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From Script to Stage: A Case Study of Creative Confidence Development in English Language Teacher Education Through Drama and Theatre

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ABSTRACT

English language teacher education programs increasingly recognize the importance of creative confidence in preparing adaptive educators, yet traditional approaches often prioritize linguistic proficiency over transformative pedagogical experiences. Drama-based pedagogy offers promising potential for developing creative confidence through embodied, performative engagement. However, limited research has systematically examined how dramatic scriptwriting specifically facilitates creative confidence development among prospective English teachers in authentic learning contexts. This study investigated how dramatic scriptwriting and performance foster creative confidence among Indonesian prospective English language teachers. A qualitative case study with embedded units was conducted over 14 weeks in the Drama and Theatre course at Universitas Harapan Bangsa, Indonesia, involving two prospective English teachers. Data were collected through naturalistic observations, written reflections, semi-structured interviews, and rubric-based assessments at two critical points (Week 6 and 14). Reflexive thematic analysis identified patterns in creative confidence development. Five interconnected mechanisms emerged: overcoming psychological resistance, discovering systematic creative processes, cultivating supportive relationships, transforming creative identity, and integrating multimodal competencies. Quantitative data revealed dramatic improvements in creativity-demanding dimensions (100% increase for one participant with initially lower confidence), while

technical skills remained stable, confirming that barriers were psychological rather than skill-based. Transformation magnitude correlated inversely with initial creative confidence levels. These findings contribute to transformative learning theory by demonstrating how drama-based pedagogy synthesizes cognitive scaffolding, affective support, and embodied performativity to enable identity reconstruction in teacher education. The study offers practical implications for integrating drama systematically in language teacher preparation programs globally.

KEYWORDS: Drama-based pedagogy, Creative confidence, English language teacher education, Scriptwriting, Transformative learning, Performativity, Indonesian teacher education

INTRODUCTION

The Javanese proverb "From habit comes love" (Saka kulina, jalaran saka tresna) encapsulates a profound reality about transformative learning: passion arises via consistent, purposeful participation. Rethinking language teacher education can be greatly aided by this idea of personal transformation, from routine to revelation, and from hesitation to passion. But what if we thought of education as a performance to be lived, a creative act to be experienced, instead of a set of skills to be learnt? Prospective educators may discover their true pedagogical identities through processes that mirror how language learners find their passion for language via repeated meaningful engagement when they not only study about teaching but also bring it to life through dramaturgical performativity.

An underexplored relationship exists in modern English language teacher education between linguistic proficiency and pedagogical innovation, yet this relationship receives insufficient attention in teacher preparation programs. The performative, embodied, and transformative aspects of language instruction are frequently overlooked in favour of theoretical knowledge and methodological frameworks in traditional approaches to language teacher preparation (Kumaravadivelu, 2012). This misalignment is evident. This gap necessitates creative methods that build more comprehensive and flexible teaching capacities. According to Zainal's (2024) editorial for the *Malaysian Journal of ELT Research*, creativity in English language instruction involves more than just creating original work; it also involves the teacher's decision-making processes that result in creative outcomes. This aspect of teaching seems to call for pedagogical approaches that go beyond traditional knowledge transfer.

Although drama-based pedagogy holds considerable potential to solve these issues, its empirical application in language teacher education is still largely unexplored; this gap persists across multiple research traditions. Drama as a teaching method, also known as Drama in Education (DiE), has a long history in language education dating back to the communicative approaches of the 1970s (Maley & Duff, 2005). However, there are still few systematic studies on how dramaturgical processes specifically support the development of creative confidence in aspiring language teachers. This disparity is particularly noticeable in Indonesia, where English language teacher education programs place a strong emphasis on linguistic proficiency and methodological understanding while denying aspiring educators the chance to undergo pedagogical transformation via in-depth, thoughtful performative investigation.

By thoroughly examining how a dramaturgical approach, particularly through scriptwriting and video performance production, could support the development of creative confidence among aspiring English teachers, this study seeks to close this critical gap. A 14-week course in drama and theatre in

the English language education program at Universitas Harapan Bangsa in Purwokerto, Central Java, Indonesia, during the even semester of 2024, served as the research backdrop and offered a realistic environment for examining these processes. The study uses embedded units of analysis and a qualitative case study design. However, two aspiring English teachers (Nur Halimah and Nofa Elok Ramdania; pseudonyms) act as embedded units in the course, which operates as a bounded system. By emphasizing depth over breadth, this design decision enables a thorough examination of each person's transformative journey while comprehending how the entire learning environment probably fosters the growth of creative confidence that large-sample studies could overlook. Using criteria-based rubrics with a 4-point scale covering five dimensions for each assessment and a structure that offered both formative feedback and summative evaluation throughout the semester, the learning process included dramatic scriptwriting through to the production of video performances, with assessments occurring at two crucial points: the script assessment at Week 6 and the video performance assessment at Week 14.

By combining quantitative data (rubric scores) and qualitative data (reflections, interviews, and naturalistic observations) in a qualitatively-driven mixed methods design (QUAL + quan), we are examining the various transformations that occur when aspiring teachers acquire a language and also function as performers who are developing their teaching knowledge, which Dunn and Stinson (2011) discussed and which may be important in the formation of teacher identities. Five major themes emerged from the data analysis utilizing reflexive thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2022). In the context of theatrical education, these themes reflect important aspects of the growth of creative confidence. Furthermore, by showing how the creative processes of scriptwriting and theatrical performance can serve as a catalyst for pedagogical development in authentic, naturalistic learning contexts, our research adds to the conversation on creativity in language teacher education (Zainal, 2024). The case study method with a small sample size ($n=2$) allows for in-depth investigation of the intricacy of unique experiences that are frequently missed in large-sample research. There are significant implications for curriculum development and teacher preparation programs not only in Indonesia but also in the wider global context. This is because, in an era of globalizing English, teachers must navigate increasingly complex linguistic and cultural landscapes that demand both technical competence and adaptive creativity (Wijaya, 2024). This suggests that our findings could provide information that informs teacher education more broadly and goes beyond this particular situation. In terms of practice, the dramaturgical method discussed here seems to offer a technique to cultivate "performative pedagogical confidence"; nevertheless, it is yet unclear how this translates to real classroom teaching situations.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Foundations of Drama in Education

Drama as a teaching method, often known as Drama in Education (DiE), has a long history in language education, dating back to the communicative approaches of the 1970s (Maley & Duff, 2005). These theoretical frameworks supporting drama's use in teacher education are firmly rooted in several important and significant learning theories, though their integration into actual practice remains uneven across different institutional contexts.

