



Exploring Students' Attitudes Toward English Reading Instruction Through Drama Activities

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Abstract: Learners' attitudes toward learning have been empirically proven to influence their academic achievement. Students with a positive attitude toward learning tend to achieve greater success than those with a negative attitude. Therefore, students' attitudes should be taken into consideration when selecting instructional approaches. This study was conducted to investigate students' attitudes toward English reading instruction through drama activities, with 133 participating students forming an intact group. A self-evaluation checklist was employed to collect data from the students. Descriptive statistics (percentages) were used to analyze the quantitative data, while content analysis was applied to examine the qualitative data. The findings revealed that the majority of students held favorable attitudes toward learning reading through drama activities, although some negative feedback gradually emerged when the tasks became more demanding. These results suggest that drama activities can serve as an effective instructional method; however, their design should be carefully tailored to meet students' learning needs.

Keywords: reading, attitude, drama activities, Readers Theatre, role play, dramatization

Received: May 16, 2025 Revised: August 12, 2025 Accepted: November 7, 2025

Introduction

English continues to play a significant role in today's interconnected world. For this reason, most, if not all, education programs in Thailand require students to demonstrate proficiency in English as one of the key learning outcomes. For English programs, this goal is a major focus, with the assumption that students will achieve a higher level of proficiency compared to those in other programs. However, there is often a discrepancy between such assumption and reality in the researcher's teaching context, where English major students struggle with low English proficiency, particularly first-year English majors. In 2023, English majors scored very poorly on the English exit exam provided by the university, with an average score of 40.28 out of 100. The results reflected weak performance across all English language skills. This troubling fact raises the question of what we, as English lecturers, can do to improve the situation.

Upon considering the four core English language skills, fostering students' reading proficiency presents a particularly practical and strategic point of departure, as reading serves as a primary conduit for language input essential to the development of listening, writing, and speaking skills.

According to Brown (2004), reading is the most crucial skill determining success in all educational settings. With a similar view, Lawal (2021) remarked that English reading is an essential core of all academic achievement. Additionally, Grabe and Yamashita (2022) emphasize the influential role of reading in individual success, asserting that without becoming a skilled reader, achieving success is exceedingly difficult. Despite the promising role of reading, numerous studies have shown that English reading instruction in the Thai context has not yet been satisfying successful as many Thai students are struggling with their reading ability. According to Lekwilai (2014), Thai students at all educational levels including university have poor English reading skills. Adunyarittigun (2021) added that Thai students' reading performance is lower than the expected level. This appears to be another serious cause for concern in academic settings, where reading is regarded as a fundamental skill in promoting learning, particularly within the context of foreign language education. Without sufficient reading input, successful language learning is difficult to achieve. Accordingly, focusing on students' reading skills in English may be a concrete and effective option. However, this option presents another challenge, as promoting reading can be demanding for both lecturers and learners. This is because reading is a complicated skill to master as it involves not only linguistic knowledge, but also psychological factors which in some can lead to reduced reading competence. In addition, during the process of reading, learners may experience various negative emotions, such as confusion, frustration, and boredom (Graesser & D'Mello, 2012), which can hinder improvement. Traditional instruction, which primarily focuses on developing reading skills while neglecting psychological factors, may not effectively address these reading hindrances.

Given these challenges, it becomes of paramount importance to consider not only instructional methods but also learners' internal dispositions—particularly students' attitudes toward their reading experiences. Attitude is defined as an individual's tendency to evaluate or respond to objects, people, or issues in either a favorable or unfavorable manner (Fazio & Petty, 2008; Oskamp & Schultz, 2005). In the context of reading instruction, this concept can be understood as students' behavioral and emotional responses to their reading experiences which can be in productive or unproductive ways. These attitudes are significant because they influence learners' motivation, defined as individuals' desire to achieve the goal by investing the effort (Gardner, 1985). Such desire shapes their learning behaviors and subsequently affect their learning achievement. As Gass and Selinker (2008) highlight, motivation is widely regarded as a crucial predictor of success in language learning. They are shaped by attitudinal factors (Gardner, 1985). Based on this, it can be concluded that students' learning behaviors are driven by their learning motivation which is influenced by attitudes. According to Brown (2000), students benefit more from language learning when they hold positive attitudes, while negative attitudes can lead to demotivation. Supporting this view, Alizadeh (2016) proposed that fostering positive attitudes can enhance motivation, which is considered a key factor in determining learners' success or failure, especially in challenging tasks. Cho et al. (2021) also found that motivation has a direct positive effect on reading development, whereas a lack of motivation may hinder progress. Based on these empirical supports, fostering learners' positive attitudes should be a central component of reading instruction. However, this leads to a critical pedagogical consideration—identifying instructional approaches that can effectively promote students' positive attitudes toward English reading instruction.

