosen theme. Students were encouraged to draw inspiration from cartoons, movies, or sci-fi films and adapt the characters and plots to their storylines, but they were also required to revise and clarify the key themes in their stories.

This course aims to increase students' interest in foreign language learning through reading, rewriting, or creating various scripts and improving their art, drama/theater literacy. It also aims to boost students' confidence and communication skills in foreign language expression through various body-based and situational performance teaching methods. The course objectives, syllabus, textbook requirements, attendance requirements, and grading criteria are all available in the school affairs portal databank.

4. Research Analysis and Results

At the beginning of the semester, the researcher had sixteen first-year students in two groups enrolled in the FL theater course. Fifteen of these students voluntarily participated in the study and submitted consent forms. Of these fifteen students, thirteen completed all four interviews, which consisted of 6 open-ended questions each. All interviews were conducted in Chinese, with the researcher translating the students' responses into English. The following qualitative interview analysis aims to address the research questions of this study.

4.1 Students' Feedback on English Learning Difficulties in This Course

The interview responses were analyzed and interpreted to answer the first research question, which asked about the English learning difficulties that students encountered and attempted to improve. During their English learning journey, students encountered various difficulties at different stages. To illustrate these difficulties and how students dealt with them, this analysis is divided into three stages based on the student's responses and the teacher's reflections on their learning processes.

4.1.1 Preparations at the beginning of the semester: Difficulties in setting English learning goals and group task goals

At the start of the semester, the researcher found that many students needed to be more emotionally prepared for the course, as they needed clear goals. This lack of motivation is a common issue among English learners in Taiwan, particularly among English majors who may follow their teachers' instructions to pass the course without actively engaging in their learning.

The researcher arranged body training lessons led by a trainer to enhance the students' emotional preparation and engagement. These lessons covered a range of activities, including breathing exercises, voice exercises, movement and stretching exercises, memory games, imaginary tug-of-war, mirroring exercises, emotional performance activities, and physical and emotional exercises for drama. In addition, Lecturer Wu, the host of a music program on the radio, was invited to share with the students the origins, genres, and performing arts of musicals.

Many students believed they understood the form of drama performance and the key considerations when educated about it. However, some felt it needed to be more manageable and preferred to begin group discussions and complete their group tasks immediately. The researcher noticed that these students faced the challenge of starting from scratch and had yet to anticipate the difficulties they might encounter later. The most significant difficulties at this stage were the need for self-determined goals, trust, and confidence among group members, which made it challenging to set group task goals.

4.1.2 Attention and correction during the semester: Difficulties with English writing, speaking, and performing ability

The most difficult tasks for students were choosing a drama theme and writing a script. According to the ARCS motivation theory, students were required to discuss and identify themes relevant to their daily life experiences. The researcher recognized that this process stage needed the most improvement, as students reported limited experiences and a lack of motivation to write scripts independently. In this study, both groups of students required ongoing encouragement to complete their scripts. Their difficulties at this stage included limited English proficiency in writing and reading scripts out loud and a lack of experience performing in front of others.

Group A students experienced delays and did not begin assigning tasks for the first three weeks of the course. Participation could have been higher during group discussions, with only 3-4 students typically in attendance. Many students expressed that the goals of the course were too tricky for them and that they struggled to write a script of 8-10 pages, memorize lines and perform. Overall, they needed help to think, write, and speak in English with their A2 level English proficiency.

In contrast, Group B students had a leader willing to take responsibility and formulate the theme. After discussing role assignments, the leader began to collect data and work with the group to develop and revise the plot during meetings. Many students based their characters on popular stories in English and used actual lines from those stories in their scripts to make them sound authentic. However, this required them to consider whether these lines were appropriate in the context of their own story.

The team members worked to ensure that the lines for each character were balanced so that no one character spoke for the entirety of the script while others only had a few lines. Discussions of the script were essential, and the researcher noticed that all Group B students attended their appointments and participated in the discussions. To encourage better execution, the researcher discussed the implementation of rewards and penalties with the students to improve their attitudes and performance.

4.1.3 Efforts before the end of the semester: Difficulties with speaking and acting drills

Due to the research component of the study, the two groups in this study required more in-depth involvement from the researcher than other teacher-led groups. After four interviews and numerous discussions with the teacher on using learning goals and strategies, students could reflect on their learning status and interact with their peers. Many students reported difficulties speaking and acting naturally. They recognized the need to put in more time and effort to perform well on stage and avoid embarrassing themselves or their team.