Building on Mezirow's (1991) transformative learning theory, we can observe that experiences that challenge one's frame of reference, such as acting on stage or taking on a character, may cause

significant perspective shifts that promote critical reflection and professional development which are frequently impossible to replicate in traditional classroom settings. Embodied cognition as a concept (Lakoff & Johnson, 1999) highlights how physical engagement may play a crucial role in knowledge acquisition, while sociocultural theory (Lantolf & Thorne, 2006) emphasizes the centrality of social interaction in competence development. These are two key aspects that drama-based approaches seem to bring together.

Recent research shows that drama-based pedagogy creates democratic spaces where all participants and their perspectives are treated equally, helping to build environments conducive to exploration, learning, and challenging existing knowledge (Akakpo & Ismaila, 2024). This multi-modal approach simultaneously engages logical-mathematical, verbal-linguistic, bodily-kinesthetic, interpersonal, and intrapersonal intelligences in integrated learning experiences (Gardner, 1993; Kalidas, 2014); it aligns with contemporary understanding of learning as an embodied process. Brain function, emotion, and physiology remain constantly interconnected.

The emotional side of teacher learning also warrants attention of teacher learning, which often receives less attention in practice. As demonstrated by Wijaya (2024), emotionally supportive classroom environments likely play crucial roles in developing productive learning dispositions, self-efficacy, and autonomy, qualities that appear equally important to cultivate in teacher preparation programs.

Drama in Language Learning: Empirical Evidence

Several recent studies have explored the effectiveness of drama approaches in language learning contexts, with generally positive findings. First, in a study conducted in EFL classrooms, Bessadet (2022) found that drama techniques significantly enhanced students' physical, emotional, social, and cognitive development. This study found that drama not only helped with linguistic acquisition, but it also reduced language anxiety and boosted learner motivation, both of which are important outcomes for long-term engagement. Second, a comprehensive systematic literature review by Luo et al. (2024) analyzed 30 studies published between 2003-2023. The findings are evident: process drama had consistently positive impacts on EFL education, including enhanced communicative competence, pragmatic understanding, and cultural awareness.

Drama in Teacher Education: The Specific Context

A significant study by Tugce (2025) that involved aspiring teachers in a 15-week Creative Drama Module sheds light on the particular environment of teacher education, which differs significantly from student learning situations in a number of ways. Their study revealed significant gains in participants' competence, confidence, and ability to incorporate dramatic activities into lesson planning. The mechanisms underlying these gains weren't always obvious, which seems to indicate that more research into the transformative processes at play would be beneficial. Nevertheless, this research emphasized that effective implementation appears to require both theoretical understanding and extensive practical experience with drama techniques. Moreover, Uştuk (2022) introduced the concept of Drama-in-Teacher-Education, revealing that drama pedagogy helps prospective teachers reconcile professional identity conflicts and develop adaptive teaching strategies through performative exploration of various pedagogical personas. This suggests that drama might offer a safe space for trying out different teaching identities before facing real classroom pressures; whether this translates to improved classroom performance, however, remains an empirical question.

Research Gaps in Drama and Teacher Education

Even though these studies offer encouraging evidence, there is still a sizable research gap that becomes apparent upon closer examination of the literature. Most research focuses on drama for student learning or linguistic skill development in large samples. Furthermore, there's limited in-depth exploration of how scriptwriting and performance specifically can transform individual prospective teachers' development in contextual ways.

The Educational Theatre Association (2024) noted that while arts education experiences, including drama, reduce the proportion of students receiving disciplinary infractions by 3.6 percent and improve academic achievement, little is understood about the specific mechanisms through which script creation and theatrical performativity shape prospective teachers' professional identities and creative confidence in authentic, naturalistic learning contexts; this gap represents not just a limitation in our knowledge but a missed opportunity for developing more effective teacher preparation approaches. As observed by Stinson and Winston (2011), there exists a continuing gap between teacher preparation and classroom practice, a disconnect that could potentially be addressed through systematic integration of dramaturgical pedagogy in teacher education curricula; This suggests this disconnect has persisted precisely because of our reliance on traditional preparation models.

Context and Prevalence of Traditional Approaches

Despite growing evidence supporting drama's effectiveness, the prevalence of traditional skill-focused approaches in language teacher education persists; many TESOL programs worldwide continue relying on knowledge transmission methods rather than performative or arts-based approaches (Burns & Richards, 2009), a pattern that seems resistant to change.

In Indonesia, this context feels more pronounced than in some other global contexts where arts-based pedagogies have gained more traction. English language teacher education programs largely prioritize linguistic competence and methodological knowledge without providing opportunities for prospective teachers to experience pedagogical transformation through deep, reflective performative exploration a pattern observed in many global contexts. The gap between teacher preparation and the complex realities of the classroom represents a critical challenge, one that likely requires innovative solutions beyond incremental adjustments to existing programs, though what those solutions should look like remains unclear. As noted by Zainal (2024) in an editorial for the *Malaysian Journal of ELT Research*, creativity in English language teaching isn't merely about producing creative products; it concerns teachers' decision-making processes that lead to innovative outcomes. This means we need pedagogical approaches transcending conventional knowledge transmission.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study employs a qualitative case study design with embedded units of analysis (Baxter & Jack, 2008). The bounded case is the Drama and Theatre course offered during the even semester of 2024, defined temporally (14 weeks), spatially (English Language Education Program, Universitas Harapan Bangsa), and by activity (dramatic scriptwriting through video performance production). Within this case are two embedded units of analysis: two prospective English teachers enrolled in the course. This

design enables analysis at two levels: within-case analysis to understand each student's transformative trajectory individually, and holistic case analysis to understand how the overall course context supports creative confidence development.

