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# ORAL FLUENCY AND DRAMA

The Effect of Drama-Based Pedagogy on English Oral Fluency in Key  
Stage 2 EAL Learners in UK Primary Schools

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# ABSTRACT

This thesis is an experimental and reflective investigation into the design, implementation, and impact of drama pedagogies with Key Stage 2 English as an Additional Language (EAL) learners on their oral fluency and expressive language production.

Drama has long been recognised as a valuable approach within many pedagogical settings, utilising and promoting imagination, expression and communicative confidence (Bowell & Heap, 2001; Heathcote & Bolton, 1995; Neelands, 2000; O’Toole, 1992; Bowell & Heap, 2001; Wagner, 1998) and, in more recent years, within the field of language learning (Di Pietro, 1987; Even, 2008; Kao & O’Neill, 1998; Maley & Duff 1984; Piazzoli 2011; Smith 1984; Stinson & Winston 2011; Wessels 1987; Whiteson 1998; Winston, 2011). This study builds upon a wealth of research previously undertaken globally, whilst being uniquely framed within the context of a state UK primary school (Key Stage 2). The research demonstrates the power of drama-based pedagogy within the language learning classroom and reveals significant advantages to young EAL learners’ academic and social experience.

The participants were all pupils at an East London state primary school, selected for its diversity of native languages spoken, and their requirement for EAL support. Seventy-three children aged 7-8 took part in the study, 12 of the participants identified as speaking English as their ‘home’ and ‘native’ language, whilst 61 participants identified as speaking one of 17 other languages. The 73 participants formed three groups (two experimental and one control); there were no attainment, or pre-defined differences between any of the three groups. The experimental groups were exposed to a series of drama-based lessons that were designed to promote collaborative learning, problem solving, and expressive language production, often based upon the curriculum-outlined literacy programme, whereas, the control group received ‘traditional’ English language and literacy teaching. These lessons took place weekly over the course of two academic terms, bookended by pre- and post -testing.

A selection of tests from the Clinical Evaluation of Language Fundamentals, fourth edition (CELF-4; Semel, Wiig, & Secord, 2003) battery were administered to assess and measure differences in our young learners’ language and communication skills. The tests selected were chosen for their appropriacy of age, standardisation of task, timing, and their focus on oral fluency, as used in similar studies with participants of this age and demographic (Bowyer-Crane et al., 2016; Kane et al. 2019; Murphy 2017; Valentini & Serratrice, 2019). The tests selected included Word Structure (WS), Formulating Sentences (FS), and Expressive Vocabulary (EV). These tests were evaluated alongside the participant’s National Curriculum Grammar assessment (NC), Raven’s Progressive Matrices, and observational diaries assessments.

The results indicate a significantly beneficial difference in English oral language production (EV and FS) for those participants who undertook drama approaches to learning in comparison to the control group. There were no significant differences between the two experimental groups, except in the assessment for WS, which can be attributed to one class having higher pre-test results and therefore having less opportunity for significant improvement. There were no significant differences in the other assessment results, with both the experimental groups and control group making gradual, expected progress.

Based on these findings, this thesis will outline considerations for drama pedagogies in the Key Stage 2 English classroom, the benefits of collaborative peer-to-peer language learning, pupil and teacher

response to drama-based learning, and the wider confidence and motivational implications of drama-based learning.

## STATEMENT OF ORIGINALITY

This work has not previously been submitted for a degree or diploma in any university. To the best of my knowledge and belief, the thesis contains no material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the thesis itself.

Luke Allder

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

|   |           |
|---|-----------|
| ABSTRACT  | I         |
| STATEMENT OF ORIGINALITY                              | III       |
| ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS                                      | IV        |
| LIST OF FIGURES                                       | X         |
| LIST OF TABLES  | XII       |
| LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS                                 | XIII      |
| <br>  |           |
| <b>CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION</b>                      | <b>1</b>  |
| 1.1    AIMS OF THE STUDY                              | 1         |
| 1.2    OVERVIEW OF THE THESIS                         | 4         |
| <br>  |           |
| <b>CHAPTER TWO: ENGLISH AS AN ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE</b> | <b>6</b>  |
| 2.1    EAL FIGURES                                    | 7         |
| 2.2    ACHIEVEMENT                                    | 10        |
| 2.3    LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY                           | 15        |
| 2.3.1    Measuring Language Proficiency               | 16        |
| 2.3.2    Attaining Proficiency                        | 20        |
| 2.4    EAL IN LONDON                                  | 25        |
| <br>  |           |
| <b>CHAPTER THREE: DRAMA IN EDUCATION</b>              | <b>29</b> |
| 3.1    RECENT DEVELOPMENTS                            | 30        |
| 3.2    LOW UPTAKE AND TEACHER TRAINING                | 32        |
| 3.3    DISADVANTAGED LEARNERS                         | 36        |
| 3.4    POST-WAR AND THE CHILD-CENTRED APPROACH        | 40        |
| 3.5    THE DEMISE OF PROGRESSIVE PEDAGOGIES           | 47        |
| 3.6    THEATRE IN EDUCATION / DRAMA IN EDUCATION      | 50        |



|   |                                     |    |
|---|-------------------------------------|----|
| 3.7   | APPLIED DRAMA                       | 53 |
| <b>CHAPTER FOUR: DRAMA IN LANGUAGE LEARNING</b> |                                     | 56 |
| 4.1   | LANGUAGE LEARNING                   | 59 |
| 4.2   | DRAMA IN LANGUAGE TEACHING          | 61 |
| 4.3   | COMMUNICATION                       | 63 |
| 4.4   | EMBODIED LEARNING IN CONTEXT        | 65 |
| 4.5   | IDENTITY                            | 67 |
| 4.6   | SAFE SPACE                          | 60 |
| 4.7   | TEACHING                            | 71 |
| 4.8   | PROCESS DRAMA AND LANGUAGE LEARNING | 72 |
| 4.8.1   | Pre-text and Context                | 73 |
| 4.8.2   | Non-Verbal Activities               | 75 |
| 4.8.3   | No External Audience                | 76 |
| 4.8.4   | Roles – Teacher and Learners        | 79 |
| 4.9   | COLLABORATION AND LANGUAGE LEARNING | 82 |
| 4.9.1   | Cooperative Learning                | 82 |
| 4.9.2   | Cooperative versus Collaborative    | 85 |
| 4.10  | PROBLEM-SOLVING                     | 86 |
| 4.11  | CASE STUDIES                        | 88 |
| <b>CHAPTER FIVE: METHODOLOGY</b>                |                                     | 90 |
| 5.1   | METHODOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS       | 92 |
| 5.2   | AIMS AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS         | 93 |
| 5.3   | THE STUDY                           | 94 |
| 5.3.1   | Context                             | 94 |
| 5.3.2   | Set Up                              | 96 |
| 5.3.3   | Ethics                              | 97 |
| 5.3.4   | Participants                        | 98 |

|  |                                     |     |
|--|-------------------------------------|-----|
| 5.4                                      | <b>QUANTITATIVE DATA COLLECTION</b> | 101 |
| 5.4.1                                    | Materials                           | 101 |
| 5.4.2                                    | Non-Verbal Reasoning                | 101 |
| 5.4.3                                    | Oral Fluency                        | 104 |
| 5.4.4                                    | Expressive Vocabulary Test          | 104 |
| 5.4.5                                    | Formulating Sentences Test          | 106 |
| 5.4.6                                    | Word Structure Test                 | 108 |
| 5.4.7                                    | National Curriculum Assessments     | 110 |
| 5.4.8                                    | Data Collection Procedure           | 112 |
| 5.5                                      | <b>INTERVENTION DESIGN</b>          | 114 |
| 5.5.1                                    | Drama Intervention                  | 115 |
| 5.5.2                                    | Theoretical Principles              | 119 |
| 5.5.3                                    | Planned Techniques and Strategies   | 120 |
| 5.5.3.1                                  | Child-Centredness                   | 122 |
| 5.5.3.2                                  | Context and Character               | 123 |
| 5.5.3.3                                  | Gesture and Movement                | 125 |
| 5.5.3.4                                  | Reflection                          | 126 |
| 5.5.4                                    | Control Group Intervention          | 129 |
| 5.6                                      | <b>QUALITATIVE DATA COLLECTION</b>  | 132 |
| 5.6.1                                    | Observational Diaries               | 132 |
| 5.6.2                                    | Interviews and Feedback             | 135 |
| 5.7                                      | <b>CHAPTER SUMMARY</b>              | 136 |
| <b>CHAPTER SIX: QUANTITATIVE RESULTS</b> |                                     | 138 |
| 6.1                                      | <b>DATA ANALYSIS</b>                | 139 |
| 6.2                                      | <b>RESULTS</b>                      | 139 |
| 6.2.1                                    | Pre-Testing                         | 139 |
| 6.2.2                                    | Post-Testing                        | 141 |
| 6.2.3                                    | Expressive Vocabulary               | 142 |
| 6.2.4                                    | Formulating Sentences               | 147 |

|   |   |     |
|---|---|-----|
| 6.2.5                                     | Word Structure                                    | 151 |
| 6.2.6                                     | National Curriculum Grammar Test                  | 154 |
| 6.3                                       | <b>CHAPTER SUMMARY</b>                            | 155 |
| <b>CHAPTER SEVEN: QUALITATIVE RESULTS</b> |   | 157 |
| 7.1                                       | <b>RESEARCH QUESTION ONE</b>                      | 159 |
| 7.1.1                                     | Plurals   | 160 |
| 7.1.2                                     | Word Omission                                     | 161 |
| 7.1.3                                     | 3 <sup>rd</sup> Person                            | 163 |
| 7.1.4                                     | Comparatives                                      | 164 |
| 7.1.5.                                    | Accuracy, Marking, and Error Correction           | 165 |
| 7.2                                       | <b>RESEARCH QUESTION THREE</b>                    | 167 |
| 7.2.1                                     | Change from the normal                            | 168 |
| 7.2.2                                     | Topics  | 171 |
| 7.2.3                                     | Taking Roles                                      | 173 |
| 7.2.4                                     | Confidence  | 175 |
| 7.2.5                                     | Teamwork and Collaboration                        | 177 |
| 7.2.6                                     | Lesson Example – Problem Solving – Alien Language | 180 |
| 7.2.7                                     | Memory and Gesture                                | 182 |
| 7.2.8                                     | Silent Classroom: ‘They’re Copying’               | 185 |
| 7.2.9                                     | Fast Finishers                                    | 187 |
| 7.2.10                                    | Interviews and Feedback                           | 188 |
| 7.3                                       | <b>CHAPTER SUMMARY</b>                            | 190 |
| <b>CHAPTER EIGHT: DISCUSSION</b>          |   | 193 |
| 8.1                                       | <b>ORAL FLUENCY</b>                               | 195 |
| 8.1.1                                     | Expressive Vocabulary                             | 195 |
| 8.1.1.1                                   | Gesture   | 196 |
| 8.1.1.2                                   | Language in Context                               | 198 |
| 8.1.1.3                                   | Safe Space / Making Mistakes / Risk Taking        | 200 |