At the end of the course, students could arrange additional rehearsals 2-3 times per week in addition to the four hours of class time. As a result, the two groups led by the researcher placed first and second in the end-of-semester drama competition among the six English groups. The research showed that students became more engaged and proactive in their learning as they saw progress and achieved results. They were more likely to discuss ways to add lines, improve pronunciation and fluency, and enhance

body movements independently. Overall, the researcher believes this course was meaningful and contributed to students' automatic spontaneity and deeper participation compared to other courses.

In summary, the ARCS theory suggests that during the implementation of this course, students initially struggled to find their footing. Through guidance to arouse their motivation and "attention," students learned language learning strategies and saw the "relevance" of the course to its set goals. They gradually overcame their difficulties, completed their scripts and rehearsed repeatedly, and improved their skills to gain "confidence." Ultimately, they achieved stage performance success and "satisfaction" through award-winning performances. This process taught students to take responsibility for their learning in the future.

4.2 Interview Analysis of Students' Self-Regulated Learning

4.2.1 SRL Utilization Helped to Accomplish the Tasks

The researcher analyzed the content of their interviews to answer the second research question, which asked how the participants changed during the four phases of self-regulated learning. The results showed that participants who engaged in self-regulated learning and took control of their learning process adjusted their learning goals and chose appropriate learning strategies to complete their tasks eventually. The following description outlines the students' changes during their self-regulated learning process.

According to student feedback, the FL theater course increased their motivation and willingness to learn. They could self-observe, engage in task-oriented self-talk, and identify the most suitable learning environment. They continued experimenting to find the best learning mode for their emotions, motivations, behaviors, and environments. As the end of the term approached, they were more inspired by their sense of achievement and invested more energy and time in their tasks. In their reflections, they concluded that self-regulated learning had helped them significantly, and they had not understood the concept at the beginning of the course. They admitted to being lazy and unaware of how to change their behavior, but the FL theater course motivated them to produce more than they thought possible.

The detailed feedback data from this research were analyzed using Pintrich's (2000) self-regulated learning model framework as follows:

A. The Forethought and Goal Setting Phase

According to Pintrich (2000), the first phase of self-regulated learning is forethought, which involves goal setting, planning, and understanding the background context of the task. Ten of the fourteen participants in this study wanted to pass the TOEIC graduation threshold. In contrast, two wanted to achieve a higher score on the TOEIC for a foreign internship or study abroad opportunity. The remaining two participants wanted to communicate fluently with foreigners in English. At the beginning of the semester, students did not understand the importance of goal setting, so the teacher emphasized the importance of setting goals and adjusting them as needed through interviews. At the end of the semester, students checked whether they had achieved their goals.

Some students set general goals for improving their English proficiency, while others discussed future job aspirations. Some students only cared a little about studying, while others struggled to determine what they wanted to achieve in this course. Regardless, the participants at least thought and talked about what they needed to accomplish, whether it was improving their test scores or completing the performing tasks of the course.

“I hope that I can reach the graduation goal of 550 by the end of the sophomore semester.”
(B3-1)

“I think the employment opportunities are not high in Taiwan, so I want to fight for opportunities of foreign internships or study abroad to broaden my horizons.” (A3-1)

“I hope that I can be proficient in listening, speaking, writing, and reading in university. I can bravely face foreigners and communicate well.” (B8-1)

“No very special motivation. When I saw this course, I only asked if I could pass, and I would not ask for anything else.” “I have little interest in studying, no great enthusiasm for reading, just hope the four-year university can be quickly finished, and I graduate smoothly.” (B2-1)

“We haven’t started to distribute work, and I’m still trying to understand the course.” (A2-1)

B. Monitoring and Supervision Phase

The second phase of self-regulated learning is monitoring motivation. During the second interview, it was found that some participants were new to FL theater classes

and struggled to express opinions or enjoy the process of writing a script. With guidance from the teacher and teaching assistants, tackling tasks and participating in group discussions motivated some of them. Those who felt a sense of achievement became worried about the end-of-semester competition and began to work hard. By the halfway point of the semester, only some participants actively searched for sources to write their script, while others remained quiet. However, they needed to recognize that their lack of effort was the cause of their difficulties. Their opinions on this topic were organized into the following four notes.

- A. Most students set short-term goals and focused on completing the script.
- B. Changes in intrinsic motivation affected their English learning.
- C. The majority of students found the task to be appropriately challenging.
- D. Most students did not change their learning environment, study time, or resource use.

Likewise, various and interesting voices can be heard.

“My original goal was too high. I tried to lower my goal. I will put more effort and take more time to study, especially my English vocabulary. In our theater class, we should keep practicing.” (B7-2)

“At present, using my learning strategies for the FL theater course, I have not encountered any major problems.” (B5-2)

“I don’t have any difficulties doing the task; I’m just shy.” (B8-2)

“After entering college, because of the need for a part-time job, my study time is gradually reduced.” (A5-2)

“The current study situation is okay. I am interested in continuing to learn English. However, my learning English is not improving, and I would say I only try to maintain a good learning attitude.” (B5-2)

C. Control Phase

The third phase of self-regulated learning is the control stage, during which students perform tasks while monitoring their progress and using various self-control strategies to stay cognitively engaged and motivated. In the third interview, the participants reported feeling nervous, running out of time, and fear of making mistakes.