The study integrates quantitative and qualitative data in a qualitatively-driven mixed-methods design (QUAL + quan). Quantitative data from rubric assessments (4-point scale with 5 dimensions for script and 5 dimensions for video) function as supporting components embedded within the dominant qualitative analysis, allowing numerical data to confirm rather than drive the analytical narrative. Data triangulation from both sources strengthens findings validity through evidence convergence (Noble & Heale, 2019). Qualitative analysis uses reflexive thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2022) to identify meaning patterns emerging in participants' experiences during the scriptwriting and performance process. The study adopts a naturalistic approach, observing phenomena in authentic learning settings without experimental manipulation.

Research Setting and Participants

The research was conducted in the English Language Education Program at Universitas Harapan Bangsa, Purwokerto, Central Java, Indonesia. The program was established in 2018, and the Drama and Theatre course is a specialization course. The course was offered over 14 weeks in the even semester of 2024, involving the process from dramatic scriptwriting through video performance production. Assessment was conducted at two points: script assessment in Week 6 and video performance assessment in Week 14, both using criteria-based rubrics with a 4-point scale covering five dimensions for each assessment.

The participants were two prospective English teachers, Nofa Elok Ramdania and Nur Halimah (pseudonyms), enrolled in the course. Both participants ranged in age from 20 to 22 years and had intermediate English proficiency based on their academic records. The researcher acted as course instructor, facilitating the learning process while systematically collecting data throughout the 14-week period. This dual role enabled deep understanding of the learning context while requiring careful reflexive consideration to manage potential biases. Both students participated fully in the entire series of learning activities, enabling comprehensive documentation of creative confidence development experiences in an authentic learning context. The research received institutional ethical approval, and informed consent was obtained from all participants before data collection, including explanations regarding research purposes, procedures, confidentiality guarantees, and the right to withdraw without academic consequences (Mulyani et al., 2025).

Data Collection Instruments

Assessment Rubrics

Two assessment rubrics were developed following authentic assessment principles (Brookhart, 2018): the Script Rubric and the Video Performance Rubric. Each rubric uses a 4-point scale (1=Poor, 2=Fair, 3=Good, 4=Excellent) with five assessment criteria, yielding a maximum total score of 20 points. The Script Rubric assesses story structure (narrative flow organization from basic to strong and engaging plot), character development (characterization depth from flat to complex characters), dialogue (conversation quality from unnatural to engaging dialogue building character and plot), English language use (grammatical accuracy and vocabulary variety from many errors to excellent and creative use), and creativity (story idea originality from very common to highly creative and innovative). The Video Performance Rubric assesses acting (performance quality from stiff and unnatural to highly

convincing and expressive), pronunciation and intonation (vocal delivery from many errors and monotone to excellent with intonation adding character dimension), blocking and movement (stage space use from stiff movement to highly dynamic movement adding dramatic value), technical quality (audio-visual production from low to excellent quality enhancing viewing experience), and script interpretation (ability to bring written text to life from minimal to highly creative interpretation). Both rubrics were validated by two independent experts prior to implementation: one specialist in research methodology and one specialist in drama and theatre education. Content validity was established using the Content Validity Index (CVI) approach (Polit & Beck, 2006), with both instruments obtaining an Item-level CVI (I-CVI) of 1.00 and Scale-level CVI (S-CVI) of 1.00, exceeding the minimum threshold of 0.80 recommended by Polit and Beck (2006), confirming their content validity.

Qualitative Instruments

Qualitative data were collected through three complementary methods to facilitate methodological triangulation (Noble & Heale, 2019). Written reflections were collected after video performance completion (Week 14), allowing participants to reflect on learning experiences holistically and retrospectively using structured prompts exploring five areas: learning experiences and challenges faced, writing skill and English language development, impact on creative confidence and soft skills, drama learning relevance to English language education, and personal transformation felt before and after the course. Semi-structured interviews were conducted at two critical points, after script assessment (Week 6) and after video performance assessment (Week 14), exploring constraints participants faced in the creative process, mitigation strategies they applied, and factors influencing their performance at each stage. Interviews were documented through systematic field notes recording verbal content, conversation context, and nuances. Naturalistic observations were conducted throughout the learning period (Week 1-14) in classroom and rehearsal settings, documenting interaction contexts, learning dynamics, and students' creative expression in authentic situations without experimental manipulation. The interview guide and written reflection prompts were similarly validated by the same two experts using the Content Validity Index (CVI) approach (Polit & Beck, 2006), yielding an Item-level CVI (I-CVI) and Scale-level CVI (S-CVI) of 1.00, confirming their content validity for exploring creative confidence development in drama-based learning contexts

Data Collection Procedures

Data collection was carried out throughout the 14-week period with multiple collection points at strategic times: continuous naturalistic observation for 14 weeks, rubric assessment at Week 6 (script) and Week 14 (video performance), semi-structured interviews after each assessment point, and comprehensive written reflections post-Week 14. Naturalistic observation was conducted in classroom learning and rehearsal settings throughout Week 1-14, with the researcher acting as instructor-researcher facilitating the learning process while documenting student interactions, classroom dynamics, creative expression, and emerging constraints in authentic contexts. Rubric-based assessment was conducted at Week 6 and Week 14 by the researcher with consultation with a co-researcher (Barlian Kristanto, Universitas Harapan Bangsa) to ensure consistency in rubric criteria interpretation and minimize subjective bias. Semi-structured interviews were conducted immediately after each assessment point, focusing on constraints, mitigation strategies, and contextual factors influencing performance. Written reflections were collected post-Week 14 after students completed the entire learning sequence, allowing participants to reflect holistically with comprehensive perspective on experienced transformation. All data were documented systematically through detailed field notes for observations, scoring sheets with justification for assessments, comprehensive field

notes for interviews, and written reflections collected electronically, with data triangulation performed by integrating insights from multiple sources and time points to validate findings.