|  |  |     |
|--|--|-----|
| 8.1.1.4  | Confidence and Collaboration                   | 203 |
| 8.1.1.5  | Lesson Example: Upscaling Language             | 207 |
| 8.1.2  | Formulating Sentences                          | 208 |
| 8.1.2.1  | Self – Confidence                              | 209 |
| 8.1.2.2  | Change from the normal                         | 213 |
| 8.1.2.3  | Problem Solving                                | 215 |
| 8.1.3  | Word Structure and National Curriculum Grammar | 218 |
| 8.2  | <b>CHAPTER SUMMARY</b>                         | 219 |
| <b>CHAPTER NINE: CONCLUSION</b>                            |  | 222 |
| 9.1  | <b>RESEARCH QUESTION CONCLUSIONS</b>           | 223 |
| 9.2  | <b>LIMITATIONS</b>                             | 229 |
| 9.3  | <b>CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE FIELD</b>              | 231 |
| 9.4  | <b>RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH</b>     | 233 |
| <b>REFERENCES</b>  |  | 235 |
| <b>APPENDICES</b>  |  | 259 |
| <b>APPENDIX A: ENGLISH LANGUAGE EXPOSURE QUESTIONNAIRE</b> |  | 260 |
| <b>APPENDIX B: LESSON PLANS</b>                            |  | 262 |
| <b>APPENDIX C: COLLATED OBSERVATIONAL NOTES</b>            |  | 290 |

## LIST OF FIGURES

**Figure 1:** English proficiency of EAL pupils, Spring 2018 (DfE, 2020)

**Figure 2:** National ‘Proficiency in English’ Codes (Department for Education, 2020)

**Figure 3:** Example question from Raven’s Progressive Matrices

**Figure 4:** Boxplot of mean scores for Raven’s Progressive Matrices Results – prior to experimentation.

**Figure 5:** Example pictures from the CELF-4 Expressive Vocabulary assessment.

**Figure 6:** Examples of interlocutor’s stimulus guide (above) and participant’s stimulus picture (below) from the CELF-4 Formulating Sentences task.

**Figure 7:** Examples of interlocutor’s question guide and participant picture stimuli from the CELF-4 Word Structure assessment.

**Figure 8:** Example questions taken from Key Stage 2 Grammar test paper (2018)

**Figure 9:** Word Structure pre-test results across all groups.

**Figure 10:** Expressive Vocabulary improvement scores across control and experimental groups.

**Figure 11:** Expressive Vocabulary improvement scores for the Control Group and the Experimental Group arranged by gender.

**Figure 12:** Expressive Vocabulary Improvement scores for native vs. non-native speakers of English in each group.

**Figure 13:** Formulating Sentences improvement scores across the control and the experimental group.

**Figure 14:** Formulating Sentences improvement scores for Control group and Experimental group arranged by gender.

**Figure 15:** Formulating Sentences improvement scores for Control and Experimental Groups arranged by native vs. non-native speakers of English.

**Figure 16:** Word Structure improvement scores across control and combined experimental groups.

**Figure 17:** Word Structure improvement scores across Control and individual Experimental groups.

**Figure 18:** NC Grammar improvement scores across the control and the experimental groups.

**Figure 19:** Example of in-class observation notes (Lesson 3 – The Favourite), made during activities, indicating the main three categories of observation.

**Figure 20:** Gesture and facial expression used to correct comparative form.

**Figure 21:** Traditional islands of tables layout within the classroom.

**Figure 22:** Learner feedback from Julie following the drama interventions. “I like that you can like move and it is so much fun”. (NL-Russian)

**Figure 23:** Learner feedback from Kylie following the drama interventions. “Freeze frames, there really fun and make me feel like I can be an actor”. (NL-Lithuanian)

**Figure 24:** Learner feedback from Gale following the drama interventions. “I liked drama because we do frees frames”. (NL-Bulgarian)

**Figure 25:** Learner feedback from Lucy following the drama interventions. “I think drama can help you with your language ”. (NL-Lithuanian)

**Figure 26:** Learner feedback from Caroline following the drama interventions. “It might help by speaking [sic] more English”. (NL-Lithuanian)

**Figure 27:** Learner feedback from Lucy) following the drama interventions. “It makes learning fun”. (NL-Lithuanian)

**Figure 28:** Learner feedback from Marta following the drama interventions. “It make me lern that I know how other people feel.” (NL-Romanian)

**Figure 29:** Learner feedback from Wendy following the drama interventions. “I like roplaying with other people, it’s really fun to do it (with) other people.” (NL-Hungarian)

**Figure 30:** Learner feedback from Nora following the drama interventions. “There very helpful to make us confidence.” (NL-Bengali)

**Figure 31:** Learner feedback from Julie following the drama interventions. “I think it can be help me by being confident because I’m not confident.” (NL-Russian)

**Figure 32:** Learner feedback from Alicia following the drama interventions. “I think it helps to speak better and help in our learning and be confidence.” (NL-Polish)

**Figure 33:** Learner feedback from Nora following the drama interventions. “It helps us work with others.” (NL – Bengali)

**Figure 34:** Learner feedback from Tommy following the drama interventions. “We learn about other things like controlling your body working together.” (NL- Bengali)

**Figure 35:** Learner feedback from Olivia following the drama interventions. “Easy to remember the story, it’s so cool.” (NL – English / Yoruba)

**Figure 36:** Learner feedback from May following the drama interventions. “It helps us memorise the story.” (NL- Lithuanian)

**Figure 37:** Learner feedback from Freddie following the drama interventions. “By help me remember things and fun.” (NL- Lithuanian)

**Figure 38:** Example of control group worksheets (supplied by the school) regarding animal body parts.

**Figure 39:** Example of experimental group gestures regarding animal body parts. (iStock image)

# LIST OF TABLES

- Table 1:** Characteristics of EAL pupils in UK state education (DfE, 2020)
- Table 2:** English proficiency level by year group (DfE, 2020)
- Table 3 :** Analysis of Primary School National Curriculum Assessment Results by First Language
- Table 4:** EAL KS2 performance by level of fluency in English in Inner London (%)
- Table 5:** FLE AND EAL KS2 performance at GCSE (2014/2015)
- Table 6:** KS2 achievement of EAL pupils by Region in England
- Table 7:** Population in Newham, London and England by nationality (excluding UK) in 2019 (ONS, 2011)
- Table 8:** Group breakdown by age and gender
- Table 9:** Group breakdown by home language
- Table 10:** Mean scores and SDs for each group on the Raven’s test.
- Table 11:** Fourteen-week lesson plan outline for Intervention group.
- Table 12:** Fourteen-week lesson plan outline for Control group.
- Table 13:** Example of Observational Diary page.
- Table 14 :** Mean and standard deviation (in parenthesis) scores of pre-testing assessments for each group.
- Table 15 :** Mean and standard deviation (in parenthesis) improvement scores for each group.
- Table 16:** Expressive Vocabulary pre and post test scores (out of 54) and SDs for each group.
- Table 17:** Expressive Vocabulary improvement scores and SDs for each group.
- Table 18:** Formulating Sentences pre and post test scores (out of 48) and SDs for each group.
- Table 19:** Formulating Sentences improvement scores and SDs for each group.
- Table 20:** Word Structure pre and post test scores (out of 32) and SDs for each group.
- Table 21:** Word Structure improvement scores and SDs for each group.
- Table 22:** Word Structure improvement mean scores and standard deviation for each group.
- Table 23:** NC Grammar improvement scores for each group
- Table 24:** Number of correct plurals pre and post test scores for each group.

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

|        |  |
|--------|--|
| ANOVA  | Analysis of variance   |
| CELF-4 | Clinical Evaluation of Linguistic Fundamentals (4 <sup>th</sup> Edition) |
| CLT    | Communicative Language Teaching  |
| DCMS   | Department of Culture, Media, and Sport                                  |
| DfE    | Department for Education   |
| DIE    | Drama in Education   |
| EAL    | English as an Additional Language  |
| EBACC  | The English Baccalaureate  |
| EFL    | English as a Foreign Language  |
| EV     | Expressive Vocabulary  |
| FLE    | First Language English   |
| FS     | Formulating Sentences  |
| GCSE   | General Certificate in Secondary Education                               |
| GLD    | Good level of development  |
| HLL    | High level learner   |
| HOY    | Head of Year   |
| KS2    | Key Stage 2  |
| LEA    | Local Education Authority  |
| LLL    | Low level learner  |
| NC     | National Curriculum  |
| NPD    | National Pupil Database  |
| ONS    | Office for National Statistics   |
| QCA    | Qualifications and Curriculum Authority                                  |
| SD     | Standard Deviation   |
| STEM   | Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics                         |
| TESOL  | Teaching English to speakers of other languages                          |
| TIE    | Theatre in Education   |
| TPR    | Total Physical Response  |
| WS     | Word Structure   |
| ZPD    | Zone of Proximal Development   |



# CHAPTER ONE

## 1 INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Aims of the study

The multi-model techniques used in Theatre-in-Education (TIE) and Drama-in-Education (DIE) have long been employed as pedagogical and methodological tools across subject areas (Heathcote & Bolton, 1995; O'Neill, 1995; Wagner, 1998; Neelands, 2000; Jackson, 2002; McCaslin, 2006; Landy & Montgomery, 2012; Anderson, Michael & Dunn, 2013; Howell & Heap, 2013). Within the field, drama has been used as a tool for engaging learners through dynamic and embodied practice, across subjects and contexts. Drama has also taken on therapeutic, social, and personal development roles helping learners to better understand themselves and the world around them. However, drama's use in the language classroom has had rather a slower trajectory and one which has taken longer to gain recognition. In the last twenty years or so, we have been able to gather deeper understanding and globally share our knowledge and experience of drama's use within the language classroom, due to a number of pioneer scholars and researchers (Kao & Neill, 1998; Miccoli, 2003; Ntelioglou, 2011; Piazzoli, 2010, 2011; Ronke, 2005; Rothwell, 2011; Schewe, 2002; Stinson, 2008; Stinson & Freebody, 2006; Winston, 2011), and the proliferation of information thanks to the internet.