The researcher wanted to understand the participants' goal strategies and perceptions of their abilities and also observed changes in motivation, environment, and time management as the upcoming drama competition approached. The following four statements show how the students performed during this stage.

- A. The researcher discussed the students' thoughts on their goals, and most of them wanted to maintain their original goals.
- B. The students' learning strategies were often influenced by their achievements, leading to an improvement in their attitudes.
- C. As the competition day approached, most students felt well-prepared.
- D. Almost all students rated using comprehensive learning resources as "very good" or "good."

Comprehensively, students expressed how they viewed their goals as follows.

"Go with the flow is my opinion as a member of the FL theater class. For my own goal, I didn't make any adjustments. However, I need to put more time and effort in maintaining my goal."
(B3-3)

"My goal is the same as before, but now I want to improve my English ability and get some language certificates." (B6-3)

"I will encourage myself to achieve the goals I set." (A7-3)

"My goal now is to increase my vocabulary." (A5-3)

"In terms of learning, I am more passive. I will not ask questions when I encounter problems in class. Before, I didn't have much time to study or read my script because of working part-time, but now I will at least spend some time reading scripts." (B7-3)

D. Response and Reflection Phase

In the final phase of self-regulated learning, students assess how they completed a task and reflect on the reasons for their success or failure. This process of self-reflection can positively or negatively impact how students perform tasks in the future. The researcher learned about the changes in the student's learning strategies and motivations throughout the FL theater class through four interviews and repeated observation.

- A. During this interview, students evaluated and discussed using cognitive adjustment strategies to adjust goals.
 - B. Students adjusted their learning strategies, and internal and external factors influenced their motivations.
 - C. Most students found it appropriate to use their learning strategies, while a minority found them easy to use.
 - D. Most students considered time, environment, and comprehensive resources for seeking help, and they felt their strategies were effective.
- To sum up, students were self-aware that they could accomplish their goals.

“I will not lower my goal if I can’t do it. I will fix my learning strategies and keep up my original goal.” (A7-4)

“I love this course because I love acting, and I’m a person who’s more interested in plays and acting.” (A8-4)

“I will discuss with my classmates and increase interaction with them.” (A3-4)

4.3 Language Learning Strategy Utilization to Help Students Improve Their English Learning

4.3.1 Qualitative Analysis

This researcher employs qualitative and quantitative data collection methods to answer the third research question and better understand students’ LLS use and thoughts. Specifically, students were interviewed and asked to fill out study sheets to provide their views and opinions on their learning situations and the adoption of LLS. Additionally, the researcher used the Line application and Google Drive to share information and folders and communicate with students outside of class, including sending reminders for homework and quizzes. The analysis of this data was organized into three categories and provided two-way feedback on the research results.

A. Cognitive Attitude

Regarding the four interviews, most of the students (eleven students) initially had difficulty performing in a theater production; as they progressed through the course and had more opportunities for practice and guidance from the teacher, their confidence and ability to complete the task improved. In the third interview, eight of them thought the

task was appropriate, but they still managed to script it. In the final stage, the final interview results indicate that ten students felt adequately prepared to perform on stage, while four felt confident that they could complete the task efficiently (Table 2). This aligns with the research findings that the FL theater course was effective in helping students improve their English speaking ability, but more support and guidance may be needed for some students.

Table 2

Students' perception of task difficulty at the beginning and end of the term

Student N=14	Very difficult	Difficult	Seems appropriate	Easy	Very easy
1 st interview	6	5	1	2	0
2 nd interview	3	4	5	2	0
3 rd interview	0	1	8	5	0
4 th interview	0	0	10	4	0

“I used to have a mentality of not giving up on learning English. But, after I entered college, I found that it's not that easy to learn. As a result, I'm not that interested.” (A5-1)

“I feel my English speaking ability has improved, so I feel the FL theater class is interesting.” (A2-3)

“As a member of the FL theater class, I motivate myself to adjust my learning strategies because I don't want to drag the group.” (B4-3)

“I'm afraid of writing wrong words while writing scripts. My grammar is not good.” (B2-2)

“I will discuss with my classmates and increase interaction with them.” (A3-2)

“We don't have enough time to discuss in class, but we'll make an appointment to discuss in the library. Although we have encountered difficulties, we are all actively working together to solve them.” (B3-2)