To address this, drama activities can be considered a practical and engaging instructional method for promoting positive attitudes toward reading. Prior research, such as Janudom (2014, 2021), has demonstrated that drama-based approaches effectively foster students' positive attitudes toward learning vocabulary and grammar. This is attributed to drama's capacity to promote physical and emotional engagement, provide pleasurable learning experiences, and build learner confidence. Given these findings, it is reasonable to suggest that similar benefits may extend to

reading instruction. That is, through active participation, emotional engagement, and contextualized language use, drama activities have the potential to create a more enjoyable and meaningful learning experience, which can, in turn, enhance students' favorable attitudes toward reading. Once these positive attitudes are established and students begin to enjoy reading through drama activities, they are more likely to engage in reading outside the classroom.

In fact, drama activities have been widely recognized for their positive impact on learners' reading performance. Their contribution to language learning achievement, particularly in reading, has been extensively supported by researchers in the EFL field. For instance, Lawal (2021) posited that drama techniques have a significant effect on reading comprehension. Similarly, Saekee and Kongpao (2022) confirmed the benefits of drama activities in enhancing reading skills, reporting positive outcomes from the implementation of Readers Theater.

While much attention has been given to improving reading skills through strategy-based instruction, fewer studies in the Thai context have explored how learners' attitudes toward reading can be shaped through instructional interventions. Understanding these attitudes is essential for designing methods that not only teach reading but also sustain students' reading motivation. Accordingly, this study was conducted to explore students' attitudes toward their experiences with English reading learning experience through drama activities.

Literature Review

Reading, both in a learner's first language (L1) and in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) or English as a Second Language (ESL), plays a critical role in academic success. In the context of language learning, reading is regarded as the most essential skill for fostering language development. According to Wisaijorn (2017), EFL learners primarily acquire language knowledge through reading, as their exposure to the foreign language is largely mediated through it. Krashen (2004), a prominent researcher in the field of reading literacy, asserts that reading, especially free voluntary one, greatly influences learners' language development, enhancing skills in writing, vocabulary, and grammar. Likewise, Brown (2004) emphasizes that reading is the most important skill for success in educational settings. Despite its importance, developing effective reading skills is often challenging and finding ways to improve learners' reading performance remains a complex issue as it involves many factors.

The practical option to support learners' reading capacity may possibly initiate with promoting students' reading motivation as their learning behaviors are largely determined by their level of motivation. Cho et al. (2021) confirmed the positive contribution of reading motivation to reading comprehension. Similarly, Alderson and Bachman (2005) observed that the quality of learners' reading outcomes is influenced by their motivation. This raises a critical question of how learners' motivation can be effectively promoted to enhance their reading engagement. According to Kudo (as cited in Thuan, 2021, p. 67), learners' motivation is influenced significantly by the attitudes in the language learning context, suggesting that motivation can be strengthened by fostering positive attitudes toward learning.

Attitude has been broadly defined in the literature as an individual's predisposition to evaluate or respond to particular stimuli in a favorable or unfavorable manner. According to Fazio and Petty (2008) and Oskamp and Schultz (2005), attitude reflects a person's tendency to assess or react to objects, people, or issues either positively or negatively. Similarly, Logan and Hodges (2012) describe attitude as encompassing an individual's feelings, beliefs, and behavioral responses

toward a specific situation, object, or person. Ahmed (2015) further defines attitude as a combination of evaluative feelings—positive, negative, or neutral. Drawing from these definitions, attitude can be understood as an individual's perception of an entity that influences how they evaluate and respond to it, whether positively, negatively, or neutrally.

Among various instructional approaches, drama activities show predominant potential in cultivating students' positive attitudes, which in turn can enhance their reading motivation. Specifically, drama activities promote learners' active involvement by encouraging emotional and physical engagement as they work toward the goal of demonstrating their understanding of a reading text through performance. This clear, purposeful engagement can effectively stimulate learners' motivation. The motivational benefits of such activities are evident in Readers Theater, a form of drama, which has been shown to foster both motivation and active participation (Hautala et al., 2024).

In terms of language learning, numerous research studies, both past and present, have demonstrated the positive effects of drama activities on learners' language acquisition for a variety of reasons. Decades ago, Stern (1980) argued that drama activities enhance motivation and self-esteem—two factors widely regarded as critical to learning success. With such benefits, drama activities are assumed to contribute significantly to learning performance. More recently, Maley and Duff (2005) suggested that by incorporating both verbal and non-verbal forms of communication, drama activities engage learners physically and mentally, thereby promoting more effective learning. They also noted that drama offers language learning in context, making the classroom more enjoyable while fostering self-esteem and confidence.

Contemporary studies further highlight the growing importance of drama in language education. For example, Nguyen (2023) found that drama-based activities had a positive impact on learners' speaking performance, and learners expressed favorable perceptions of these activities in their speaking classes. In the context of reading, Anderson (2016) posited that drama allows students to engage with literary themes, characters, and narratives in a dynamic manner, making reading more interactive and enjoyable. Similarly, Lawal (2021) found a positive effect of drama techniques on students' reading comprehension achievement.