The UK state primary school system has been subject to a constantly shifting curriculum. As governments change, the educational parameters in which a school operates are subject to dramatic changes affecting the day-to-day organisation of the school, academic priorities, and varying assessment criteria. This has been especially felt in recent years, in many major inner-city and more economically deprived areas with ever increasing populations and changing sociocultural requirements. According to the data collected through the National Census and the Department for Education, it is clear that certain educational authorities are seeing their resources stretched and their needs exacerbated. One specific educational area which has seen a shift over recent years is

that of English language. Within UK primary schools, 21.2% of pupils identify as English as an Additional Language (EAL) (a number which has doubled since 2006 – The Bell Foundation, 2021), meaning they are exposed to a language known, or believed, to be other than English in their home. This homogenic umbrella term can be rather misleading as it does not take into account the level of English attained by the learner and the learner's exposure to English. Indeed, there are very few studies undertaken which evaluate the ways in which EAL students are assessed, their attainment levels, and their levels of language proficiency. Moreover, many resources urgently request a further study to improve the knowledge on EAL students' attainment and how further support might be given to those with lower levels of English language proficiency (Borgoyne, 2009; Demie, 2017; Demie & Strand, 2006; Foley, 2013; NALDIC, 2012a).

However, as more data is gathered, it has become clear that within the UK primary school system, this is where we witness Key Stage 2 (KS2) EAL learners struggle most with their language proficiency. Very young (KS1 and below) EAL learners are still acquiring their first language skills, and so have a stronger ability to acquire English as a dominant language or more easily become bi or multilingual. Generally, in KS3 and above, EAL learners are provided with further English language support in school, and have provisions put in place to specifically target the needs of the EAL student. On the other hand, primary schools have reported a lack of resources to support their KS2 EAL learners, and the statistical data supports this, with KS2 EAL learners achieving below their native English-speaking peers across national curriculum assessments (DfE, 2017).

In their meta-analysis of the field, Prevo, Malda, Mesman, and van IJzendoorn (2016) posited that overall, oral language proficiency was the greatest indicator of attainment across all subjects with learners of this age group. Indeed, through greater oral language learning the discrepancy between native and non-native English speakers disappeared and EAL learners began to out-perform their native speaking peers. Furthermore, this evidence was not only witnessed with regards to academic performance but, as Whiteside et al. (2017) and Dowdy, Dever, DiStefano, and Chin (2011) found, an

improvement in English language proficiency in early school years amongst EAL pupils led to a direct correlation in improved social, behavioural and emotional skills.

Building on the increased knowledge being collated internationally, this thesis seeks to explore how these changing pedagogical approaches can be used to help promote English oral fluency within the KS2 UK state primary school system.

The aims of this study are to design, implement, and assess a curriculum of process-drama based workshops and lessons, in comparison to more traditional language and literacy lessons to answer the following research questions:

1. Will children who have undertaken a drama-based English programme improve their oral fluency more than those children who have not undertaken a drama-based English programme?
2. Will children who have undertaken a drama-based English programme perform better in their National Curriculum Grammar examination than those children who have not undertaken a drama-based English programme?
3. Will children who have undertaken a drama-based English programme reveal any other benefits related to confidence, motivation, or social integration in comparison to those children who have not undertaken a drama-based English programme?

The study will use a battery of quantitative oral fluency assessments (CELF-4) alongside qualitative data collection as a means of measuring the resultant outcomes of the intervention with KS2 students. The study will also seek to further discuss the reasons why drama-based learning can have an impact on language proficiency, language confidence, and the importance of collaboration and peer to peer learning.

As the use of process drama-based teaching approaches have not been studied with EAL learners within the UK primary school system previously, it is hoped that this study will make an original contribution to the field of EAL and drama in language education research.

## 1.2 Overview of the thesis

This thesis is comprised of nine chapters. This brief Introduction outlines the main aims of the study and situates the original context for investigation. Chapters Two, Three, and Four present a review of the literature that focuses on the main topics of interest; these include: English as an Additional Language within the UK, Drama in Education in historical and social context, and Drama in Language Learning. These chapters frame current understanding on the field in which we are operating and build a basis for the research questions leading to the design and implementation of the study.

Chapter Five concerns the research methodology which supports this experimental study. It presents the research questions and approaches implemented. This chapter also provides data on the context for the study, the school, the participants, and the ethical considerations undertaken prior to and during the project. Further within this chapter the implementation design is discussed, which includes guidance through the lesson plans, the theoretical grounding for the designs, and the methodological approaches to teaching and implementation. This chapter concludes by outlining how the varied data collection occurred and the methods for qualitative observational assessment.

The quantitative data and results are presented in Chapter Six. Here, the pre-test data, post-test data, and comparative data are analysed. This chapter details the quantitative findings from the study in relation to the previously outlined research questions.

Following the presentation of quantitative data and results, Chapter Seven presents the qualitative data and results. Observational diaries, verbatim quotes, feedback, and interview contributions are presented as a means of further answering the research questions and also firmly placing the results

in a more comprehensive context. The data here further supports the quantitative results, whilst also allowing the participants and facilitators an opportunity to add their opinions and perspective on the project.

The Discussion chapter builds upon the previous chapters and uses the data and results, alongside previous research to further understand the outcomes achieved. Whilst using the framework of the research questions, the Discussion chapter considers the study's outcomes in terms of both quantitative oral fluency proficiency achievement and the more social and behavioural aspects of the intervention. The results are divided into sections relating to specific oral fluency assessments in tandem to their pedagogic strategies.

Finally, Chapter Nine concludes the thesis and discusses the implications of the project. The conclusion assesses the role of drama in language education and more specifically the role of drama within the EAL learning context. It continues by considering the contribution of the study to this burgeoning field of research, and in particular its limitations and avenues for future research needed.

## CHAPTER TWO

### 2 ENGLISH AS AN ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE

It is essential to define the term 'English as an Additional Language' which has long been an issue of contention for researchers, policy-makers, and educators. As Demie (2017) and Whiteside (2017) discuss, EAL is not a homogenous term; indeed, it refers to a host of possible variations between individuals and groups and it can be very misleading when used as a categorisation of data.

The long-held categorisation of English as an Additional Language pupils as 'pupils whose first language is known or believed to be other than English, where 'first language' refers to 'the language to which a child was initially exposed during early development and continues to be exposed to this language in the home or in the community' (DfE, 2019: 7) came under scrutiny within the England National Pupil Database (NPD) for giving no specific indication of any level of fluency or proficiency in English.

The heterogenous EAL community is very diverse in its make-up, from those second or third generation ethnic minorities for whom languages other than English form only part of a cultural, heritage, or religious function, to newly arrived migrants who speak little or no English. Demie (2015) calls for clarity and a 'need to unpick' the categorisations used with ethnic minorities in schools as a means of better understanding the performance of those for whom English is not their native language. Demie (2015) goes on to detail how, until 2007, there was no nationally collected data detailing the languages spoken in the homes of school children. The School Census in England 2012, therefore, revealed some interesting statistics for the first time in the UK, that there were approximately 350 languages spoken in schools (DfE, 2014). Eighteen of these languages were widely spoken (by more than 10,000 pupils, with Panjabi, Urdu, Bengali and Polish forming the 4 largest populations) whereas seventy languages were only spoken by between 1 and 4 pupils. This diversity of languages spoken highlights the varied nature of the British school system but does not

detail whether the EAL population's languages impact on their English language proficiency or lead to any challenges or difficulty in their education.

Whilst a pupil may be exposed to languages other than English in the home or community environment it does not mean that the pupils are necessarily fluent in a language other than English, or that they cannot speak English fluently. 'Pupils can, therefore, be identified in the census as EAL when they are bilingual and have no specific need of support to access mainstream education in English.' (DfE, 2016). The indefinite terms by which EAL pupils are categorised therefore needs clarification based on solid assessment criteria, rather than sweeping judgements cast on a diverse group. In contrast, however, many children will be classed as EAL when considered 'emergent bilinguals' (Gregory, 1998). Emergent bilinguals are those children who do not acquire two languages from birth and are expected, mainly through educational outlets, to eventually become bilingual. Under these circumstances for children and their families, 'English is usually an additional language (EAL) in an already rich linguistic repertoire' (Mahon et al., 2003).

Whether having always lived in the UK but speaking languages other than English at home or within one's community, or being a new arrival, the statistics on EAL pupils reveal some stark findings. Aggregated data collection, which does not always separate contributing factors, such as, pupil's background, native language (L1), and the period of time in the UK, confirms that EAL pupils underachieve at Key Stage 2 in reading, writing, and maths compared to their monolingual or First Language English (FLE) speaking peers (Burgoyne et al. 2009; Demie, 2011, 2013, 2017; Strand, 1999, 2005; Whiteside, 2017). Indeed, as Demie's (2011, 2015) findings conclude, language barriers are still one of the greatest factors affecting a child's success in education.

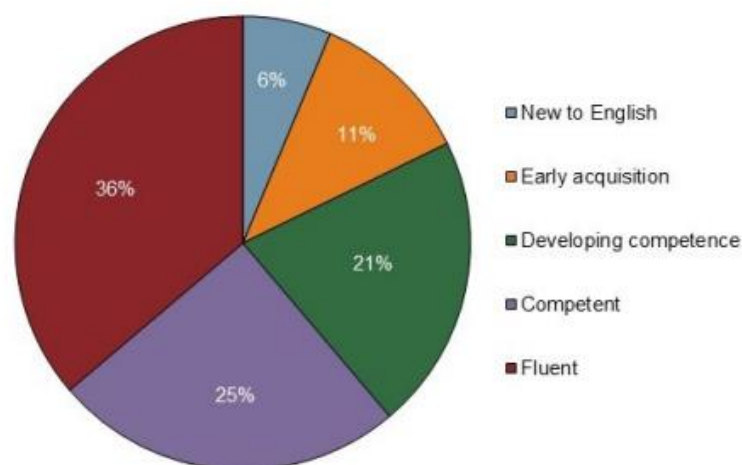
## 2.1 EAL Figures

As the Department for Education (2019) figures show, 21.2% of pupils in UK primary schools identify as EAL, meaning they are exposed to a language known, or believed to be, other than English in their

home. Since January 2017, this is an increase of 0.6%. Within the UK there has been a steady rise in EAL pupil numbers since 2006. The number of EAL pupil is higher in primary schools than in secondary education, which shows identifying EAL numbers at 16.9% (DfE, 2019).

English language proficiency within the heterogenous EAL population is incredibly varied.

Assessment data from Spring 2018 shows 36% of EAL pupils as being 'fluent', and a further 25% as 'competent', with the further 39% being categorised as having 'No English', 'New to English' or 'Becoming familiar with English' (See Figure 1, DfE, 2020). Variations in proficiency are generally attributed to age and length of time within English schools, with 77% of secondary school EAL pupils and 51% of primary school EAL pupils being classed as 'fluent'. This is also apparent in pupils time educated in English schools, with fluency accounting for 80% of those educated for over 5 years, and only 40% for those up to 5 years.