Data Analysis Procedures

Quantitative data from assessment rubrics were analyzed manually with Microsoft Excel assistance for data organization and visualization. Given the small sample size ($n=2$), descriptive analysis was used to calculate total scores, achievement percentages, and score changes from script assessment (Week 6) to video performance assessment (Week 14), focusing on each participant's developmental trajectory and performance comparison across five assessment dimensions. Within this study's mixed-methods design (QUAL + quan), quantitative data function as supporting components to confirm and enrich qualitative transformation narratives through data triangulation.

Qualitative data were analyzed using reflexive thematic analysis developed by Braun and Clarke (2022), chosen for its theoretical flexibility and appropriateness for deeply exploring meaning patterns in participants' experiences. The analysis process followed six phases iteratively and recursively: familiarization through repeated reading of field notes and reflections while noting initial ideas and patterns, generating initial codes through systematic identification and labeling of meaningful data features, generating themes by organizing codes into broader thematic groups, reviewing themes by checking their coherence against individual codes and the entire dataset, defining and naming themes by clarifying each theme's essence and developing precise definitions, and producing the report by integrating analytical narrative with vivid data extracts to answer research questions. Coding was done manually with systematic documentation through analytical memos and visual concept maps to track analytical thinking development. This iterative process yielded over 30 initial codes that, through continuous refinement, were grouped into five main themes representing critical dimensions of creative confidence development in drama learning contexts. Triangulation was performed by integrating insights from qualitative data (reflections, interviews, observations) with patterns identified in quantitative data (rubric scores) to strengthen findings validity and generate comprehensive understanding of the transformation phenomena studied.

Trustworthiness

The trustworthiness of this research was evaluated using Lincoln and Guba's (1985) criteria. Credibility was strengthened through methodological triangulation by integrating multiple data sources (observations, interviews, reflections, rubric scores) and multiple time points (Week 6, Week 14, post-Week 14), prolonged engagement with participants throughout 14 weeks, and ongoing consultation with co-researcher for cross-checking data interpretations. Transferability was facilitated through thick description of research context, participant characteristics, learning procedures, and detailed data collection and analysis processes, enabling readers to assess findings applicability to their own contexts. Dependability was maintained through systematic documentation of all research procedures including field notes, scoring sheets with justifications, and analytical memos creating an audit trail. Confirmability was strengthened through transparency in the data analysis process, with explicit connections between raw data and researcher interpretations evident in findings reporting and analytical codes grounded in data rather than researcher preconceptions. Reflexivity became critical given the researcher's dual role as instructor-researcher, with potential bias managed through reflective bracketing to separate factual observations from subjective interpretations, use of co-researcher as critical friend to challenge interpretations, systematic documentation through reflective memos about evolving thinking and potential influences of dual role, and informal member checking during learning to validate emerging interpretations with participant experiences.

FINDINGS

Reflexive thematic analysis identified five interconnected themes documenting the development of creative confidence among prospective English language teachers through dramatic scriptwriting. These themes evolved from initial psychological resistance (Theme 1), through the discovery of systematic processes (Theme 2) and the cultivation of supportive relationships (Theme 3), culminating in the transformation of creative identity (Theme 4) and the integration of writing-performance skills (Theme 5). Collectively, both quantitative and qualitative data indicate that scriptwriting enhances creative confidence through processes addressing cognitive, affective, and social dimensions.

Table 1

Participant Performance Trajectories: Script Writing to Video Production

PARTICIPANT PERFORMANCE TRAJECTORIES: SCRIPT WRITING TO VIDEO PROJECTION				
PARTICIPANT	SCRIPT SCORE (WEEK 6)	VIDEO SCORE (WEEK 14)	IMPROVEMENT	KEY CHANGES
Nofa Elok Ramdania	13/20 (65%)	20/20 (100%)	+7 (+35%)	Creativity: 2-4 (100% increase) Character Dev: 2-4 (100% increase)
Nur Halimah	15/20 (75%)	18/20 (90%)	+3 (15%)	Balanced improvement across all dimension

Note: Scores were calculated based on 4-point rubrics (1 = Poor, 2 = Fair, 3 = Good, 4 = Excellent) across five dimensions for script (Story Structure, Character Development, Dialogue, Language Use, Creativity) and five dimensions for video (Acting, Pronunciation/Intonation, Blocking/Movement, Technical Quality, Script Interpretation). Dramatic improvement (Nofa: +35%) occurred in those dimensions requiring creative risk-taking, which validates the qualitative transformation narrative.

Theme 1: Initial Writing Resistance

Both participants reported significant psychological barriers to creative writing at this intervention's outset. Nofa candidly expressed her inexperience, articulating it simply: "Because I've never had any serious experience writing scripts, I found it challenging." Her perceived inability contrasted sharply with her adequate technical competence, evidenced by her Language Use score of 3 out of 4 points. However, beyond technical concerns, emotional barriers surfaced in participant reflections. In Nofa's reflection, avoidance of emotional expression became apparent: "Initially, I didn't like writing what I felt because I chose to keep it bottled up inside." Performance anxiety also emerged. She worried: "Will the message reach the audience?" The quantitative data corroborated this particular pattern of psychological impediments. Participants exhibited notably lower scores on those dimensions requiring creative courage, with Character Development and Creativity both scoring 2 out of 4 points. In contrast, they maintained adequate technical competence in Language Use and Dialogue Structure, each achieving 3 out of 4 points. This means that obstacles resided primarily in psychological rather than technical dimensions of writing, a distinction that, while perhaps obvious in retrospect, was not immediately apparent to the participants themselves during the early stages of the intervention. This pattern of psychological barriers despite technical adequacy aligns with Bessadet's (2022) finding that

drama techniques specifically address affective rather than cognitive barriers in language learning contexts.