Collectively, this body of empirical evidence affirms the value of drama activities in language learning including English reading skills, thereby supporting their application as an alternative instructional intervention.

Drama activities, as the name suggests, involve various forms such as games, role play, pantomime, and dramatization. Each type of activity serves different learning purposes (Janudom, 2009). The present study primarily employed three types of drama activities including Readers Theater, role play, and dramatization with the aim of enhancing students' reading ability while also fostering a positive attitude toward reading.

Readers Theater involves a performance where students convey meaning as characters through vocal expression while reading scripted stories, with minimal physical movement on stage. It was found to be an effective instructional method which benefited students' reading proficiency and establishing positive attitudes towards reading (Mastrothanasis et al., 2023). As for role play, it is another teaching activity widely applied in language classrooms. It refers to activities which allow students to take on other people's roles based on their interpretation and understanding of the situation and characters' feelings, thought, and action in order to assume the assigned roles

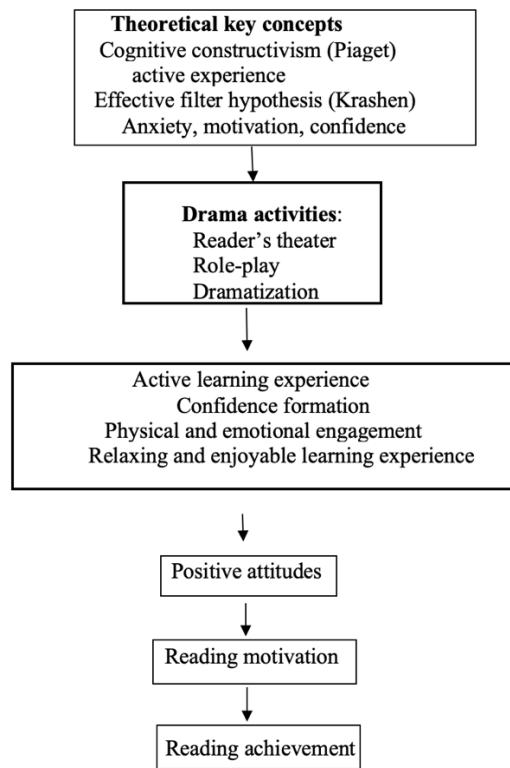
properly (Godwin & Perkins, 2002). Dramatization pertains to acting out the story (Collins & Cooper, 1997). Through this activity, students are required to read a story which includes beginning, middle, climax, and the end of the story to understand the plot, theme, and characters' situations and effectively present their interpretation through the performance. Through these three drama activities, which involved students' active engagement and provided an enjoyable and stimulating learning experience, it is assumed that students' positive attitudes toward reading can be nurtured, thereby contributing to the improvement of their reading skills.

The application of the drama activities in language learning is underpinned by Piaget's theory of cognitive constructivism (Wadsworth, 1996). Piaget identified four key factors in cognitive development, one of which is active engagement with learning tasks. According to his theory, it is through such active engagement that the processes of assimilation and accommodation occur, leading to cognitive growth and the construction of knowledge. This theoretical framework supports the integration of drama activities into English reading instruction, as these activities offer learners meaningful opportunities for active participation, thereby fostering deeper comprehension and knowledge construction.

In addition to cognitive benefits, the affective dimension of learning is also addressed through the Affective Filter Hypothesis proposed by Krashen (1982). This hypothesis posits that emotional factors such as anxiety, motivation, and self-confidence influence the extent to which language input is effectively acquired. Drama activities have been widely recognized for their potential to reduce anxiety, promote relaxation, and build learner confidence, all of which contribute to lowering the affective filter. As a result, learners are more receptive to input, which facilitates more effective language acquisition and improved reading outcomes.

Despite the recognized importance of reading for language development and academic success, many Thai university students, particularly English majors continue to struggle with poor reading performance. Traditional instructional approaches have not much effectively addressed learners' negative or passive attitudes toward reading, which may hinder motivation and long-term engagement. Therefore, it is essential to explore alternative instructional methods that can positively influence learners' attitudes toward reading. Although numerous studies have demonstrated the positive impact of drama activities on students' attitudes, varying contexts and variables may lead to different outcomes. Therefore, this study aims to further investigate these effects within the researcher's specific setting. The findings may also provide valuable insights for language educators and researchers working in similar settings to better support their students. To clearly explain the link of each variable in this study, the conceptual framework of the study is presented below.