B. Affective Attitude

The study found that eight of the fourteen students were motivated by extrinsic factors such as course grades at the beginning of the semester. In contrast, five were motivated by instrumental reasons, one by the hope of winning an award, one by fear of failing, and one by peer competition. However, by the end of the semester, the influence of extrinsic motivation decreased. Concerning intrinsic motivation, nine out of fourteen students initially expressed attitude motivation, wanting to change others'

views or thoughts and enhancing social interaction through the class. Another five students had competency motivation, aiming to improve their abilities. By the end of the semester, these students expressed feelings of accomplishment after winning the competition and were excited about their performance and recognition. They reported having a positive learning attitude and a great sense of accomplishment. (Table 3, Table 4)

Table 3
Comparison of Instrumental Motivation of Students

Instrumental Motivation				
Student N	Reward-Based	Fear-Based	Instrumental	Affiliation
1 st interview	1	1	5	1
2 nd interview	0	0	6	3
3 rd interview	1	0	3	3
4 th interview	2	0	2	2

Table 4
Comparison of Intrinsic Motivation of Students

Intrinsic Motivation				
Student N	Achievement-Based	Power-Based	Attitude	Competence
1 st interview	1	1	9	5
2 nd interview	1	0	7	0
3 rd interview	0	0	6	7
4 th interview	5	0	2	6

Some interesting contrasts before and after the theater training were shown in the following quotes (translated from Chinese).

“Our group worked well from the beginning, and I had a lot of thoughts on the script. However, I had no interest in this course.” (A2-1)

“I felt the importance of teamwork in this course. I was motivated and increased the practice of reciting scripts and expressing emotions. This experience enriched my university life, and I realized the purpose of the course activities.” (A2-4).

“I am just a bit interested in English. But, I just want to finish this FL theater course.” (A4-1)

“My problem is being too nervous, and I forget some words. There was stage fright for us. Although this was my first time performing in front of so many people, it was inevitably the case

that I felt proud of myself. I would like to participate in such performances in the future because I would like to write the script and discuss it with my classmates actively.” (A4-4).

“I love this course because I love acting, and I’m a person who is more interested in plays and acting.” (A8-1)

“I’m quite satisfied! Our group won the first prize! I was flattered.” (A8-4)

“I didn’t set a time to read. When I think of it; I’ll take a look at the script. But, I had no plan about this class.” (B3-1)

“I want to do better. I’m not very satisfied with my performance, and I think I forgot a lot of things. I could have done better.” (B3-4)

C. Behavioral Attitude

In the first interview, most participants (64.3%) felt that the learning resources provided were good. However, the researcher found that they did not spend much time studying, often dedicating less than 30 minutes weekly to preparing the script. Initially, they struggled to write scripts and were not very active in using the learning resources. However, after two to three weeks, their use of the resources and time spent seeking help and studying increased. They began to discuss topics and search the Internet, eventually writing script drafts. The students were more focused due to peer pressure and time constraints. Observations of group rehearsals in class revealed that by the mid-semester, they were actively practicing, asking questions, and making progress as a group, dedicating two to three times a week, two to four hours to rehearsals and communication.

In the final interview, twelve participants (85.7%) reported dedicated time daily to rehearsing, working hard to improve their pronunciation and fluency. Analysis of the four interviews (Table 5) revealed an increase in the students’ use of learning resources, with twelve students feeling they were making good use of them. The researcher observed improved behavior as they increased the frequency of their practice and rehearsals. The students also reported an increase in their practice time, intending to compete in the stage performance at the end of the semester. They aimed not just to avoid embarrassment but also to deliver superior performance and achieve a good ranking.

Table 5*Comparison of Student Resource Use*

Student (N)	Use of environment, time, and learning resources			
	Very well	Well	Fair	Poor
1 st interview (14)	5	4	5	0
2 nd interview (14)	4	3	7	0
3 rd interview (14)	5	8	1	0
4 th interview (14)	12	2	0	0

"I look up the pronunciation of words online, seek help from teachers or classmates, or watch American plays and videos to practice English listening and speaking." (A5-3)

"I can solve questions online with abundant internet information resources. Besides, I have several English books to study. If I have problems with my studies, I can also ask my teacher or classmates." (A8-3)

"I spend more time studying than before. I read the script three times a week for 1-2 hours each time. If I have more free time, I will study other subjects." (A2-3)

"Now I read the script every day; I will watch it after taking a bath and before I go to bed." (A7-3)

"I have increased my time studying; I also will use my spare time to read some books." (B8-3)

"I read the script occasionally at home. I have a part-time job, so I skipped some classes, but I spend more time in the FL theater class than before." (B4-3)

4.3.2 Quantitative Analysis

A. Analysis of the SILL Language Learning Strategy Questionnaire

An analysis of the pretest and posttest data of the SILL questionnaire for 9 participants showed no significant difference in results (Table 6). This suggests that the students may not have been able to utilize the strategies effectively or that the time frame for the study was too short for them to implement appropriate learning strategies.