Theme 2: Discovery of Systematic Process

When participants discovered that scriptwriting follows learnable procedures, a critical shift occurred. Nofa described this conceptual reframing: "Now I understand that writing scripts has steps too—it's not just about producing random text." Awareness of compositional structure, clearly evident throughout the intervention, developed progressively. Participants began recognizing writing as a process requiring sustained cognitive engagement, Nofa reflected: "Through writing, I have to really excavate my thinking to convey meaning." Furthermore, a distinctive integration with oral proficiency emerged. Nofa observed: "Writing scripts informs my speaking—how to vocalize with correct pronunciation." This reciprocal relationship between scriptwriting and oral performance likely distinguishes dramatic writing from traditional academic composition. This discovery of systematic process reflects what Braun and Clarke (2022) describe as metacognitive development through reflexive engagement, wherein learners develop awareness of their own creative thinking processes.

Theme 3: Development of Supportive Relationships

Three particular specific forms of relational support emerged as catalytic factors: instructor enthusiasm, explicit validation, and peer collaboration. The participants identified instructor enthusiasm as exerting powerful influence on their motivation. Nofa characterized this impact of pedagogical energy: "Mrs. Nike's blazing passion in teaching opened my mind." Direct affirmation from the instructor, particularly when delivered at critical moments of self-doubt, proved pivotal in confidence construction. Nur Halimah emphasized the significance of targeted feedback: "The idea received excellent response and support from the lecturer, which made me more confident." Moreover, collaborative work with peers normalized difficulties inherent in creative processes. Nofa noted the value of collective effort: "Realizing it together with cooperative friends."

The public dimension of dramatic performance provided validation qualitatively distinct from private written assessment, something that proved important for student development. The temporal trajectory of Nofa's performance improvement, showing a 35% gain across creativity-demanding dimensions, coincided with this particular period of sustained relational support. These relational support mechanisms align with Wijaya's (2024) identification of emotionally supportive classroom environments as crucial for developing productive learning dispositions and self-efficacy in EFL contexts.

Theme 4: Transformation of Creative Identity

Systematic analysis of participant reflections revealed a fundamental reconceptualization of creative self. Nofa articulated this transformational arc with striking clarity: "Initially, I didn't like writing what I felt because I chose to keep it bottled up. Through drama and theatre, however, I actually want to write more scripts that I want to bring to life." The linguistic analysis revealed three salient markers of identity transformation: the particle "*malah*" (actually/even) signals an unexpected reversal of initial disposition; the verb "*ingin*" (want to) reflects intrinsic motivation; and the future-oriented phrase "*nantinya ingin direalisasikan*" (want to realize in the future) projects creative intention beyond immediate course requirements.

Quantitative data support this narrative, showing clear patterns of psychological transformation. The 100% improvement in those dimensions requiring creative courage, namely Creativity and Character

Development, both advancing from 2 to 4 out of 4 points, confirms psychological liberation rather than technical skill development. Language Use remained stable at 3 out of 4 points throughout the intervention, suggesting that technical competence was adequate initially. What changed was willingness to take creative risks.

Nur Halimah's trajectory showed a different pattern of improvement with more moderate gains, achieving a 15% overall increase from an initially higher baseline of 15 out of 20 points. This suggests that this difference in magnitude may correlate with initial resistance levels. Nofa, who exhibited more pronounced psychological barriers initially, experienced correspondingly more dramatic transformation. This pattern suggests that participants with lower initial creative confidence may show greater potential for growth when facilitative conditions are established. This identity reconstruction process resonates with Uştuk's (2022) framework demonstrating how drama pedagogy helps pre-service teachers reconcile professional identity conflicts through performative exploration.

Theme 5: Writing-Performance Integration

The performative nature of drama establishes a distinctive relationship between written composition and embodied oral realization. Nofa articulated this multimodal integration: "Writing scripts helps my speaking—how to vocalize with correct pronunciation, which words need emphasis, and how to deploy facial expressions."

Through dramatic scriptwriting a range of competencies developed synergistically. Pronunciation accuracy improved as students needed to envision how dialogue would sound when spoken. Lexical emphasis became more intentional. Writers considered which words required stress for dramatic effect. The development of affective expression was facilitated through the necessity of conveying emotion both textually and performatively. This integration differs fundamentally from traditional composition pedagogy, where text tends to remain abstract symbolization divorced from physical enactment.

Participants achieved exceptional video performance scores despite experiencing initial scriptwriting challenges. Nofa attained a perfect score of 20 out of 20 points, while Nur Halimah achieved 18 out of 20 points. Such excellence in video performance suggests that the performative context provides an alternative pathway for validating creative work, one distinct from conventional textual assessment. This multimodal integration supports Piazzoli's (2018) conceptualization of embodied language learning, wherein physical enactment fundamentally restructures relationships between written and oral language production.

Synergistic Integration Model

The five identified themes operate not as discrete elements but rather as components of an interconnected system. Temporal analysis reveals differentiated developmental trajectories between participants—trajectories that demonstrate the complex, nonlinear nature of creative confidence development. Nofa demonstrated dramatic improvement, advancing from an intervention baseline of 13 out of 20 points (65%) to a conclusion score of 20 out of 20 points (100%), representing a 35% gain in creative dimensions. By contrast, Nur Halimah showed more modest advancement, progressing from a baseline of 15 out of 20 points (75%) to a conclusion score of 18 out of 20 points (90%), representing a 15% gain in creative dimensions.

Several defining characteristics of this integrated system emerged through analysis. Change occurred asymmetrically rather than uniformly across dimensions, with breakthroughs in one domain (such as

structural comprehension in Theme 2) appearing to help development in adjacent domains (such as creative expression in Theme 4). No single factor proved sufficient, as cognitive scaffolding required affective support. The cognitive scaffolding provided through Theme 2 required affective support from Theme 3 to precipitate the identity reconstruction documented in Theme 4. The synergistic combination of factors generated effects exceeding what could be attributed to any single intervention element; this multiplicative effect represents the distinctive power of drama-based pedagogy.