Figure 1
Conceptual Framework of the Study



As illustrated in Figure 1, this study's conceptual framework is grounded in two influential theories: Piaget's Cognitive Constructivism (Wadsworth, 1996) and the Affective Filter Hypothesis (Krashen, 1982). The key concepts of these theories collectively support the use of drama activities in language learning in a way that drama promotes active, experiential learning, which facilitates cognitive development through processes such as assimilation and accommodation. Meanwhile, Krashen's affective filter hypothesis highlights the importance of emotional factors—such as confidence, motivation, and anxiety reduction—in promoting effective language acquisition. Drama activities are recognized for fostering active engagement, confidence-building, and creating a pleasurable learning environment. These attributes help cultivate learners' positive attitudes, which in turn enhance reading motivation and ultimately contribute to improved reading performance.

Research Objective

The objective of this study was to investigate students' attitudes towards English reading instruction through drama activities

Limitations of the Study

The reading texts used in this study were literature in nature. Hence, the findings may not be applicable to other forms of reading material.

Research Methodology

Participants

The study was conducted with an intact group of 133 first-year undergraduate students majoring in English and enrolled in a course titled Reading for Pleasure during the first semester of the 2024 academic year. The students were assigned to three separate sections based on the university's registration system, with each section attending class at different times throughout the week. They were informed that the investigation was not a part of the course assessment, so their personal information was not required and the responses would be used for educational reasons only. Their oral consent was also requested before conducting the study.

Research Instruments

The research instruments included lesson plans and a student self-evaluation checklist. The quality of the instruments was validated by three experts in the field to ensure content validity, with the Index of Item-Objective Congruence (IOC) of 0.92.

The 12-week, two-hour lesson plan incorporated three types of drama activities, Readers Theater, role-play, and dramatization, through which students engaged in preparation, practice, and performance. Readers Theater was introduced during the first three weeks to familiarize students with this drama-based approach which was new to most of them as a method for learning English. In this stage, students practiced the reading and demonstrated their understanding through vocal expression. Subsequently, students continued developing their reading skills through role-play activities, where they were required to act out assigned roles based on a play of their choice. Finally, dramatization was introduced to further challenge students' reading comprehension and interpretation. In this final activity, students collaboratively read a short story and adapt it into a play, which they then dramatize to demonstrate their understanding of the text.

Table 1
Summary of 12-Week Two-Hour Lesson Plan

Week	Drama activity	Learning purposes	Learning processes
1-3	Readers Theater	To familiarize students with drama activities while enhancing their reading skills by having them read a short play excerpt and express their understanding through vocal expression.	Preparation: Reading and understanding the short play excerpt, and familiarizing themselves with the character. Practice: Expressing understanding through vocal expression. Performance: Presenting the play to the class
4-7	Role-play	To enhance students' reading comprehension and analytical thinking by encouraging them to read a play script and portray an assigned role based on their understanding and interpretation of the text and the character's perceived personality.	Preparation: Reading and discussing the theme, plot, and characters of the story using guided questions as prompts Practice: Collaboratively assigning roles within the group and rehearsing based on their understanding of

Week	Drama activity	Learning purposes	Learning processes
8-12	Dramatization	To deepen students' reading comprehension by supporting them in dramatizing a short story, allowing them to demonstrate their understanding and interpretation of the plot, theme and characters.	<p>story, the characters and storyline.</p> <p>Performance: Acting out their assigned roles in front of the class with props and costumes.</p> <p>Preparation: Reading and discussing the story's theme, plot, and characters using guided questions as prompts, followed by creating a storyboard to reflect their understanding of the plot before adapting the story into a play.</p> <p>Practice: Rehearsing the play and receiving feedback from the lecturer to improve performance.</p> <p>Performance: Performing on stage in front of an audience.</p>

The summary of the 12-week, two-hour lesson plan outlines the rationale and implementation of each type of drama activity. The activities were deliberately sequenced to progress from simpler to more complex tasks. Instruction began with Readers Theater, which involved short, scripted dialogues, small-group collaboration, and did not require memorization. Their understanding of the reading text was expressed only through their voice. This was followed by more demanding activities, role-plays in which students read a longer play thoughtfully and analytically to understand the plot, theme, and characters, and then portrayed the story through a full-scale performance that required both physical and emotional expression of their understanding. Finally, a dramatization activity, the most challenging one, was introduced. In this final activity, students worked collaboratively in larger groups and read a longer story analytically multiple times to deepen their understanding to adapt the full short story into a play. Then, they were required to rehearse their roles and portray the entire story without using a script.

A self-evaluation checklist, designed based on an attitude framework, was employed to elicit students' attitudes toward the reading experience through drama activities. It comprised two sections: the first asked students to indicate their agreement or disagreement with statements addressing the effectiveness of learning reading through drama activities, their motivation, and their satisfaction with this learning approach. The second section invited responses to three open-ended questions corresponding to the themes in the first section.

Data Collection

Drama activities were implemented in a reading class for 12 weeks according to the lesson plans displayed in Table 1. During the implementation of the activities, students completed self-evaluation checklists three times to assess the perception of their reading learning experience through such activities. The first checklist was completed after using the Readers Theater method, the second after participating in role-play activities, and the third after taking part in dramatization.