**Figure 1:** English proficiency of EAL pupils, Spring 2018 (DfE, 2020)

The Department for Education (2020) further details how pupils living in the least deprived areas are more likely to be assessed at a higher English proficiency level with 73% of pupils living in the least deprived decile assessed as either 'competent' or 'fluent' in English compared to only 59% of those in the most deprived areas. This is also shown in the geographic spread of proficiency data, with the highest levels of English proficiency among EAL pupils in the South East (66%) and in London (65%) and the lowest in the North East (54%) and North West (54%).



**Table 1:** Characteristics of EAL pupils in UK state education (DfE, 2020)

|                           | Pupils with English as an additional language |                            | Pupils with English first language |                            | EAL pupils as a % of all pupils |
|---------------------------|---|----------------------------|------------------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------------|
|                           | Number of pupils                              | % with that characteristic | Number of pupils                   | % with that characteristic |                                 |
| All pupils                | 1,476,414                                     |                            | 6,317,921                          |                            | 19%                             |
| Male                      | 752,197                                       | 51%                        | 3,223,728                          | 51%                        | 19%                             |
| Female                    | 724,217                                       | 49%                        | 3,094,193                          | 49%                        | 19%                             |
| Primary (Reception to Y6) | 945,561                                       | 64%                        | 3,596,297                          | 57%                        | 21%                             |
| Secondary (Y7-11)         | 458,389                                       | 31%                        | 2,373,948                          | 38%                        | 16%                             |
| Post-16 (Y12-14)          | 72,349  | 5%                         | 346,655                            | 5%                         | 17%                             |
| White                     | 439,086                                       | 30%                        | 5,359,888                          | 85%                        | 8%                              |
| Black                     | 189,338                                       | 13%                        | 249,943                            | 4%                         | 43%                             |
| Asian                     | 610,860                                       | 41%                        | 233,763                            | 4%                         | 72%                             |
| Chinese                   | 25,796  | 2%                         | 8,187                              | 0%                         | 76%                             |
| Other                     | 116,091                                       | 8%                         | 28,352                             | 0%                         | 80%                             |
| Mixed                     | 77,301  | 5%                         | 371,646                            | 6%                         | 17%                             |
| UNCL                      | 17,942  | 1%                         | 66,142                             | 1%                         | 20%                             |
| Disadvantaged             | 362,339                                       | 25%                        | 1,500,002                          | 24%                        | 19%                             |
| Not disadvantaged         | 1,114,075                                     | 75%                        | 4,817,919                          | 76%                        | 19%                             |
| FSM                       | 201,812                                       | 14%                        | 881,508                            | 14%                        | 19%                             |
| Not FSM                   | 1,274,602                                     | 86%                        | 5,436,413                          | 86%                        | 19%                             |
| SEN                       | 188,884                                       | 13%                        | 971,468                            | 15%                        | 16%                             |
| No SEN                    | 1,287,530                                     | 87%                        | 5,346,453                          | 85%                        | 19%                             |
| North East                | 24,778  | 2%                         | 337,201                            | 5%                         | 7%                              |
| North West                | 150,209                                       | 10%                        | 895,463                            | 14%                        | 14%                             |
| Yorkshire and The Humber  | 126,957                                       | 9%                         | 656,168                            | 10%                        | 16%                             |
| East Midlands             | 96,021  | 7%                         | 576,779                            | 9%                         | 14%                             |
| East                      | 122,962                                       | 8%                         | 757,245                            | 12%                        | 14%                             |
| West Midlands             | 181,104                                       | 12%                        | 690,519                            | 11%                        | 21%                             |
| London                    | 555,567                                       | 38%                        | 657,460                            | 10%                        | 46%                             |
| South East                | 163,836                                       | 11%                        | 1,074,000                          | 17%                        | 13%                             |
| South West                | 54,980  | 4%                         | 673,086                            | 11%                        | 8%                              |

As Table 1 shows, EAL pupils are much less likely to be white than pupils with English as their first language - 30% of EAL pupils are white, 41% are Asian, and 13% are black, whereas 85% of pupils with English as a first language are white, 4% are black and 4% are Asian. They are also more likely to be of primary school age - 64% of EAL pupils are in primary schools (compared to 57% of FLE pupils)

There is no specific difference between EAL and FLE pupils with regards to many other characteristics. For example, similar to the general school population 49% are female, 25% are

disadvantaged and 13% have a special educational need (SEN). They are more likely to go to school in London (38%) and least likely to go to school in the North East (2%).

The data collected by DfE (2020), also shows that EAL pupils are more likely to struggle with English language attainment, rather than mathematics and science subjects. Within primary education, Key Stage 1 and 2, the impact of low English proficiency levels is most apparent in reading and writing assessments and, similarly at Key Stage 4, the impact is greatest in GCSE English.

**Table 2:** English proficiency level by year group (DfE, 2020)

|           | Number of pupils | Percentage with English proficiency level |                   |                       |           |        |
|-----------|------------------|---|-------------------|-----------------------|-----------|--------|
|           |                  | New to English                            | Early acquisition | Developing competence | Competent | Fluent |
| Reception | 131,825          | 23%                                       | 28%               | 23%                   | 14%       | 12%    |
| Year 1    | 139,281          | 14%                                       | 26%               | 27%                   | 18%       | 16%    |
| Year 2    | 140,106          | 7%  | 18%               | 29%                   | 24%       | 22%    |
| Year 3    | 138,379          | 5%  | 12%               | 27%                   | 28%       | 27%    |
| Year 4    | 137,664          | 4%  | 10%               | 25%                   | 30%       | 31%    |
| Year 5    | 135,673          | 3%  | 7%                | 23%                   | 31%       | 36%    |
| Year 6    | 127,480          | 3%  | 6%                | 20%                   | 31%       | 40%    |
| Year 7    | 96,372           | 3%  | 6%                | 18%                   | 28%       | 46%    |
| Year 8    | 95,464           | 3%  | 6%                | 16%                   | 25%       | 50%    |
| Year 9    | 93,355           | 3%  | 5%                | 15%                   | 25%       | 53%    |
| Year 10   | 92,110           | 3%  | 5%                | 14%                   | 24%       | 54%    |
| Year 11   | 87,802           | 2%  | 4%                | 13%                   | 24%       | 57%    |
| Year 12   | 41,419           | 1%  | 2%                | 6%                    | 22%       | 68%    |
| Year 13   | 31,936           | 0%  | 1%                | 3%                    | 17%       | 79%    |

As Table 2 shows, English proficiency levels increase with age. By secondary school (years 7 to 13), a mean of 52% of EAL pupils were assessed as ‘fluent in English’ compared to only 26% of those of primary school age (reception to year 6). This study is focused on KS2 (years 3 to 6), which have a ‘fluent in English’ mean of 33.5%.

## 2.2 Achievement

When observing data across early school achievement, a considerable line can be drawn between those pupils identifying as EAL and their FLE peers. At age 5 (Reception), 71% of pupils recorded as

FLE achieved a good level of development (GLD), according to the 2016 Department for Education Statistical First Release, in contrast to 63% of EAL pupils at the same Key Stage. The Department for Education use the GLD assessment as their main criteria for Reception-aged learners; they define GLD as follows:

Children achieving a good level of development are those achieving at least the expected level within the following areas of learning: communication and language; physical development; personal, social and emotional development; literacy; and mathematics. (DfE, 2013b: 7)

This significant difference continues throughout primary schooling with noticeable gaps between EAL and FLE's expected standards. Table 3 presents an analysis of national assessment results from 2016 from the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile (EYFSP) at age 5, end of Key Stage 1 (KS1) teacher assessment at age 7, and end of Key Stage 2 (KS2) tests at age 11. Whilst EAL pupils across early years and primary education are underperforming their FLE peers, it is evident that they are generally making better progress throughout their academic journey.

**Table 3** : Analysis of Primary School National Curriculum Assessment Results by First Language

| EYFSP      | First Language     | No of Eligible Pupils | At least the expected standard in all Early Learning Goals (ELGs)            | A good level of development (GLD)  |
|------------|--------------------|-----------------------|--|--|
|            | English            | 469,875               | 70   | 71   |
|            | Other than English | 118,030               | 61   | 63   |
|            | Unclassified       | 81,147                | 63   | 65   |
| <b>KS1</b> |                    |                       | <b>Percentage of pupils reaching the expected standard (English Reading)</b> | <b>Percentage of pupils reaching the expected standard (English Writing)</b> |
|            | English            | 514,570               | 77   | 69   |
|            | Other than English | 136,041               | 72   | 67   |
|            | Unclassified       | 4,977                 | 36   | 30   |
| <b>KS2</b> |                    |                       | <b>Percentage of pupils reaching the expected standard</b>                   | <b>Progress Score</b>  |
|            | English            | 472,006               | 54   | -0.1   |
|            | Other than English | 111,719               | 50   | 0.3  |
|            | Unclassified       | 3,334                 | 25   | -0.7   |

\* Unclassified refers to pupils for whom ethnicity or first language was not obtained, refused or could not be determined.

(Data source: DfE, 2017)

However, progress results can be slightly skewed due to the levels of attainment previously gathered. As Strand et al. (2015) describe 'averaging across KS2 and KS4, around 17% of pupils recorded as EAL have no prior attainment score, compared to just 2% of FLE pupils.' Therefore, progress from a previous null entry may appear to show greater progress attained.

With regards to government data collection, and its subsequent analysis, it is important that all the statistics are considered in the context of other extraneous variables. The EAL community, as with FLE pupils, is affected by the same factors that foster low attainment. Special Educational Needs (SEN), Free School Meals (FSM), living in an economically deprived area, being young for the school year group, and being male, are all shown to disadvantage pupils with regards to their academic achievement (Strand et al., 2015). These factors can all affect attainment by themselves and as collected factors, including having English as an additional language. Often, the higher number of affecting factors, the greater negative impact on attainment.

In addition to these factors, EAL pupils also have a variety of EAL-specific factors which can, in turn, lead to further risks to attainment; for example, time in the UK and entering during a key stage (especially within the last two years of primary). There have also been discrepancies found with specific ethnic groups (Black African and White Other) and home languages, particularly Lithuanian, Polish, Romanian, Turkish, and Portuguese, all of which are predictors of lower attainment scores. These lower attainment outcomes continue even after taking socio-economic variables into consideration (Strand et al., 2015).

In identifying factors affecting attainment, it is a school's duty, as prescribed by the National Curriculum to 'ensure the continual development of pupils' confidence and competence in spoken language and listening skills' (DfE, 2012: 3). This is reinforced by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) which states teachers 'must ensure that all their pupils develop as competent and confident speakers and writers of English' (QCA, 2000: 8). However, understanding how best to

identify, diagnose, and improve a pupil's language proficiency, when English is not necessarily their native tongue, can be an arduous task, especially without adequate training and resources.