DISCUSSION

Initial psychological resistance documented in Theme 1 reveals a significant phenomenon: participants expressed creative barriers despite possessing adequate technical competence. Rubric data confirm this particular pattern, as participants initially scored lower on those dimensions demanding creative courage (Creativity and Character Development: 2/4) while maintaining adequate performance on technical dimensions (Language Use: 3/4). This 33% discrepancy clearly indicates that barriers resided primarily in psychological rather than technical domains. The dramatic transformation observed, Nofa's 100% improvement on Creativity and Character Development dimensions (2→4), seems to indicate that when psychological barriers are systematically addressed, latent creative capacity can be released. What changed was not technical ability but willingness to take creative risks. Drama, through the medium of characterization and fictional narrative, may offer a more psychologically safe pathway for developing emotional openness, an insight with particular implications for Southeast Asian contexts where direct emotional expression in academic settings is not always normative.

When participants discovered that scriptwriting follows learnable procedures, this discovery demonstrated the importance of cognitive scaffolding. This conceptual reframing addressed the uncertainty articulated in Theme 1, providing a visible pathway through previously opaque creative territory. Awareness of compositional structure, clearly evident through participant reflections, developed progressively. The sustained cognitive engagement observed likely fostered metacognitive development, specifically awareness of one's own thinking processes, which is a defining characteristic of reflective practitioners capable of adapting their practice through ongoing analysis of learning. Unlike traditional approaches that separate content knowledge from performance skills, dramatic writing creates natural integration. However, structural understanding alone was insufficient; it still required affective support to bring about identity reconstruction.

Three forms of relational support emerged as catalytic factors: instructor enthusiasm, explicit validation, and peer collaboration. Research on affective pedagogy confirms that the emotional dimension of instruction can fundamentally reshape attitudes toward creative tasks through emotional contagion. Direct affirmation from the instructor, particularly when it came at critical moments of creative uncertainty, proved pivotal in confidence construction. Credible confirmation of creative capacity counteracts self-doubt. This provides "psychological anchoring" that enables learners to internalize identity as creatively capable individuals. Moreover, dramaturgical collaboration creates a community of practice where creative confidence is collectively constructed. The shared experience of working through creative challenges alongside peers who face similar struggles attenuates isolation and anxiety, establishing horizontal support networks. The public dimension of dramatic performance provides validation qualitatively distinct from private written assessment, as scripts enacted before live audiences offer tangible evidence of creative success. Nofa's temporal trajectory of improvement (35%

gain) coincided with this particular period of intensive relational support, suggesting that affective scaffolding helps expression of latent creative capacity.

Systematic analysis of participant reflections reveals fundamental reconceptualization of creative self that transcends skill acquisition. Nofa's transformational arc, articulated through her own reflective writing, contains three linguistic markers: the particle "malah" (unexpected reversal), the verb "ingin" (intrinsic motivation), and future projection "nantinya ingin direalisasikan" (intention beyond course requirements). Quantitative data provide empirical weight to this narrative. Nofa's 100% improvement on Creativity and Character Development while Language Use remained stable seems to confirm psychological liberation rather than technical skill development. So, what changed was willingness to take creative risks, precisely what Theme 1's resistance prevented and Theme 4's transformation enabled. Drama's performative nature connects written composition and oral realization differently from traditional composition pedagogy. In this dramaturgical context, composers must simultaneously envision performative realization throughout the compositional process itself, strengthening connections between written and spoken language production, including bidirectional transfer effects that may not occur in conventional writing instruction.

These five themes operate as components of an interconnected system. Temporal analysis, examining performance trajectories across the intervention period, reveals differential trajectories: Nofa demonstrated dramatic improvement (35% gain in creative dimensions), while Nur Halimah showed moderate progress (15% gain). This pattern suggests transformation magnitude correlates inversely with initial confidence, as participants with more pronounced resistance show greater capacity for change when facilitative conditions are established.

Table 2
Comparative Rubric Scores Across Assessment Phases

COMPARATIVE RUBRIC SCORES ACROSS ASSESSMENT PHASES				
CRITERION	SCRIPT ASSESSMENT (WEEK 6)		VIDEO ASSESSMENT (WEEK 14)	
	NOFA	NUR	NOFA	NUR
Story Structure / acting	3	3	4	4
Character Development	2	3	4	3
Dialogue / Blocking	3	3	4	4
Language use / Pronunciation	3	3	4	4
Creativity / Interpretation	2	3	4	4
Total	13/20	15/20	20/20	18/20

Note. Scores represent performance on 4-point rubrics (1 = Poor, 2 = Fair, 3 = Good, 4 = Excellent) for each assessment criterion. Color coding: Red = Fair (2), Yellow = Good (3), Green = Excellent

(4)., Nofa's transformation is most evident in creativity-demanding dimensions (Character Development, Creativity/Interpretation), moving from Fair (2) to Excellent (4).

Change occurred asymmetrically, as breakthroughs in one domain catalyze development in adjacent domains. No single factor proved sufficient. Cognitive scaffolding required affective support to precipitate identity reconstruction. This means this synergistic combination generates effects exceeding any single element. The model that emerges from these findings indicates that creative confidence development operates as an ecological system wherein cognitive, affective, social, and performative elements interact dynamically to produce transformative outcomes.

Convergence with Recent Drama Research

These findings show substantial alignment with Tuncdemir (2025), who documented that Creative Drama Modules significantly enhanced pre-service teachers' confidence and reduced their anxiety about "acting" and teaching using drama. The observed pattern, psychological resistance transforming into increased confidence, replicates the trajectory Tuncdemir documented in a different context. This study, however, provides several extensions: first, quantitative evidence of transformation magnitude (Nofa: 35% increase, 100% gain in creativity dimensions); second, identification of five specific mechanisms through which transformation occurs; third, documentation of differential trajectories based on initial confidence levels. The "peer teaching" component Tuncdemir identified as critical, where learners engage directly with dramaturgical processes under structured guidance, finds strong parallels in findings regarding peer collaboration. Both studies confirm that learning through direct practice and peer feedback helps reflection and revision. Tuncdemir emphasizes shifts in pre-service teachers' perceptions about applying drama for various age groups, while this study focuses on transformation of creative pedagogical identity through dramaturgical performativity.