Data Analysis

The quantitative data from the students' self-evaluation checklists were analyzed using descriptive statistics, including percentage and mean. For the qualitative data derived from the second part of the checklist, content analysis was employed to examine the students' responses. Prior to conducting the content analysis, the responses were categorized according to the concept of attitude as positive, negative, or neutral responses or evaluation. To minimize researcher bias, the categorized data were reviewed by another lecturer for verification.

Findings

The present study aimed to explore students' attitudes toward learning reading through drama activities. Table 2 presents the results reflecting students' perceptions of their reading learning experience through these activities.

Table 2
Students' Attitudes towards Their Reading Learning Experience through Drama Activities

Items	1 st time Yes (%)	1 st time No (%)	2 nd time Yes (%)	2 nd time No (%)	3 rd time Yes (%)	3 rd time No (%)
1. Effectiveness of learning reading through drama activities						
1.1 After learning reading through drama activities, I understand the reading and the meaning the writer aims to convey better.	99	1	93	7	92	8
1.2 After learning reading through drama activities I feel my English reading skills improved.	95	5	93	7	89	11
1.3 I can express my opinions and discuss what I read with my peers and the teacher.	89	11	80	20	83	17
1.4 Learning reading through drama activities helps me improve my critical thinking.	88	12	86	14	84	16
1.5 When I have to perform the story I have read, I understand the story much better than when reading only.	94	6	91	9	79	21
Mean	93	7	89	11	85	15
Mean agreement (89%)						
Mean disagreement (11%)						
2. Students' motivation in learning reading						
2.1 I pay more attention to my reading when learning through drama activities.	85	15	77	23	86	14
2.2 I want to understand what I read clearly so that I can do drama activities better.	96	4	98	2	97	3
2.3 I enjoy learning reading through drama activities because I can work with my classmates.	82	18	77	23	67	33
2.4 After learning reading through drama activities, I would like to read more because it makes me feel reading is fun.	71	29	61	39	57	43
2.5 I would like to learn reading through drama activities again in future reading classes.	56	44	68	32	53	47
2.6 Learning reading through drama activities	82	18	77	23	69	31

Items	1 st time Yes (%)	1 st time No (%)	2 nd time Yes (%)	2 nd time No (%)	3 rd time Yes (%)	3 rd time No (%)
increases my enjoyment of my reading class.						
Mean	79	21	76	24	72	28
Mean agreement (75.6 %)						
Mean disagreement (24.4%)						
3. Students' satisfaction in learning reading through drama activities						
3.1 I like learning reading through drama activities.	72	28	70	30	54	46
3.2 Learning reading through drama activities is fun.	89	11	85	15	76	24
3.3 Learning reading through drama activities is a new, exciting learning experience for me.	86	14	86	14	86	14
3.4 Learning reading through drama activities makes me feel more confident in learning.	65	35	66	34	57	43
3.5 I am satisfied with my learning experience through drama activities because they help me improve my reading.	90	10	85	15	77	23
3.6 Learning reading through drama activities helps me become an active learner.	89	11	88	12	87	13
3.7 I am satisfied with my learning experience through drama activities.	74	26	70	30	66	34
3.8 Learning reading through drama activities increases my enjoyment of what I am reading.	85	15	78	22	68	32
Mean	81.35	18.65	79.64	20.36	71.50	28.50
Mean agreement (77.49%)						
Mean disagreement (22.51%)						

The data obtained from students' self-evaluation checklists, as shown in Table 2, reflected students' positive attitudes towards their reading learning experience through drama activities across all three key areas: the effectiveness of learning reading through drama activities, students' motivation to learn reading, and students' satisfaction with learning reading through drama activities. Based on the average calculation across the three time of investigation of favorable responses to statements regarding the effectiveness of learning to read through drama activities, it was found that 89 percent of students expressed positive responses to the effectiveness of drama activities in promoting their reading skills which was the highest compared to the other two areas. Specifically, over 90 percent of students, across the three sessions in the investigation, confirmed that after engaging in drama activities, they better understood the reading material and the meaning the writer aimed to convey. Regarding reading motivation, 75.6 percent agreed that learning reading through drama activities boosted their motivation. Upon closer inspection, the findings manifested that over 90 percent of students reported feeling motivated to understand what they read more clearly to perform better in drama activities. As for the last area, most students (77.49 percent) expressed satisfaction with their reading learning experience through drama activities, particularly highlighting the benefits that helped them become more active learners.

Although the findings showed students' positive attitudes towards their reading learning experience through drama activities, it should be noted that these positive views gradually decreased over the three sessions of the investigation.

To further explore students' attitudes, their responses to the second part of the self-evaluation checklist were examined. This section included three open-ended questions aligned with those in

the first part of the checklist, aiming to elicit students' evaluations of the effectiveness of learning reading through drama activities, their motivation to learn through the activities, and their satisfaction to their learning experience. These responses could be triangulated with those from the first part of the checklist.