Table 6
Differences in SILL language learning strategies used by students

	Cognitive strategies		Memory strategies		Compensation strategies		Metacognitive strategies		Affective strategies		Social strategies	
	Mean1	SD1	Mean2	SD2	Mean3	SD3	Mean4	SD4	Mean5	SD5	Mean6	SD6
Pretest	3.04	.413	3.08	.429	3.24	.665	3.24	.553	2.86	.532	3.24	.505
Posttest	3.22	.474	3.40	.406	3.63	.429	3.38	.509	2.99	.448	3.42	.427
<i>p</i>	.221		.122		.459		.602		.573		.432	

In this research, the “Compensation Strategies” were the most commonly used by students (Table 7). Six (66.7%) participants reported using the following four strategies most frequently: guessing the meaning of an unknown word, using alternative words, making up words, guessing what the other person was going to say next, and also using gestures or actions to convey the meaning.

“Memory Strategies” and “Social Strategies” were also commonly used by the participants. According to the quantitative analysis of the SILL questionnaire in this research, the memory strategies identified as being used frequently were the following items:

10. I say or write new English words several times.
 15. I watch English-language TV shows spoken in English or go to movies spoken in English.
 19. I look for words in my language similar to new words in English.
 20. I try to find patterns in English.
- Highly-used social strategies employed by the participants were as follows.
45. If there is something I don't understand in an English conversation, I will ask the other party to speak slowly or repeat it.
 50. I try to learn about the cultures of English-speaking countries.

Among the six categories of learning strategies, the participants least frequently used “Affective Strategies,” as indicated by scores lower than three on both the pretest and posttest. This suggests that the students did not have effective ways of dealing with their fear of using English, did not try to relax, were not good at self-encouragement, did not frequently reward themselves for progress, did not often monitor their emotional stress, and did not regularly document their feelings about learning English in a diary or share their learning experience with others.

According to Oxford's strategy use frequency levels scale, a score of 3.5 or above on a 50-question test is considered high, a score between 3.5 and 2.5 is considered medium, and a score of 2.5 or below is considered low.

Table 7

The frequency statistics of the six categories of students using the 50-item SILL strategies

	Part A (9) Cognitive strategies	Part B (14) Memory strategies	Part C (6) Compensation strategies	Part D (9) Metacognitive strategies	Part E (6) Affective strategies	Part F (6) Social strategies
High frequency (N=16)	2	4	4	3	1	2
Medium frequency (N=32)	6	10	2	6	4	4
Low frequency (N=2)	1	0	0	0	1	0

Previous literature suggests that individuals with lower language proficiency tend to use “memory strategies” more frequently. Pi's (2008) study identified 23 high-frequency strategies used by her students. However, in this research, the participants used only 16 high-frequency strategies (Appendix 1). This suggests that the students in the technological university in this study employed fewer language learning strategies than those in previous studies.

4.4 Analysis of Students' Reflections Concerning Their Efforts to Improve Their English Ability

4.4.1 Qualitative Analysis

To answer the fourth research question on the students' reflections on their efforts to improve their English ability, the researcher emphasizes noting that the primary objective of the FL theater course was to motivate the students and increase their interest in learning English, as well as to improve their speaking skills. Throughout the course, students were given opportunities to reflect on and improve their use of learning strategies through performing. This provided insights into the student's progress and changes through their voices and observations of the process. They reported that their self-regulation led to increased practice time. They also mentioned recording and tracking how long and often they rehearsed at home.

Many students expressed that speaking English was difficult and desired to improve their speaking skills. However, they acknowledged that they did not review

effectively and, as a result, could not speak their lines fluently during rehearsals. This is where the Self-Regulated Learning theory came into play, as the team leader and other responsible classmates would call for team members to gather and practice until they could recite the lines fluently. This led to practices at least three times a week on campus, and they understood that if anyone was absent, it would be hard to progress. The group also set rules like fining for absence, which would be used to purchase materials for making props.

The teacher helped the students make gradual and incremental pronunciation and sentence structure corrections. They also worked on practicing the tone, emotion, and speed of their oral expressions, which were done by incorporating actions, facial expressions, gestures, and movements that were in sync with the play's content.

Although the results of the mock speaking test did not show a significant improvement, the students had a deeper understanding of the importance of memorizing English words and sentences, and they made efforts to internalize these words and sentences, which led to them being able to recite their lines fluently. This was an outcome of self-regulation and adjustments they made throughout the process. This qualitative analysis provided an understanding of their goals and efforts throughout the process of self-regulation.