The documented creative identity reconstruction resonates strongly with Uştuk's (2022) framework for how drama helps EFL pre-service teachers reconcile professional identity conflicts. Building on Uştuk's work, which identifies "reflexivity as a professional tool" and "upcycling pedagogies", strategic adaptation without surrendering core philosophy, these mechanisms parallel what was observed: participants adapted their writing approaches while developing authentic creative identity. However, this study further specifies how identity is reconstructed in dramaturgical contexts: through embodied performativity enabling "identity tryout" in psychologically safe space. The identified linguistic markers provide concrete operational indicators of identity transformation that Uştuk theorized more abstractly, representing a methodological contribution for future research. Quantitative validation, the 100% Creativity improvement while Language Use remained stable, shows that transformation is psychological liberation rather than technical skill development. While Uştuk focuses on identity negotiation of already-experienced teacher educators in transnational contexts, this study extends understanding to pre-service teachers whose professional identities are still in early formation stages, a timing consideration with important practical implications. Drama may function as a pedagogical "contact zone" where creative identities can be explored before pressures of actual teaching contexts; this represents an important insight for timing drama-based interventions in teacher education curricula.

The documented importance of relational support finds strong validation in Wijaya's (2024) literature review on emotionally supportive classrooms. Wijaya identifies that supportive environments reduce foreign language anxiety and enhance student agency, with teacher roles as caring facilitators being key. These findings operationalize Wijaya's recommendations with specific mechanisms for drama-

based pedagogy: positive affect transmission through instructor enthusiasm, credible confirmation of creative capacity through targeted feedback, and normalization of creative challenges through shared peer experiences. While Wijaya's review focuses primarily on language learners in traditional classroom settings, this study demonstrates that the same mechanisms operate for language teacher candidates; an important extension given that teachers capable of creating supportive classrooms must first experience emotional support in their own professional preparation. Furthermore, in Indonesian cultural contexts where emotional expression in academic settings is not always normative, drama offers a valuable alternative pathway for developing the emotional openness required for responsive teaching.

Intensive case study examining just two participants in considerable depth reveals individual variation with significant practical implications: transformation magnitude appears to correlate inversely with initial confidence. This pattern suggests drama-based interventions may be especially effective for students with high anxiety and low confidence—a targeting insight for teacher education program design. Moreover, focus on dramatic scriptwriting as primary medium distinguishes this study from most drama research emphasizing improvisation or roleplay. The documented writing-performance integration provides unique insights into how drama helps integrated multimodal skill development. Exceptional video scores (Nofa: 20/20; Nur Halimah: 18/20) despite initial writing challenges seem to suggest that dramaturgical processes transform skills through embodied integration, not merely transfer them.

Theoretical Contributions

The primary theoretical contribution is identification and empirical documentation of a five-mechanism developmental model for creative confidence: psychological resistance despite technical adequacy, cognitive reframing through discovery of systematic process, affective catalysis through relational support, identity reconstruction through embodied performativity, and multimodal integration of written-oral competencies. While existing literature, particularly work in creative pedagogy and teacher identity formation, documents these elements separately, this model shows their synergistic operation; no single mechanism proved sufficient, as transformation emerges through their convergent interaction. Quantitative data provide evidence for this synergy. Nofa's 100% Creativity improvement cannot be explained by cognitive scaffolding alone, as her structural understanding developed earlier but creative breakthrough occurred later following intensive relational support.

These findings synthesize three theoretical traditions typically treated separately. Bandura's framework confirms that psychological barriers operate independently of actual capability. The 33% gap between technical and creative dimension scores at baseline shows that low self-efficacy can impede performance despite adequate competence. From Mezirow, validation that disorienting dilemmas can trigger profound perspective transformation. From Vygotsky, confirmation that structured scaffolding within the zone of proximal development helps development. The distinctive theoretical contribution, which emerges when these traditions are viewed not as competing but as complementary frameworks, demonstrates that these three frameworks operate simultaneously: Vygotskian cognitive scaffolding addresses uncertainty created by Bandurian low self-efficacy, while relational support creates the psychologically safe environment necessary for Mezirowian transformative experiences to precipitate identity reconstruction. Quantitative evidence, particularly the differential improvement patterns observed, demonstrates that creative confidence is a psychologically distinct construct from technical competence. The 100% improvement in creativity dimensions while technical skills remained stable provides empirical evidence that barriers to creativity are psychological rather than technical. This

carries significant implications for assessment frameworks in teacher education, as evaluating pre-service teachers' creative capacity requires different instruments than evaluating linguistic proficiency. Rubrics that distinguish creativity-demanding dimensions from technical dimensions offer one operationalization for future research and assessment practice.

The documentation of writing-performance integration extends embodied cognition theory into teacher education. The observed bidirectional relationship, in which scriptwriting enhances oral proficiency and vice versa, shows that drama-based pedagogy does not merely add performative elements to conventional instruction but fundamentally restructures learning processes through multimodal integration. Quantitative data provide empirical evidence for this claim. Video Pronunciation/Intonation scores exceeded initial script Language Use scores, suggesting that dramaturgical processes transform skills through embodied integration, not merely transfer them. This challenges the dualistic separation of "content knowledge" and "performance skills" prevalent in traditional teacher education—a separation that, while administratively convenient, may not reflect actual learning processes.

While the small sample size ($n=2$) limits statistical generalizability, this study offers analytical generalizability (Yin, 2018) through its theoretical contributions. The five-mechanism model of creative confidence development is not proposed as a universal law but as a theoretical framework transferable to similar educational contexts. As Lincoln and Guba (1985) argue, transferability in qualitative research is facilitated through thick description, enabling readers to assess applicability to their own contexts. The documented mechanisms, psychological resistance, cognitive scaffolding, relational support, identity reconstruction, and multimodal integration are theoretically grounded in established frameworks (Bandura, Mezirow, Vygotsky) that transcend specific cultural or institutional settings. Moreover, the inverse correlation between initial confidence levels and transformation magnitude suggests a pattern likely applicable across diverse teacher education contexts, particularly in Southeast Asian settings where emotional expression in academic contexts is constrained by cultural norms similar to those documented here.