The responses to the three open-ended questions consistently revealed students' favorable perspectives on the supportive roles of drama activities in enhancing their reading abilities. Their positive responses were consistently observed across the three sessions of the investigation. However, it should be remarked that their negative responses gradually increased from the first to the third survey which is similar to the findings from the first part. Their responses could be classified into three main themes as follows.

Students' Evaluation of the Effectiveness of Learning Reading through Drama Activities

Students' responses to the first question reflected their positive evaluation of the effectiveness of learning reading through drama activities. Their feedback on the three sessions of the investigation was generally consistent, that is, most students reflected that learning reading through drama activities helped improve their reading performance for several reasons. For example, many commented that learning reading through drama activities supported their practice by encouraging them to pay closer attention in order to clearly understand the story. Furthermore, they noted that engaging with the texts multiple times supported vocabulary acquisition. As a result, they felt their reading skills had improved. Some examples of their comments were as follows: (1) *"I paid more attention when I read. I also tried to understand new vocabulary to better understand the story."* (2) *"As I had to dramatize the story I read, I went over the assigned story many times, which helped me memorize many new words. This improved my reading."* Several students noted that learning through these activities encouraged them to read more, as they found reading to be more engaging and enjoyable compared to conventional reading practice. Furthermore, some appreciated the frequent practice opportunities that enhanced multiple reading related skills which in turn, enhanced their pronunciation, interpretation of the story, ability to grasp the main idea, and analytical skills. They, for instance, further recorded the following reflections: (1) *"I wanted to understand what each character said, so I read many times. If I didn't understand any words, I tried to find their meanings. This gradually helped me improve my reading skills."* (2) *"My reading improved a lot because I had the chance to practice reading, learn new vocabulary, interpret the meaning of the story, and develop a better understanding of it."* or (3) *"I learned how to pronounce words correctly. I realized that I had been mispronouncing some words for a long time."* These responses indicate that students viewed learning reading through drama activities as effective and held supportive attitudes toward the intervention, consistent with their answers in the checklist's first section.

Students' Motivation to Learn through Drama Activities

The second question, which was used to elicit students' reflections on their reading motivation in learning through drama activities, also received favorable responses throughout the three rounds of investigation. The majority of students indicated that they were motivated to engage in reading through these activities for a variety of reasons. For example, many reported that learning through these activities made the learning experience pleasurable which made them enjoy reading. They said, for instance, (1) *"I felt motivated to read because it was fun, not boring."* or (2) *"It was fun, so it made reading enjoyable."* Some felt that learning through these activities not only helped them improve their English skills, such as reading and speaking, but also enhanced other abilities such as the ability to express themselves or to work in team. They felt they became more courageous in

taking on challenging tasks which increased their motivation. Some examples reflected in their responses to the question include (1) *"I had a chance to try something new and challenging."* (2) *"After learning through drama activities, I felt my reading improved. I understood what I read better, so I was motivated to learn."* or (3) *"I felt learning through these activities helped me improve in many aspects."* Additionally, reading for performance made the reading process more enjoyable, which further motivated students to read more. They, for example, commented that (1) *"Learning through these activities, I had a clear reading goal, so I became more motivated to read."* (2) *"I personally did not like reading, however, I became more interested in reading when I read for performing."* or (3) *"I wanted to perform well, so I was motivated to try to understand what I read."* The students' reflections reveal that drama-based reading activities fostered their motivation, providing clear evidence of their positive attitudes toward the learning experience, which corroborates their responses in the first part of the checklist.

Students' Satisfaction to Their Reading Learning Experience

Across the three sessions, students' responses strongly reflected their satisfaction to their reading learning experience through drama activities. In the first round of the survey, students described their learning as stimulating and engaging, largely because it differed from their prior experiences, thereby fostering excitement and eagerness to learn. For example, they reported that (1) *"I enjoyed learning through drama activities because I had never done it before."* (2) *"It was new for me. I felt excited to learn."* In addition, their positive perception was also reflected due to the self-confidence they could build through the learning activities. Many expressed that (1) *"These activities helped me build my confidence."* (2) *"I think it was enjoyable because learning through these activities helped me improve my confidence to express myself."*

Even as the readings and activities became more demanding and complex, most students' reflections during the second and third rounds of investigation remained positive. They found the experience enjoyable for various reasons. Many noted that the increased challenge encouraged them to pay closer attention to the readings which in turn made the experience more engaging. For instance, some students reflected, *"Learning through these activities made the reading fun and more interesting. I paid more attention to my reading and understood the story better."* Additionally, students expressed satisfaction due to the perception of their progress. They reported on becoming more confident in expressing themselves, making noticeable improvements in various areas including the following: expanding their vocabulary which helped them better understand the stories, as a result, feeling more engaged and connected to the reading and developing stronger analytical thinking skills. For example, in response to the first question, some said, *"It was exciting and challenging. At the beginning, I wasn't courageous enough to express myself. However, I became more confident after having the chance to participate in drama activities."* (2) *"I enjoyed learning through drama activities because they helped me improve my reading and analytical thinking skills."* (3) *"I felt I had improved a lot after learning through drama activities."*