Many children who identify as EAL underachieve at primary school especially in areas of English literacy (Hutchinson et al., 2003; Melby-Lervåg & Lervåg, 2014; Oxley & De Cat, 2021). Teachers often overestimate a pupil's language proficiency, especially with regards to literacy, due to their decoding ability. It has been noted, that whilst a pupil may demonstrate very strong reading skills this can, in part, be a misleading characteristic due to the skillset required. Successful reading is a combination of both decoding and comprehension skills; two skills which are independent, whilst related. A child who is slow to decode does not necessarily struggle to understand the story or concept, and vice-versa the child for whom decoding appears strong does not automatically comprehend. As Burgoyne (2009) suggests, lower reading attainment is linked to issues of understanding, rather than decoding, and this is the issue often faced by EAL learners. Hutchinson, Whiteley, Smith, and Connors' (2003) study, regarding EAL learners, suggests a similar pattern of comprehension difficulties in the absence of word reading problems.

Decoding, regardless of the language, can be taught by rote, and whilst appearing to demonstrate understanding, it can often mask a lack of comprehension with a text. Burgoyne et al. (2009) found, that many of their EAL sample group were attending Mosque, where they would read the Qur'an. The Qur'an was read, not to understand the Arabic, but to decode and recite aloud. This skillset and decoding process can then, they maintain, be transferred to the English reading classroom. As Rosowsky (2001) argues, in this situation, whilst the approach supports strong decoding skills, comprehension is likely to be relatively poor. Similarly, conversational skills can mask abilities with reading and written language attainment.

Stuart (1999, 2004) questions the systems in place that are used in teaching EAL students, especially those who struggle with reading. Often phonics-based learning is targeted at students who have

issues with texts, with the hope of improving recognition skills. However, these do little to support or develop comprehension.

Moreover, Borgoyne et al.'s (2009) report finds that EAL pupils, who are having problems with both written and spoken text in comparison to their monolingual English peers, are not demonstrating issues with decoding but are in fact experiencing issues with comprehension due to a weaker vocabulary. Expressive and receptive vocabulary are significant predictors of both listening and reading comprehension for both EAL and FLE pupils and the weaker vocabulary places a significant restriction on the comprehension of both written and spoken text. Burgoyne et al. argue that a promotion in reading for meaning should be enshrined and then supported through discussion to further stimulate active vocabulary usage.

This discrepancy between decoding and comprehension is further compounded by international studies regarding bilingualism in children, in which bilingual children are reported to do comparably well in basic reading tasks (decoding) in comparison to their FLE peers, whilst trailing significantly in vocabulary comprehension and awareness (Cobo-Lewis et al., 2002; Ricketts et al., 2007; Swanson et al., 2008; Verhoeven, 1994).

Vocabulary is contextually specific, and its acquisition and usage can impact on a child's attainment level. Vocabulary for conversational use and vocabulary as the basis for academic purpose are shown to affect a child's progress in differing ways. Bilingual and EAL children most commonly use English as a scholastic language, forming the basis for instruction, comprehension, and expression within the classroom and further school environment, for example playgrounds and cafeterias. This vocabulary is set within school and developed over the course of a child's academic career.

Alternatively, the home vocabulary is based on conversational and emotion lexis, very different to that explored at school (Bialystok et al., 2010). However, as Bialystok et al. found, the vocabulary difference between bilingual and monolingual children was largely confined to words that are part of home language. This is not surprising, as English is not used as extensively in bilingual home

environments as in those of monolinguals. School vocabulary was more comparable. Therefore, according to Bialystok et al., bilingual children are not generally disadvantaged in academic achievement as the academic vocabulary being used has been acquired and explored at a similar time by both bilingual and monolingual pupils. This can, however, have a much more significant impact on EAL pupils who are new to the English language entirely, late arrivals to their key stage, and unfamiliar with educational environments, as they are both having to acquire new vocabulary alongside their FLE peers and play catch-up on previous vocabulary they have missed.

Achieving proficiency with the English language is a tough obstacle to master, especially when those pupils who need to achieve proficiency are regarded, not as individuals with specific needs but rather as a standardised collective. The majority of studies undertaken to assess the EAL school population regards them as a collective homogeneous group. Many in-school, local authority, and national surveys do not take into account the variety of abilities and contributing factors which comprise to create the EAL community. Demie (2013: 67) calls for a further breakdown of EAL statistics, outlining an essential need for 'additional targeted support for EAL pupils to improve their levels of fluency in English'. Demie requests the implementation of a framework within which the umbrella-term EAL can be subdivided and pupils are assessed, ascertaining their level of proficiency in English. This will allow for more accurate support to be tailor-made and disseminated between specific subsets based on individual requirements.

### 2.3 Language Proficiency

Language proficiency, as a definitive term, has been classified in many ways by different researchers. Many characterise it as a balance between oral fluency and literacy skills. Oral fluency is a contentious term which divides opinion. It is commonly held that 'smoothness' of oral delivery is a key factor; this includes speed of delivery with continuous flow, alongside appropriateness.

Many researchers (Gatbonton & Segalowitz, 2005; Nation & Newton, 2009) indicate the lack of time-based dimensions, such as, undue hesitations and pauses, repetition, and fillers within fluent language speakers in conjunction with correct pronunciation, vocabulary choice, and grammatical structures. However, when considering L2 speakers, Fillmore (1979) states that fluency involves 'time filled with words' rather than grammatical and lexical accuracy, whereas Koponen and Riggensbach (2000) describe fluency as an interplay between speaker and listener, into which comprehensibility is key.

Within this study, 'proficiency' will support the dichotomous school of thought that English language proficiency is a combination of 'oral fluency' and the literacy and listening skills associated with successful academic functioning (Cummins, 2000; Hakuta et al., 2000; Halle et al., 2012). This definition encapsulates both the language development skills (phonetics, phonology, syntax, morphology, pragmatics, and semantics) as discussed in MacSwan and Pray (2005), whilst acknowledging the social necessities of language proficiency within an academic environment, for example, instruction recognition, testing, and social comprehension, as outlined in Bailey (2007).

### 2.3.1 Measuring Language Proficiency

Language proficiency, as the desired acquisition which is sought by EAL learners and imparted by teachers as part of a codified promise by governments, is difficult to assess and therefore gives rise to problems in how to approach its teaching.

There are very few studies undertaken which evaluate the ways in which EAL pupils are assessed, their attainment levels, and their levels of language proficiency. Indeed, many resources (Borgoyne, 2009; Demie, 2017; Demie & Strand, 2006; Foley, 2013; NALDIC, 2012a) urgently request a further study to improve the knowledge on EAL attainment and how further support might be given to those EAL students with lower levels of English language proficiency. As yet, guidelines put forth ask that requirement for EAL support be measured in relation to a child's English language proficiency and



that 'schools need to be able to assess this need accurately using their own procedures and expertise.' (Strand et al., 2015).

Knowing how to assess and comprehend a child's understanding with regards to English is incredibly important. Teachers are often not equipped, trained, or have sufficient experience with EAL pupils to best evaluate a child's specific needs. As Strand & Demie (2005, 2006) state, citing Hayes, Coyle, and Mellor's (2001) presentation to the British Educational Research Association conference, 'the use of classroom teachers for assessment may introduce statistical noise into the data'. This is further supported by Read's (2012) findings which conclude that teachers often stereotype EAL pupils as having very low English language ability and neglect to consider more capable EAL pupils and those on the journey towards language proficiency.

Whilst searching for a systematic assessment framework with which to assess a pupil's fluency with the English language, Hester (1990, 1993) developed the Stages of Fluency categories. The four Stages of Fluency system, supported by Demie (2017) and Strand et al. (2015) and which most English Local Educational Authorities (LEA) had adopted throughout the 2000s, is largely derived from the work of Hilary Hester and Inner London colleagues at the Centre for Language in Primary Education (CLPE) in the 1980s (Barrs, 1988; Hester, 1990; Hester 1993).<sup>1</sup> This system had, however, not been officially agreed, recommended, nor regulated as a means of testing EAL pupil's language proficiency. Until very recently, however, The National Association for Language Development in the Curriculum (NALDIC), The Bell Foundation, and other advisory bodies did believe *Stages of Fluency* in English to be the best predictor of educational attainment within the EAL pupil population.

These four stages range from beginner to fluent and are described below:

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<sup>1</sup> Other systems in use include the Northern Association of Support Services for Equality and Achievement (NASSEA), EAL Assessment System (Milton Keynes Council 2001; NASSEA 2001; South 2003, 34) or the National Curriculum English descriptors set out by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA 2000) in *A Language in Common*.

|                |   |
|----------------|---|
| <b>Stage 1</b> | <b>New to English</b> - Bilingual English learners who might be able to engage in classroom learning activities using their own mother tongue, but need support to operate in English.  |
| <b>Stage 2</b> | <b>Becoming familiar with English</b> - Bilingual English learners who can engage in all learning activities but whose spoken and/or written English clearly shows that English is not their first language. Their oral English is well developed but their literacy development in English is such that they need considerable support to operate successfully in written activities in the classroom.   |
| <b>Stage 3</b> | <b>Becoming confident as a user of English</b> - Bilingual pupils whose oral and written English is progressing well and who can engage successfully in both oral and written activities, but need further support for a variety of possible reasons, for example pupils who are achieving considerable success in subjects such as mathematics and science but much less in others such as English or in Humanities, which are more dependent upon a greater command of English. |
| <b>Stage 4</b> | <b>Fully fluent in English</b> - Bilingual pupils whose use of English and engagement with the curriculum are considered successful and who do not require additional language support.   |

One impact of the *Stages of Fluency* is greater transparency and accuracy in identifying issues within the EAL student populations.

The homogenous grouping of EAL pupils has led to the notion that younger EAL pupils underachieve in early years and primary education and that British FLE pupils underperform their EAL peers as they progress through the secondary education system. However, if the stratified stages of fluency measures are applied, it is evident that whilst a proportion of the EAL pupils who achieve stage 4 (proficient with English) are often achieving higher than their FLE peers, there remains a significant contingent of EAL pupils who are at the lower stages of fluency who desperately require extra support. The homogenous grouping of EAL pupils is masking the needs of EAL pupil population and this, in turn, has allowed government policy to ignore the issue of an underachieving group.

Based upon official expectations outlined, for example, in the Carter Review of Initial Teacher Training (2015), NALDIC (2012b), and The Bell Foundation (2016), a movement toward a national codified framework of EAL assessment was officially requested. The need for a more universal approach was deemed appropriate given that schools were under pressure to give well-informed assessments on their pupil's fluency, without official criteria with which to base their findings.

In January 2017, the Department for Education instated a national framework of competency benchmarks for EAL students, *The DfE Proficiency Scale*. The new statutory measure of English language proficiency has been introduced to distinguish between those pupils at early levels of English development and those at the more proficient stages. It is suggested that this will enable funding to be better targeted and the new data will provide statistics on the groups of children who fall into the category of EAL, their attainment and trajectories, and identify any additional challenges they or their schools face.