CONCLUSION

Summary of Main Findings

This study has documented and interpreted, through both quantitative rubric analysis and qualitative thematic examination, how dramatic scriptwriting and performance help creative confidence development among prospective English language teachers through five interconnected mechanisms: overcoming psychological resistance, discovering systematic creative processes, cultivating supportive relationships, transforming creative identity, and integrating multimodal competencies. These findings advance theoretical understanding by demonstrating how Bandura's self-efficacy theory, Mezirow's transformative learning, and Vygotsky's sociocultural framework function as complementary rather than competing lenses for explaining creative confidence development in drama-based teacher education. Documentation of creative confidence as a psychologically distinct construct from technical competence, a finding clearly evident in the 100% improvement on creativity dimensions while language use scores remained stable, has important implications for assessment practice in teacher education. Identification of linguistic markers is also valuable. The particle "malah" (unexpected reversal), the verb "ingin" (intrinsic motivation), and future projection—together with quantitative patterns—provide operational tools for future research.

Practical Implications

The findings of this study produce specific implications for English language teacher education that emerge directly from the five documented mechanisms of creative confidence development. First, the initial resistance participants experienced in creative writing, as documented in Theme 1, demonstrates that psychological barriers, not technical deficits, are the primary obstacle to creative development among prospective EFL teachers. This means that English language teacher educators should reframe drama-based assessment to explicitly distinguish creativity-demanding dimensions from technical competence dimensions, as evidenced by the 33% discrepancy between participants' creative and technical rubric scores at baseline. Assessment rubrics in ELT teacher preparation programs should therefore incorporate separate evaluation criteria for creative risk-taking and technical proficiency rather than conflating them in holistic scoring systems.

Second, the discovery participants made about systematic creative processes, as documented in Theme 2, indicates that prospective EFL teachers benefit significantly from explicit procedural scaffolding in creative writing. The documented cognitive reframing, from viewing scriptwriting as random text production to understanding it as a learnable systematic process, suggests that ELT teacher education curricula should incorporate explicit instruction in dramatic compositional structure before expecting creative output. This challenges the common assumption that creative writing ability is innate rather than teachable. Third, the relational support participants received throughout the learning process, as documented in Theme 3, reveals three specific mechanisms catalytic to creative confidence: instructor enthusiasm, targeted validation at moments of self-doubt, and peer collaboration. For ELT teacher educators specifically, this means that affective dimensions of drama-based pedagogy, namely instructor energy, timing of feedback, and collaborative task design, are not peripheral concerns but core pedagogical variables. The temporal correlation between Nofa's relational support experiences and her 35% performance improvement provides empirical justification for investing in these affective dimensions.

Fourth, the creative identity transformation participants underwent during dramaturgical engagement, as documented in Theme 4, demonstrates that drama-based pedagogy produces identity reconstruction, not merely skill acquisition, among prospective EFL teachers. The documented linguistic markers of transformation, namely unexpected reversal, intrinsic motivation, and future-oriented projection, suggest that ELT teacher education programs should incorporate reflective writing as a systematic tool for tracking identity development, not only as a supplementary journaling activity. Participants whose creative identity undergoes reconstruction show greater capacity for adaptive, creative teaching—precisely the competency demanded in contemporary EFL classrooms. Fifth, the writing-performance integration participants developed through dramatic scriptwriting, as documented in Theme 5, reveals that dramatic scriptwriting creates bidirectional transfer between written and oral language competencies that traditional composition instruction does not. Nofa's Video Pronunciation/Intonation score exceeding her initial Script Language Use score provides empirical evidence that dramaturgical processes transform rather than merely transfer skills. This has direct implications for ELT curriculum design: integrating scriptwriting with performance production addresses multiple language competencies simultaneously, offering a more efficient and holistic approach than teaching discrete language skills in isolation — a persistent challenge in Indonesian ELT contexts and beyond.

Limitations

Despite generating rich insights, this study has several limitations requiring consideration. The small sample size ($n=2$) limits statistical generalizability. The case study approach, however, with small

sample permits deep exploration of individual experience complexity, yet findings should be understood as providing theoretical insights rather than statistical generalizations. The specific setting of a relatively new teacher education program with small cohort size may have influenced participant receptivity to innovative approaches. Moreover, reliance on self-reported data, written reflections, interviews, and naturalistic observations, though triangulated with rubric assessments, may be subject to social desirability bias. The study did not track participants into actual teaching practice, leaving open questions about transfer of creative confidence developed during teacher preparation to actual classroom pedagogy. Indonesia's specific cultural context, particularly norms about emotional expression in academic settings, may influence how participants experienced and responded to drama-based intervention.

Future Research Directions

Several future research directions emerge from this study's findings and limitations. First, studies tracking graduates into teaching careers would show whether and how dramaturgical experiences influence actual classroom practice, which is a critical question for establishing long-term impact of drama-based interventions in teacher education. Second, comparative research exploring relative effectiveness of drama-based approaches versus conventional teacher education methods in developing creative confidence, with larger and more diverse samples, would provide stronger evidence for advocating systematic drama integration in language teacher education curricula, though such large-scale comparative studies present their own methodological challenges. Third, the era of global language education digitalization demands exploration of drama applications in online and hybrid context. Drama's performative and embodied dimensions can be translated or adapted for virtual learning environments represent important directions for future investigation. Fourth, cross-cultural research investigating how different cultural norms about emotional expression, creativity, and performativity influence drama-based intervention effectiveness would expand understanding of contextual boundaries and necessary adaptations.

Ultimately, this study shows that when language teacher education moves beyond knowledge transmission about teaching toward enabling embodied teaching experiences through dramaturgical performativity, pre-service teachers can discover not only how to teach creatively but how to become creative pedagogical agents. This transformation, from knowing about creativity toward being creative, may represent the essential shift needed to prepare teachers capable of navigating the complex and unpredictable realities of contemporary language classrooms.

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