Although the majority of favorable responses to the three questions were consistently received throughout the three rounds of investigation, it should be noted that some negative views, though very few compared to the positive ones, were also found, and these should not be overlooked. At the same time, it is important to note that although some students expressed negative views in response to the questions, none of them gave negative responses to all three. For example, some students felt unmotivated to learn reading through drama activities, yet still recognized their usefulness in improving reading skills, which may indicate that they are in the process of developing more favorable attitudes.

Students' negative responses regarding the effectiveness of learning reading through drama activities were notably fewer than those related to their motivation and satisfaction. This suggests a general recognition among students of the benefits associated with this learning approach. The primary source of their unfavorable feelings appeared to stem from a fear of expressing themselves in front of others. However, it is worth noting that although some students did not perceive drama activities as directly beneficial to their reading skill development, they nonetheless acknowledged the value of these activities in enhancing their confidence in self-expression. For instance, some students remarked that "*These activities did not help improve my reading skills, but they greatly supported my confidence to express myself.*"

In terms of the satisfaction, some students expressed dissatisfaction with learning through drama activities, primarily due to a lack of confidence in performing in front of an audience and discomfort with working in a team. For example, they commented: (1) "*It was new for me, so I felt nervous and pressured.*" (2) "*I did not like working in a team. It was tiring sometimes.*" However, not all of these students held entirely negative views. While they found the activities entertaining, they lacked confidence when it came to performing. Despite acknowledging the benefits gained such as increased participation and improved English skills, they did not fully enjoy the learning experience due to their discomfort with performing in front of classmates. Students, for instance, reflected that "*I did not enjoy learning through these activities, though I felt more active in participating and my English improved, because I did not like performing in front of other people.*"

Regarding students' motivation, some students expressed negative responses, generally for similar reasons previously mentioned, a lack of confidence in performing or a dislike of performing. However, the primary reason they did not feel motivated to learn through these activities was their unfavorable attitude toward reading itself. Some examples of their unfavorable responses were (1) "*I was not motivated to learn because I personally did not like reading.*" (2) "*The reading was too long. I was bored.*"

Based on the findings, it can be concluded that most students held positive attitudes toward their reading learning experiences through drama activities, owing to the fact that these activities nurtured their reading improvement, fostered reading motivation, and offered a satisfying learning experience. However, some negative attitudes toward certain aspects of the learning experience through drama activities were still observed among a few students.

Discussion

Attitude has long been recognized as a key factor in learning success, particularly in language acquisition. For instance, Naimon (as cited in Krashen, 1981, p. 33) argued that students' attitudes toward the language learning environment are "the best predictor of success." Decades later, Oroujou and Vahedi (2011) emphasized that positive attitudes are essential for enhancing learners' efficiency and proficiency. More recently, Asserraji et al. (2022) reinforced this perspective, highlighting the significant impact of attitude on the foreign language learning process. These findings underscore the importance of fostering a positive attitude in students as a critical element of effective language instruction. In the context of the present study, most students reported positive attitudes toward their reading experiences when drama activities were incorporated, supporting the use of drama as a pedagogical tool to cultivate students' positive attitudes toward reading, which, in turn, may boost students' motivation and improve their reading proficiency. These findings may be attributed to four main reasons.

First, learning to read through drama activities made the reading process more purposeful. With the goal of delivering an impressive performance, students were motivated to engage with the texts thoughtfully and repeatedly in order to express their understanding through performance. This approach promoted active engagement and enhanced their comprehension of the material, which in turn contributed to improvements in their reading skills. As reflected in their self-evaluation checklists, some students stated, (1) *"I wanted to perform well, so I was motivated to try to understand what I read,"* and (2) *"Learning through these activities gave me a clear reading goal, so I became more motivated to read."* These experiences suggest that students' positive attitudes may have been fostered through their active engagement and perceived learning achievement. This aligns with Fithriyah (2021), who found that students' positive attitudes stemmed from their perception of learning success resulting from active participation in learning activities.

Second, students' recognition of additional improvements such as increased confidence, the development of teamwork skills, and enhanced English abilities, including vocabulary, pronunciation, and speaking through drama activities may have contributed to their positive attitudes. To illustrate, learning through drama provided opportunities for students to practice a broad range of skills beyond language learning alone. They were able to express themselves in public, interact with others in a dramatic context, and collaborate to deliver a performance, which could gradually support the formation of self-confidence as well as overall improvement. Through these experiences, students may have come to perceive themselves as more capable and improved learners, which subsequently helped shape their favorable attitudes toward learning through drama activities. As Mai and Thao (2022) suggested, self-confidence, lexical knowledge, and their perception of the crucial role of their English knowledge are internal factors that influence students' positive attitudes toward their learning experience.