The DfE Proficiency Scale codes and descriptors are as follows:

|                |  |
|----------------|--|
| <b>Code A.</b> | <b>New to English-</b> May use first language for learning and other purposes. May remain completely silent in the classroom. May be copying/repeating some words or phrases. May understand some everyday expressions in English but may have minimal or no literacy in English. Needs a considerable amount of EAL support.  |
| <b>Code B.</b> | <b>Early acquisition-</b> May follow day to day social communication in English and participate in learning activities with support. Beginning to use spoken English for social purposes. May understand simple instructions and can follow narrative/accounts with visual support. May have developed some skills in reading and writing. May have become familiar with some subject specific vocabulary. Still needs a significant amount of EAL support to access the curriculum. |
| <b>Code C.</b> | <b>Developing competence-</b> May participate in learning activities with increasing independence. Able to express self orally in English, but structural inaccuracies are still apparent. Literacy will require ongoing support, particularly for understanding text and writing. May be able to follow abstract concepts and more complex written English. Requires ongoing EAL support to access the curriculum fully.  |
| <b>Code D.</b> | <b>Competent-</b> Oral English will be developing well, enabling successful engagement in activities across the curriculum. Can read and understand a wide variety of texts. Written English may lack complexity and contain occasional evidence of errors in structure. Needs some support to access subtle nuances of meaning, to refine English usage, and to develop abstract vocabulary. Needs some/occasional EAL support to access complex curriculum material and tasks.     |
| <b>Code E.</b> | <b>Fluent-</b> Can operate across the curriculum to a level of competence equivalent to that of a pupil who uses English as his/her first language. Operates without EAL support across the curriculum.  |
| <b>Code N.</b> | <b>Not yet assessed</b>  |

The Department for Education cites that data collected from the new framework will be used to inform policy on EAL pupils, whom it considers a 'high needs' group, with the basic rationale being that current data collection does not distinguish between those EAL pupils who lack a basic

command of English and those who are bilingual but have proficiency with the English language. Under the new system, support will be targeted at those EAL pupils who face challenges but can be minimised once a student is deemed to have 'mastered English sufficiently to access the curriculum' (DfE, 2017).

It appears that EAL will continue to be used as a factor for funding and resourcing schools. As outlined in the schools funding formula (DfE, 2016), the new framework may, as data is analysed, inform spending strategies and target precise areas for funds.

### 2.3.2 Attaining Proficiency

Examinations of pupil attainment levels at the end of KS2 reveal a strong relationship between educational attainment and stage of fluency, revealing the higher a pupil's proficiency with the English language, the higher their overall academic attainment.

It can be argued that for a student to fully achieve within the UK education system they must be fluent in English. The time and resources that UK schools must invest in additional language support for EAL students often come under scrutiny, especially when resources are stretched, and government financial support is being cut. Local Educational Authorities (LEA) have a duty to supply adequate facilities to support EAL students; however, top-down policymakers are often looking to reduce costs and demand a time-limited system in which to offer these services.

The Department for Education describes that the aim of the Government policy is: 'to promote rapid language acquisition and include children learning EAL in mainstream education as quickly as possible' (as cited in NALDIC, 2012b). The aim of rapid language acquisition is understandable given that the English language is the primary medium of instruction in schools and pupils are required to and will benefit greatly from, fully comprehending tasks at hand, and concepts being discussed. Rapid language acquisition is also a benefit for policymakers, as the more quickly language is

acquired the less money is required to be spent on extra language support services. Indeed, the government's advisory document *School Funding Reform: Next Steps Towards a Fairer System* (2012) proposed the limiting of support funds for pupils with EAL to three years because this 'should provide enough time'.

Whilst the time it takes to acquire proficiency with a language can significantly vary between individuals, it has been recognised by Ofsted (2001) as taking on average between 5 and 7 years for someone to become fully competent. Research (Collier, 1992; Cummins, 2000; Demie, 2011) suggests that an average pupil will be classified at stage 1 (beginner) for around one and half years, reaching stage 2 (familiar) and remaining at this level for a further 3 years. It would then take an average of 3 more years to achieve stage 3 (confident with English) before reaching the classification of fully fluent, taking approximately 6-8 years to acquire academic English proficiency.

The journey that EAL pupils must endure to become fluent must also be considered in terms of the stress they are under, as they not only have to acquire, develop, and utilise a new language but also to maintain progress alongside those for whom English is their mother tongue. However, as Collier (1989) notes, the time taken by a student to become fluent varies based on a multitude of varying factors, including age, educational history, ethnicity, economic background, and interactive opportunities. This difference in starting position when an EAL pupil enters mainstream English education and the other factors that impact on a child's ability to become proficient with the English language should all be taken into account when assessing a child's needs for support. This thinking is supported by NALDIC (2003), who outline the need for reflection within EAL assessment schemes, with specific consideration given to EAL pupil's individual learning trajectories. NALDIC argue that each EAL pupil's English language starting point and progression are clearly noted, and that it is taken into consideration that the EAL learner is acquiring new language skills, at a young age, and in the context of learning the full curriculum.

There is a direct correlation between stage of fluency and educational attainment. Whilst lower stages of fluency EAL pupils often underperform pupils for whom English was their only language, higher level, and fully fluent EAL pupils often achieved higher results, surpassing their monolingual peers (Demie, 2011, 2017; Demie & Strand, 2006; Strand & Demie, 2005).

By the end of KS2, learners are expected to have achieved a Level 4+ in their academic assessments. Using data from inner London schools (as no nationwide data has been collected), Demie and Hau (2016) were able to show that the percentage of pupils attaining Level 4 and above at the end of primary education increased as the stage of English language proficiency increased, see Table 4. The data reveals that Stages 1-3 EAL learners achieved a Level 4+ pass rate of 68% compared to their FLE peers (85%), whereas Stage 4 (fully fluent) EAL learners outperformed their FLE peers at a Level 4+ pass rate of 96%.

**Table 4:** EAL KS2 performance by level of fluency in English in Inner London (%)

| EAL Stages of English Fluency                                | KS2 Level 4+ Primary 2015 <sup>a</sup> |
|--|--|
| EAL Stage 1 ( <i>Beginners – New to English</i> )            | 0%                                     |
| EAL Stage 2 ( <i>Becoming familiar with English</i> )        | 43%                                    |
| EAL Stage 3 ( <i>Becoming confident as user of English</i> ) | 81%                                    |
| EAL Stage 4 ( <i>Fully Fluent in English</i> )               | 96%                                    |
| English Only   | 85%                                    |
| EAL Stage 1–3 (non-fluent in English)                        | 68%                                    |
| All Pupils – LA average                                      | 84%                                    |
| All Pupils – National average                                | 80%                                    |
| All pupils – LA number                                       | 2644                                   |

Source: Schools Research and Statistics Unit, from Demie and Hau (2016)

Demie (2011, 2017) found that, overall, bilingual and multilingual pupils who were fluent in English were not only more likely to achieve level 4 in their end of KS2 assessments compared to their FLE speaking peers but would continue to achieve grades in-line with their monolingual peers at KS4 and above (Table 5); stating: ‘Once the disadvantage of language is overcome, it is possible to attain high levels of achievement’ (Demie, 2017).

**Table 5:** FLE AND EAL performance at GCSE (2014/2015)

| <b>KS4</b> | <b>Subject</b>                  | <b>Measure</b>          | <b>FLE %</b> | <b>EAL %</b> |
|------------|---------------------------------|-------------------------|--------------|--------------|
|            | <b>English</b>                  | GCSE A*-C pass          | 68.8         | 64.6         |
|            | <b>Maths</b>                    | GCSE A*-C pass          | 71.2         | 71.8         |
|            | <b>Modern Foreign Languages</b> | GCSE A*-C pass          | 32.2         | 47.5         |
|            | <b>Overall</b>                  | 5 A* - C , inc. En & Ma | 60.9         | 58.3         |
|            | <b>Overall</b>                  | Ebacc achieved          | 22.5         | 24.4         |

Source: DfE (2014/2015)

This GCSE performance data is also supported by more recent Department for Education statistics which show mixed statistics combining GCSE and English Baccalaureate scores as part of the Attainment 8<sup>2</sup> assessment. These statistics continue to show an out-performance by EAL learners above their FLE peers within KS4, once English language fluency has been achieved. The average Attainment 8 score for EAL learners in 2017 was 46.8%, whilst the average FLE score was 46.3% (DfE, 2018, 2019b). Whilst it is not yet available, as data is collected and analysed it will be interesting to examine the impact of Covid-19 and home-schooling on EAL and FLE attainment.

The academic success of the EAL population to achieve at the levels reported is reassuring, although, as we have seen, we must pay attention to variables within this group. EAL students that have attended English schools for the whole of a key stage have been observed making greater progress than FLE students, and indeed by age 16, they have caught up with their FLE peers (Strand, Malmberg & Hall, 2015). However, this data does not stratify the EAL population into stages of fluency nor takes into account those who have entered the education system mid-Key Stage, and those for whom English language issues are a continuing problem. As previously mentioned, data must be analysed using more rigorous scrutiny to unveil some detail behind the sweeping judgements.

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<sup>2</sup> Attainment 8 measures the average achievement of pupils in up to 8 qualifications including English (double weighted if both language and literature are taken), maths (double weighted), three further qualifications that count in the English Baccalaureate (EBacc) and three further qualifications that can be GCSE qualifications (including EBacc subjects) or any other non-GCSE qualifications on the DfE approved list.

Interestingly, Strand & Demie (2005), after applying background factors as variables, including gender, age, SEN, and FSM, in their assessment of KS2 EAL students, found that the higher achievements of fully fluent EAL pupils over monolingual English-only speaking peers becomes negligible. Therefore, it appears that fluency is the equalising factor in KS2 attainment across the curriculum. This echoes KS1 progress results reported by Strand (2002).

It could be argued, therefore, that reports such as Department for Education and Skills (DfES) (2003, 2004) and DfE (2011) which detail fully fluent EAL pupils' success above FLE pupils without factoring in other background variables could be misleading.

There is a consensus amongst the literature that with increased fluency the attainment of individual pupils will be improved and the educational equality within the school system will be achieved. This therefore means that inversely, without English fluency, pupils are at a severe disadvantage and likely to underperform academically. This is not surprising as without substantial language ability they will not have the capacity to understand the work being taught, especially at the more complex levels of secondary education.

The suggestion by Strand et al. (2015) that English language proficiency is likely to be the most important predictor of attainment is supported and explained further by Prevoo, Malda, Mesman, and van IJzendoorn (2016) whose meta-analysis indicates associations between the oral language proficiency and improved literacy, reading, spelling, mathematics, and general academic attainment. Achievement is surely only expected when a pupil can fully understand their teacher, follow instruction, and comprehend discussion within a classroom. Language proficiency will always precede achievement within subjects using that specific language as a medium of instruction.