“I have some ideas for the script and some ideas about music, and I can practice my speaking ability, but I'm not very interested in acting.” (A2-1)

“I feel my English speaking ability has improved, and I can chat with my foreign teacher in class. I can practice pronunciation in FL theater class. Reciting lines can let me speak English smoothly.” (A2-2)

“After taking the English theater course for almost a month, I feel that I have improved and that I spent more time reading. I kept practicing English speaking.” (B1-2)

“There are many lines in the play, which are very long. I'm very nervous and can forget words, so I skim them when I recite the scripts.” (B2-2)

“My goal for this course is to be able to recite the lines quickly, and I can deal with the pronunciation ASAP. I hope to learn how to perform feelings and express the right tone for my performance.” (B3-1)

"Before I say a sentence, I try to check the meaning of new words and pronounce them first. I learn the meaning of the whole line first so that I can recite it better." (B3-2)

"Communicating in English is by far the most difficult part I have encountered, but I will not amend my goals because of this. It is difficult for me to recite lines and reinforce my tone and expression." (B5-2)

"After rehearsing on stage, I felt that I had improved, and I knew there were many words that I didn't know. In terms of speaking, I practiced the script lines by imitating the pronunciation of my sister." (B5-3)

"For the current FL theater course, I wish I could be courageous enough to express myself more and dare speak English. Yes, I'm highly motivated. I hope to increase my chances of speaking English through this course. Compared to other subjects, I have more interest in this course." (A7-1)

"I didn't dare to speak English, but later I found that if I let myself speak English, my learning efficiency would improve. Now, I practice speaking with my sister at home because she has studied abroad before." (A7-3)

"From the beginning to the present, I now review a lot more times than before. I keep reviewing the script even after class. I go back to it once a day and will correct it immediately if there is a problem." (A4-3)

"I'm often beaten by two words when reciting lines, extravagantly and scrutinize because I'm used to pronouncing them my way. I will constantly remind myself not to mispronounce them and try to meet the teacher's requirements." (A4-4)

"I am interested in English and the theater class, but I don't have enough confidence. I don't have any difficulties doing the task. I'm just shy." (B8-1)

"Having the training from the FL theater course, I'm more confident to speak in English, and that's a breakthrough for me. When I was performing on stage, I saw a foreign judge. I became afraid of speaking. However, the FL Theatre class is beneficial to my English." (B8-4)

4.4.2 Quantitative Analysis

1. Correlation and Statistical Analysis of the Oral Speaking Pretest and Posttest

The correlation between the pre-and posttest scores of the mock speaking test, as given by two teachers, was found to be 0.989 and 0.988, respectively (Table 8). The data suggests that the two teachers have a similar perspective on the students' pronunciation skills.

Table 8*Correlation of two-teacher graded scores*

	Student No.	r
Pretest	11	0.989
Posttest	11	0.988

Twelve cases in the student-speaking mock test were collected in this research, with one case being invalid because the student stopped responding before the time was up. The grading teacher listened to it twice and determined that the student suddenly stopped without finishing, so this case was excluded from the grading, leaving eleven cases. The student's oral pretest and posttest scores were analyzed using nonparametric statistics (see Table 9). The z value of the Wilcoxon signed-rank test for two related samples was -2.135, indicating an asymptotic significance of 0.033.

Table 9*Comparison of students' pre- and posttest scores*

	Numbers	Median	Range	Wilcoxon signed-rank test
Pretest	11	157	85.5-166	-2.135*
Posttest	11	161	82.5-167.5	

2. Mispronounced Word Analysis of the Speaking Test

Based on the GEPT Intermediate Level Speaking Mock Test text, the researcher analyzed all the words and found a total of 64 mispronounced words. The following are the 21 most commonly mispronounced English words (Table 10).

Table 10*Mispronounced words in the oral pretest*

Vocabulary	Mispronounced student population	Vocabulary	Mispronounced student population	Vocabulary	Mispronounced student population
the	11	series	6	audience	4
classmates	10	average	5	professional	4
needs	10	environmental	5	protection	4
helps	9	it's	5	1997	3
generated	8	laughter	5	24,000	3
actors	7	speeches	5	administration	3
8.9	6	tons	5	disposal	3

Explanation: (1) The pronunciation of the / ð/ sound was a common problem for all students, and both grading teachers corrected their mistakes. Words like ‘their,’ ‘them,’ and ‘they’ were also frequently mispronounced. (2) Another common issue was with the plural form of nouns; students often omitted to add -s or -es. Similarly, the regular past tense verb -ed was also frequently omitted. (3) Numbers such as 8.9 should be pronounced as “eight dot nine” or “eight points nine” instead of “eight Dien (Chinese pronunciation) nine.” Similarly, students did not say “1997” in English; they used Chinese instead. “24,000” was also an unfamiliar number, and they were unable to say “twenty-four thousand.” (4) There were also many unfamiliar words that students could not pronounce, with many errors in vowels or syllables leading to incorrect intonation when reciting sentences.