Third, learning to read through drama activities made the reading experience entertaining, relaxing, and enjoyable. As students read to perform, they imagined themselves as the characters in the texts, planning how to act out their roles in ways that the audience could understand. They designed vocal and facial expressions and prepared props and costumes to support their performances. Such activities could reduce learning anxiety while providing stimulation and excitement, thereby gradually fostering a positive perception of the learning experience. This aligns with the theoretical concept of a lower affective filter, which facilitates positive attitude formation (Krashen, 1982). Furthermore, Mai and Thao (2022) affirmed that anxiety is a significant internal factor influencing students' attitudes toward learning. This perspective is further supported by Ramzan et al. (2023), who argued that learning enjoyment plays a crucial role in fostering positive attitudes among students.

Finally, students' positive attitudes may have originated from learning processes that progressively enhanced their self-esteem. Engaging in reading through drama activities effectively established a sense of ownership, whereby students perceived the outcomes as their own, fostering responsibility and pride. This sense of ownership likely contributed to their favorable perception of the learning experience. Within the drama-based learning context, the lecturer primarily provided support during the preparation phase, whereas students assumed responsibility for managing subsequent stages. With the lecturer offering guidance and feedback as necessary, students were required to plan, organize, rehearse, and deliver their performances independently. Through these processes, students exercised control over their learning, which in turn enhanced their self-esteem and promoted positive attitudes toward learning. As Brown (2000) asserts, successful cognitive or affective engagement must be accompanied by a certain degree of self-esteem.

Although the findings revealed that most students held positive attitudes, negative reflections deserve consideration. Across the three rounds of investigation, the tendency toward positive views gradually decreased while negative perceptions—though minimal—became slightly more apparent. This shift was likely due to the increasingly demanding and complex tasks students were required to complete. Initially, students engaged in Readers Theater, during which they read from short and simple scripted dialogues and worked in pairs or small groups, requiring minimal effort. However, subsequent activities of role-play and dramatization demanded the memorization of longer scripts, the performance of more complex roles, and collaboration within larger groups. These tasks required greater effort and time, which could lead to stress and fatigue. Despite this, most students were able to maintain a positive attitude and continued to report favorable perceptions of their learning experience. However, some expressed less favorable views due to factors such as shyness, lack of confidence in performing, and the pressure of having to rehearse lengthy scripts—although they still recognize the benefits to their personal growth, such as improved analytical and interpretative skills. This is evidenced by student feedback such as *“I did not feel my reading improved, but I felt I could analyze and interpret better.”* and *“I sometimes felt motivated to learn through these activities, but I became discouraged when the script was too long.”* Based on the feedback, it can be concluded that the negative responses were attributable more to task design than to the activities themselves, highlighting the importance of implementing drama activities through carefully planned and well-structured tasks.

Conclusion and Implications of the Findings

The present study was conducted to explore the effects of learning reading through drama activities on students' attitudes toward their reading experiences. The findings revealed that drama activities were effective in fostering positive attitudes toward learning among most students, though some negative perceptions emerged in certain aspects of the activities. Based on these findings, some pedagogical implications can be drawn.

First, drama activities should be incorporated into reading classes, as they can make the learning environment more enjoyable and relaxed. At the same time, students' motivation to read may be enhanced when they understand that reading serves the purpose of performance. With this clear goal, an improvement in reading quality can be expected. However, instructors should keep in mind that not all students possibly feel comfortable with this approach. Therefore, it is recommended that drama activities be introduced gradually, and that tasks be carefully designed to avoid being overly demanding. Although some negative responses were found, it is worth noting that students' expression of their preference for the implemented activities over traditional methods they had previously experienced was clearly observed.

Second, the findings reveal the highest positive responses from students regarding the contribution of drama activities to the development of their reading ability. This suggests that their positive attitudes were largely influenced by their perception of the academic benefits gained from these activities. Therefore, drama-based reading instruction should be carefully designed to emphasize academic improvement, as students tend to value the progress they make in reading skills more than other aspects.

Finally, most of the negative responses to drama activities, as indicated by the findings, stemmed from students' lack of confidence in expressing themselves, despite their appreciation for the value of the method. This suggests that students did not entirely perceive the method in a negative light. Therefore, helping students gradually build their confidence by starting with simple drama

task could foster more positive feelings and eventually allow them to gain greater benefits from the learning experience.

Proficiency in English reading is vital for students' language development and long-term academic achievement. As English lecturers, we can foster this success by nurturing students' positive attitudes toward reading, with drama activities serving as an alternative and powerful approach to achieve this objective. The present study primarily examined students' attitudes toward reading-for-pleasure materials through the use of drama activities. Future research could investigate the application of drama activities to enhance students' reading in other contexts and with a wider range of reading materials.

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