As Strand and Demie (2005) observe, whilst many bilingual pupils do achieve highly at KS2 in comparison to their English-only speaking peers, a significant number of less fluent EAL students do not, and these pupils will require targeted support in order to acquire both a higher level of English language fluency and academic attainment.



It is crucial that support is given to pupils as early as possible in their educational journey. This principle is defended by Thomas and Collier (1997), who argue the rate by which a pupil can obtain fluency can drop significantly when a child is undertaking more cognitively challenging work within secondary schooling and 'as the content of instruction becomes more academic and abstract' (1997: 15).

Halle et al. (2012) found not only significant development in pupil's academic achievements were linked to language proficiency but also behaviour, attention, eagerness to learn, and organisation. Those pupils who were not proficient in English demonstrated comparably poorer emotional and social skills within the classroom environment.

Further examined by Goldfeld et al. (2014), the theory of language proficiency and improved social and behavioural skills noted that monolingual English pupils who were identified as non-proficient in English also struggled in similar social areas. It is important to acknowledge that areas of challenge faced by EAL pupils are not singularly linked to this population and the multitude of problems that arise in the general school population are prevalent across language boundaries.

It has been suggested (Dowdy et al., 2011; Whiteside et al., 2017) that a focus on improving English proficiency in early school years amongst EAL pupils will improve social, behavioural and emotional skills, and interaction, and will also improve the academic achievement, reducing the gap between FLE and EAL primary aged pupils.

These findings further support the need to identify EAL as a wide and heterogenous group and one with complex issues in need of strategized multifarious support.

## 2.4 EAL in London

The distribution of EAL pupils across the UK is highly uneven. EAL populations vary between 6% in the south-west and over 56% in inner London (Strand et al., 2015). Interestingly, whilst urban areas

are commonly associated with academic underachievement (Burgess, 2014), Inner and Outer London, which are intensely EAL populated areas, are conversely achieving the highest national results. As the National Pupil Database (NPD) found, the disparity in pupil achievement (non-EAL and EAL) between regions in England varies greatly. This can further be broken down and assessed in terms of EAL and non-EAL achievement as further data is revealed (see Table 6).

**Table 6:** 2017 KS2 achievement of EAL pupils by Region in England

| Region                   | % Pupils EAL | Reading, Writing, and Maths (RWM) Level 4+ |           |       |
|--------------------------|--------------|--|-----------|-------|
|                          |              | EAL %                                      | Non-EAL % | Gap % |
| Inner London             | 54.4         | 68   | 68        | 0     |
| Outer London             | 39.5         | 66   | 68        | -2    |
| South East               | 10.1         | 63   | 63        | 0     |
| North East               | 5.3          | 59   | 65        | -6    |
| North West               | 11.9         | 56   | 62        | -6    |
| West Midlands            | 18.5         | 55   | 60        | -5    |
| East                     | 9.9          | 58   | 61        | -3    |
| East Midlands            | 10.5         | 55   | 60        | -5    |
| South West               | 4.9          | 56   | 61        | -5    |
| Yorkshire and the Humber | 14.8         | 53   | 59        | -6    |
| All England              | 16.2         | 61   | 62        | -1    |

Source: Choudry (2018)

EAL pupils in Yorkshire and the Humber were not only the lowest achieving in general population, 53% achieving Level 4 at KS2, 8% below national average, but they also showed the greatest disparity between EAL and non-EAL pupils with a 6% gap between groups.

In 2014, EAL students in London tended to achieve higher scores than EAL students in other regions. On average, after adjusting for other factors (SEN, free school meals, ethnic group) EAL students outside London scored around 4 National Curriculum (NC)<sup>3</sup> months below their peers in London. On

<sup>3</sup> The original conception of National Curriculum (NC) levels as set out in the Task Group on Assessment and Testing (TGAT) report, 1988, was that each level equated to approximately two years of progress. Therefore, the typical pupil would achieve level 2 at age 7 and level 4 at age 11. As two years represents six terms, test outcomes are often expressed as points scores with each point representing one term (or 4 NC months) of typical progress. Two NC months is considered a threshold for a notable effect.

the other hand, in Yorkshire and the Humber the EAL gap was even larger with EAL students scoring 8 NC months below their London peers.

It must be addressed as to why the regions, London and the South-East, in which EAL pupils were achieving the highest results were the same regions where the FLE pupils had the best highest results. This calls into question distribution of resources, training, and support.

Primarily, London has a long experience of dealing with migrant populations and, as a result, the schools are more aware of the needs and requirements of a multilingual community. This has led to a more effective use of resources, and a higher level of EAL support being offered (Demie, 2017; Burgess, 2014). Due to the higher numbers of EAL pupils in London and the South East, it is also a key factor that school budgets are used to target the issues that align themselves with the EAL community. The higher numbers of EAL pupil means that a higher priority is placed on supporting English language acquisition and this drive for fluency becomes a key part of the schools' curriculum. Therefore, schools are choosing to spend Local Authority money on training, resources, and support specifically targeted at the EAL pupil population.

This draws attention to another potential cause of higher attainment in London and the South East. London's additional funding, over many regional schools, could play a key role in the higher attainment levels of EAL pupils. The extra financial resources available to London schools can pay for extra resources, training, interventions, and higher qualified teaching staff. These additional elements could, in turn, improve pupil attainment.

The Department for Education (2016) acknowledge the discrepancies between regions of the UK and further discuss issues of support and allocation of local authority funding. The DfE state that EAL pupils, and their specific needs, increase the costs for schools due to the dedicated support required to help these pupils achieve fluency, and in turn educational attainment. The DfE argue that targeted funds are available to support EAL pupils, and that support is available through all local authorities. The guidelines written in 2016 state that EAL support is offered to pupils over a three-year period.

The Government believes that this measure would target funding to schools likely to have pupils in need of targeted support to increase language proficiency and that it is right to apply a longer-lasting measure given that some pupils will need sustained support over a longer period of time. (DfE, 2016: 27–28)

The awareness and readiness of the Department for Education in allocating funds to support and aid EAL pupils are evident. However, this 2016 report is further evidence of the homogenous labelling attributed to the EAL community.

It is important to observe that EAL pupils who have lived in the UK for longer than four years but who still have a stage of fluency rating of 1 or 2 (beginner or becoming familiar with English) may not be representative of the EAL pupil community on the whole. These pupils may well demonstrate a requirement for special educational needs (SEN). As Cline and Shamsi (2000) note, often SEN requirements in EAL pupils are overlooked due to issues being masked by problems with English language fluency; the assumption being that as English fluency improves the other issues will become resolved. This thinking is supported by Crutchley et al. (1999) in their study of bilingual children in language units who tended to have more complicated and often more severe language difficulties than their FLE peers, signifying under-identification of bilingual children with SEN.

This heterogenous school population require attention and consideration throughout their school experience. A varied syllabus, including the arts, and multi-model pedagogical approaches can support learning and significantly improve confidence in language acquisition. However, as the next chapter shows, as schools and local authorities make radical changes across the curriculum, the arts and the creative approaches to learning are often removed from young learners' school experience.

## CHAPTER THREE

### 3 DRAMA IN EDUCATION

‘We are living in a desperate time in arts education’

(Taylor, 1996: 1)

The UK, like many countries worldwide, has witnessed a dramatic overhaul in educational practice over the last twenty years. Framed by economic necessity, social pressure, and technological modernisation, changes toward curricula and pedagogy have left a lasting impact on the way young people learn. Moreover, drastic cuts to budgets and target-driven directives have seen a shift from process-based, subjective and critical learning to a rigid system in which the arts are playing an ever-decreasing role (Chitty, 2009; Robinson, 2015; Taylor, 1996; Tomlinson, 1994).

Since the neoliberal free-market 1980s of Thatcher and Reagan, through education reforms, and the development of a National Curriculum, arts practitioners and educators have endeavoured to demonstrate creativity’s educational value (Prentki & Stinson, 2016), not only as subjects in their own right but as pedagogical approaches stimulating discursive, reflexive, and experiential learning. However, with ‘back to basics’ rhetoric favouring numeracy and literacy in education and a reductionist characterisation of the arts embedded in political and social consciousness, the status of drama and the arts remains an enduring challenge today (Gallagher, Rhoades, Bie & Cardwell, 2017: 20). The problems faced by drama educators are vocalised by Tim Prentki and Madonna Stinson, the editors of a special edition of *Research in Drama Education (RIDE)*, declaring drama practitioner-researchers are now ‘faced with the imminent demise of our discipline within formal state education’ (Prentki & Stinson, 2016: 7).

This chapter of the literature review identifies some of the social and political changes which have contributed to this 'imminent demise' of drama within education and the key theories which have shaped its trajectory. The chapter begins by reporting recent educational reform, and the impact on

drama's role within education. The literature review then outlines specific socio-historical events and theories that have influenced the field. The chapter is broken into the following sections:

- Recent developments
- Post-War and the Child-Centred Approach
- Way's Sixties and Seventies
- Theatre in Education
- Applied Drama
- Process Drama

This review will subsequently consider the role of educational drama and its specific role within English language learning, shaping the theoretical framework from which this study is derived.

Throughout this thesis, due to changing ideologies and movements, there will appear to be a splitting and/or conflation of interconnecting terminology to describe approaches to performative teaching and learning. For the purposes of this thesis, Drama in Education (DIE) refers to drama-based practices in classrooms (Bolton in Jackson, 2002: 40); Theatre in Education (TIE) refers to the tradition of practitioners visiting schools to conduct theatre-based workshops (Jackson, 2002: 3-37); Applied Theatre refers to practice-based research in educational and community contexts (Nicholson, 2014), and Process Drama refers to practices in which the teacher performs and interacts in role (Bowell & Heap, 2013). These terms will be described in further detail in the following chapters.

### 3.1 Recent Developments

The demise of drama, and the rejection of progressive approaches to education that it represents, is no more evident than in the English government's startling omission of all arts subjects from the

new secondary-education subject specifications, the English Baccalaureate (EBacc) or ‘progress 8’, restricting the subjects available at General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE). The EBacc requires students to attain a certificate in five specific subject areas: mathematics, English, sciences, geography or history, and a language, with a noticeable disregard for the arts, now defined as ‘facilitating subjects’ (DfE, 2014). The introduction and development of the EBacc were intending to improve opportunities and raise the quality of academic education available to all pupils, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds (Johnes, 2017). It can be argued that this educational reform responded to concerns about educational standards, unemployment, the readiness to work of school leavers, and the nation’s global economic competitiveness (Bleazby, 2015). This section regards the controversy surrounding the new examinations, and the impact on arts education.