At the end of the semester, the posttest of the GEPT Intermediate Level Speaking Mock Test was conducted. The mistakes made by students were also recorded, a total of 63 words. The most common errors were as follows (Table 11):

Table 11

Mispronounced words in the oral posttest

Vocabulary	Mispronounced student population	Vocabulary	Mispronounced student population	Vocabulary	Mispronounced student population
the	11	actors	5	speeches	4
disposal	7	generated	5	24,000	3
helps	7	it's	5	administration	3
audience	6	protection	5	classmates	3
average	6	tons	5	environmental	3
needs	6	laughter	4	ever	3
8.9	5	series	4	outstanding	3

Note: There were still many other words not listed above. (1) Pronunciation of “the” was still problematic for some students. (2) -s, -es at the end of verbs or nouns such as “helps,” “needs,” “actors,” “speeches,” etc., were still being ignored, but the number of students who mispronounced “classmates” was reduced from 10 to three. (3) There was not much progress in the pronunciation of numbers. (4) Some students had a weak vocabulary and were not familiar with many common words, such as “series” and “serious,” which were often confused. Words such as “complain,” “fact,” “important,” “joke,” “nearly,” “percent,” “profession,” and “victory” were not difficult,

but some students struggled with them. So more than half of the students (6-7 people) mispronounced more complex words such as “disposal,” “audience,” and “average.”

5. Conclusion

5.1 The Conclusion

This research explores the effectiveness of implementing a theater course in English as a foreign language (EFL) education, which deviates from traditional passive learning methods. The study found that students could improve their speaking skills, logical thinking, problem-solving, and innovation ability through group teaching, actual rehearsals, and metacognition training. Additionally, using theater performance as a teaching method was beneficial in motivating students to improve their pronunciation, intonation, and other speaking skills, helping students adjust their learning strategies, encouraging creative thinking, and developing new teaching assessment methods. However, it suggested that teachers closely observe students' performance and provide guidance regarding reciting lines, pronunciation, and intonation. The study also recommends that teachers consider incorporating the FL theater course elements in their English language teaching to promote student engagement and improve language learning outcomes. To sum up, the following conclusions are drawn:

(1) Students' oral English proficiency improved through the performance and rehearsal process.

Theater performances require students to understand the language and use it actively. Gone through the regulation during the rehearsal and performance process, students not only input new vocabulary and grammar but also have opportunities to output and practice using them. This helps students to internalize the language and make it their own. Therefore, it is recommended that teachers not only focus on inputting language knowledge but also provide students with more opportunities to practice using it. This can be done through pair work, group work, and class presentations.

(2) Students become more self-aware of their learning.

Throughout the course, students developed learning strategies and applied them. Besides, students reflected more on their use of learning strategies, their progress, and areas that needed improvement. This helps them become more self-aware and take more ownership of their learning. Therefore, it is recommended that teachers should provide regular opportunities for students to reflect on their learning, such as through journals, self-evaluations, or group discussions.

(3) Technology tools help support and enhance language learning.

In this research, the researcher utilized the line application and Google Drive to share information and resources with students, facilitating communication and collaboration outside class. This helped students to stay organized and develop learning strategies on top of coursework and homework. Therefore, it is recommended that teachers consider utilizing technology tools to support and enhance language learning, such as through language learning apps, online discussion forums, or virtual classrooms.

(4) The course design, which emphasizes group work and problem-solving, effectively promotes students' self-regulation, cooperation, and interaction.

The theater performance aspect of the course allowed students to work together creatively and collaborate on their performances. This not only improved their language skills but also helped them to develop teamwork and problem-solving skills. Therefore, it is recommended that teachers create opportunities for students to work together in creative and collaborative ways, such as through group projects, debates, or role-playing activities.

(5) The course received positive feedback from students, indicating that it is a valuable and effective way to learn English.

The use of theater performances in the course allowed students to feel more relaxed and comfortable in the classroom, which helped to create a positive and supportive learning environment. Therefore, it is recommended that teachers create a positive and supportive learning environment through positive reinforcement, providing opportunities for positive feedback and building a sense of community in the classroom.

(6) Confidence gained when they were fluent in uttering lines, allowing students to showcase themselves and improve their learning.

The theater performance course required students to focus on pronunciation and intonation, and the researcher guided the students on this. Some students carefully studied pronunciation and intonation and practiced until they were very familiar and fluent, and they made more progress when they could memorize lines. The more accurate in pronunciation, the more confident students became.

5.2 The Suggestions for Future Improvement

According to Nilson (2013), the behavior of learning involves self-discipline, effort, time management, and seeking assistance from teachers or peers; the environment of learning includes the use of technology, task management, and other sensory conditions such as location, temperature, background sounds, and body posture. Beginners or low-achievers may not be aware of the need to set learning goals or may not break down tasks into manageable parts during the learning process, leading to frustration and a lack of motivation to continue.

Therefore, by applying the approaches described in this research, the FL theater course has demonstrated an effective learning process that helps to activate students' learning and guide them to improve continuously. The suggestions for future improvement are:

- (1) Teachers should enable students to discover and solve problems through rehearsals or practices.
- (2) Teachers can provide more varied learning resources to students and encourage them to explore and use them actively.
- (3) Increase the use of technology to enhance the effectiveness of classroom instruction and communication between students and teachers.
- (4) Teachers should provide more opportunities for students to reflect on their learning and guide them to set clear and achievable learning goals.
- (5) Provide more opportunities for cooperative learning, such as group work and peer feedback, to enhance student social interaction and support.
- (6) Teachers should emphasize the importance of self-regulation and encourage students to take responsibility for their learning by setting goals, monitoring progress, and adjusting their study habits.
- (7) Teachers should provide regular feedback and guidance on pronunciation, intonation, and other speaking skills to help students improve their proficiency.

(8) Teachers should consider incorporating authentic materials, such as real-life conversations and native speaker videos, exposing students to real-life language usage and improving their listening and comprehension skills.

(9) Teachers should encourage students to take on leadership roles in class and provide opportunities to lead activities, discussions, and presentations to improve their confidence and speaking skills.

(10) Teachers should foster a positive and supportive learning environment that promotes risk-taking, experimentation, and the willingness to make mistakes as a natural part of the learning process.

5.3 The Limitations of the Study

However, the research results were limited because students self-reported their feelings and evaluated their performance. This was an issue during the interviews and while the students answered the questionnaires. The five-point Likert scales were subjective in the sense that the student's feelings were what they were taking into consideration. This is a common problem in social science research. Even though the analysis was subjective, the researcher was interested in the students' feelings.

Another limitation is that the pretest and posttest only measured their speaking abilities. However, we would also expect improved writing abilities because the students had been asked to collaborate on writing their scripts. In retrospect, the students could have been tested regarding their writing abilities to measure whether they improved in this respect or not.

A third limitation of the research is that, while fifty-four students took the English language theater course, the researcher only had direct contact with fourteen of them. Hence, the researcher needed to be careful not to over-generalize the experiences that the students had while taking the course. As a result, the actual sample size was tiny.

Additionally, it should be noted that the results of this study may not be directly generalizable to other populations as the sample group was a specific group of students in a technology university who were already motivated to improve their English speaking abilities. The research findings may not be the same for students in different educational levels or settings or those with a different level of motivation to improve their English speaking abilities. The researcher will conduct further research with more extensive and diverse sample groups to draw more general conclusions.

In summary, the research suggests that the use of a theater performance course as a method for teaching English as a foreign language can be an effective way to improve students' speaking skills, self-confidence, motivation, and creativity. The course provided a platform for students to practice their pronunciation and intonation and their ability to work in a team and think creatively. Future research could focus on larger sample sizes and more objective measures of student performance. Additionally, incorporating assessments of writing and speaking abilities could provide a more complete picture of student progress.

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EFL 劇場課程學生英語學習反思：以自我調節學習 支持語言學習策略的應用

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摘要

本研究探究英語學習困難、調節學習的變化、語言學習策略及努力提昇英語的反思。主要以質性研究法分析 14 名科技大學學生在劇場課程的調節學習四階段四次訪談的質性數據和全民英檢測驗（GEPT）口語模擬測驗和語言學習策略問卷（SILL）量化數據的分析。學生最初面臨動機、學習策略、劇本創作和表演的挑戰，加強自律後，變得更有能力和責任感。學生努力提昇記憶力、語言技能和學習動機，經常使用補償、社交和記憶策略，因成就感受激勵，投入更多時間精力完成任務。統計分析 GEPT 口語朗誦前後測分數具有 0.033 的漸近顯著性；而 SILL 問卷六類量化分析 p 值沒有顯著差異。本研究限制為樣本數小和學生自我評估具主觀性，要求學生合作編寫劇本卻未預先施測寫作評量。研究人員應謹慎推斷這些經驗。

關鍵詞：自我調節學習、語言學習策略、口說英語能力、劇場課程

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