Whilst the government hopes to have EBacc introduced to 90% of students by 2025 (Long & Bolton, 2017), the campaign has come under scrutiny (Adams, 2013; Pring, 2013; Taylor, 2013; Welch, 2012). In 2016, 102,000 signatures signed a petition (Wilson, 2016) to include expressive arts subjects on the EBacc, to which the government response read:

The Government believes that arts subjects are important. That is why art and design and music are compulsory subjects within the national curriculum for 5 – 14-year-olds. Pupils also have to study drama, as part of the English curriculum, and dance, as part of the PE curriculum. At key stage 4, the Government does not believe it is right that every student should have to study an arts subject, but all pupils in maintained schools have a statutory entitlement to be able to study an arts subject if they wish. (DfE, 2016)

Whilst the government stance maintains that EBacc’s omission of the arts will not impede a student’s opportunity to study creative subjects ‘if they wish’, this has not manifested itself in the actualised reality of state schooling. In 2011, market researcher Ipsos Mori discovered 27% of schools had removed arts subjects from their curriculums following the arrival of the EBacc, with the most common casualty being drama and performing arts at 23% (Greevy et al., 2012; Higgins, 2012). In 2015, the SSAT (Specialist Schools and Academies Trust) substantiated this issue, surveying 1,664 schools regarding EBacc, finding that, due to the cuts to curriculum options, ‘students who had an aptitude and interest in the arts and other creative subjects would miss out’ (Watkin, 2015). Harriet

Finney, of the Creative Industries Federation, reinforced this concern, announcing that the fall in the number of teachers as well as the time dedicated to creative subjects needed to be addressed urgently, especially as its cuts were affecting deprived students more than any other group (Adams, 2017). Therefore, whilst the government position is one of core subjects plus the opportunity of additional creative opportunities, the reality is one of restricted access to an increasingly limited choice. As one headteacher reports: 'students are pressured into the EBacc with the result that they are now taking subjects that they "dislike least". This has led to demotivated pupils and more behavioural issues' (Henshaw, 2016).

The issues raised regarding the arrival of EBacc and the falling provision of arts teaching highlight two key criteria; firstly, the removal of arts subjects from the core curriculum are leading to less uptake at GCSE level, with 2016 arts GCSEs presenting the lowest figures in over a decade across all creative disciplines (Johnes, 2017), and secondly, the removal of arts subjects from the core curriculum are having an unfair impact on disadvantaged students.

### 3.2 Low Uptake and Teacher Training

The number of students entering arts GCSEs in England in 2019 declined by 10% compared with the previous year; within drama GCSE this was a decline of over 29% since 2010. According to figures released by the Department for Education, 58,255 students entered GCSE drama in 2019 – 9,916 fewer than in 2016 (Ofqual, 2019). This decline has been noticed across all subjects which are not part of the core EBacc curriculum. The Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation identifies this overall decline as indicating that centres are focusing more on the delivery of EBacc subjects than those subjects which do not count towards the EBacc (Ofqual, 2017). It has been observed that whilst many schools have implemented measures that encourage, or require, students to pursue EBacc subjects, non-EBacc subjects are either given reduced teaching time or removed from the curriculum entirely.



Supporters of EBacc might argue that whilst GCSE drama is not being undertaken as a subject within its own right, it is still being taught as part of the core subject of English. However, the guidelines set within English, with regards to drama, only cover some narrow aspects of the subject, namely Shakespeare. As Bell observes, the inclusion of drama within the English curriculum, as already in place at Key Stage 3 (years 7-9, ages 11-14), has 'turned off' students from drama, as it is linked primarily to Shakespeare, and 'spoken language', which is not assessed, and so offers little achievement incentive (Bell, 2016: 149). The inclusion of drama as part of English also discounts the pedagogical and holistic aspects of drama as a practical, workshop-based subject, which have for many years been celebrated within the discipline (as later parts of this chapter will explore).

The changes made within post-14 education do not exist within a vacuum, the consequences are much wider-reaching; it can be considered that this decline will particularly affect two main areas: continued drama education, and the creative industries.

The reduction in drama GCSEs will have a substantial impact on continued drama education including the uptake of drama A-levels, and alternative further educational qualifications, with the potential for significant consequences in Higher Education. As Bell describes: 'the status of drama, theatre and performance in Higher Education is inevitably shaped and affected by shifts in educational policies that manage and administrate compulsory education' (2016:1). By 2010, the effects of the EBacc and the primacy allocated to STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering & Maths) subjects had not been limited to secondary educational establishments; as the government announced a 40% cut to higher education funding over four years with the only exemption being STEM subjects (Morgan, 2010), which, Worthington has calculated, in practice, due to the ring-fencing of STEM subjects, results in a 100% cut to public funding for Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences courses across UK universities (Worthington, 2010). This continued lack of support for arts, from schools, through to universities is echoed by John Sorrell when he said: 'If we lose kids at 14 because they're choosing not to do a [creative] GCSE ... we lose them forever' (Sorrell in Morby,

2017). With fewer students exploring creative subjects in schools, further, and higher education, there will be a reduction in the number of degree courses required, a national shortfall in the number of qualified practitioners, theorists, educators, performers, and designers, and an overall deficit within the creative industries.

In 2017, the Labour Party released the *Acting Up!* report revealing, that despite an overall rise in teacher numbers, there are 1,700 fewer drama teachers in UK secondary schools than there were in 2010 (Piero & Brabin, 2017:6). This fall in drama teacher numbers coincides with an 8% reduction in drama teaching hours in 2015 (CLA, 2015). The decrease in teacher requirement, provision of teacher training, and the number of applications for PGCEs have all been attributed to the activation of EBacc. In 2016, The Royal Central School of Speech and Drama suspended all recruitment to its Initial Teacher Training (ITT) courses, stating 'this has been triggered by the continuing changes in government policy in this area and the practical effects of those changes on Central' (RCSSD in Bell, 2016: 151). The RCSSD's decision to suspend its drama teacher training programme is a sign of the potential demise of drama education. As GCSE numbers fall, so too will teaching provisions, training and eventually without speciality teachers available, the whole subject may find itself extinct.

The fallout from educational drama will have consequences across the local community too, as it is often within educational establishments that new performance works are conceived and performed. They are often supported by institutional funding and benefit from the scholarly activity surrounding the work. Educational drama has a long history (as later sections will demonstrate) of working across school settings, in the non-academic environment, and higher education institutions, and without the support of degrees, courses, and training programmes, both the support and the participants may cease to exist.

EBacc's influence over GCSE choices has a far reach, both within the academic sector and the wider fields of industry. This is further evident in a speech given by the then Education Secretary, Nicky Morgan, claiming that the idea that by choosing arts or humanities subjects, pupils would keep their

career choices open ‘couldn’t be further from the truth[...] the subjects that keep young people’s options open and unlock doors to all sorts of careers are the STEM subjects’ (Morgan, 2014).

Morgan’s statement provoked criticism from Christine Blower, general secretary of the National Union of Teachers, saying:

Downgrading the arts is the wrong message... Politicians would do well to stop making such sweeping statements... Sciences, maths and engineering are of course useful subjects, but so are the arts (Blower in Garner, 2014).

Whilst Nigel Carrington, the vice-chancellor of the University of the Arts London, argued:

This absurd discrimination between ‘hard’ STEM and ‘soft’ arts subjects will damage the next generation of entrepreneurs. The Government needs to recognise that creativity is vital to the economy and should be taught (Carrington in Garner, 2014).

Within the UK, the vital contribution of which Carrington speaks is worth £92 billion a year to the economy; that is bigger than oil, gas, life sciences, automotive, and aeronautics combined (DDCMS, 2018). This highly significant industry employs almost 2 million people, with a wider number of 3.04 million making up the creative economy, which includes creative roles in non-creative organisations (DCMS, 2017). Until the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020, the creative industries were also showing little signs of slowing, with a growth of 7.6% in 2016, twice the rate of the average industry in the UK.

Therefore, while the education reform act sees creative subjects side-lined from the curriculum, and in some cases, removed from schools entirely, the national economy is reliant on its success, and benefit from the achievements of its alumni. The future of the creative industries is reliant on a creatively dynamic and culturally aware workforce, experienced in arts-based subjects. Lord Baker, who advocates the broadening of EBacc to include arts-based subjects, argues the current EBacc’s ‘narrow academic curriculum will severely limit access to technical and creative subjects of the very kind needed in our new digital age’ (Baker, 2016: 42).

Coincidentally, politicians have become well-practiced in praising the creative industries and acknowledging their value within the UK economy and society, as demonstrated by Theresa May’s speech at the Creative Industries reception:

Your work is a vital part of our national life and our national economy, and I am absolutely committed to supporting it, ... The value of culture and creativity lies not only in its economic strength, ... Just as important is the less tangible contribution that it makes to our national life. The work you do brings joy to millions (May, 2018).

As Annetts, founder of the *BACC for the Future* campaign discusses, 'the EBacc is at odds with these commitments and is diminishing opportunities for children and young people' (Annetts in Masso, 2018).

The government acknowledges the important role the creative subjects play within society, they recognise the economic value which they wield and the joy that they bring. Within turbulent political times, both in its fractured communities and due to economic downturn, it seems at odds with intelligent thought to remove subjects from the curriculum which stimulate prosperity and demonstrate unity. Despite this, the government's determination to promote EBacc and to remove all aspects of creative learning from its structure seems imminent and the relegation of arts to the extra-curricular outlets, inevitable (James et al., 2019).

### 3.3 Disadvantaged Learners

As previously discussed, state schools are choosing to cut arts subjects from the curriculum as a means of focusing attention on the EBacc core subjects. This removal, however, is not being experienced within the independent and private school systems in the same manner. Arts Council England (2013; 2015), alongside the Creative Industries Federation (CLA, 2016; CLA, 2017), have drawn attention to the disparity between low and high-income families and their opportunities to engage with the arts. Of most concern is that schools with a high proportion of children on free school meals (FSM) are more than twice as likely to withdraw arts subjects from the curriculum than schools with a low proportion (21% versus 8%) (Sutton Trust, 2014). This withdrawal of the arts coincides with Amanda Spielman's, Ofsted's Chief Inspector of Schools for England, statement outlining the benefits of an arts-free EBacc, especially with regards to those students from

disadvantaged backgrounds. Spielman argues that, by supporting a shift back towards 'traditional' academic subjects, students will have the best chance to progress to higher-level study.

The worst thing that can happen to a working-class child is they don't get the full education to 16 that leaves them with options that could take them to university or vocational education

(Spielman in Jeffreys, 2018)

However, whilst Spielman argues that a 'full education' does not need to include arts as core subjects, statistics reveal students from low-income families who take part in arts activities at school are three times more likely to attain a higher-education degree (CLA, 2017). Spielman, in further discussion as to the art's role within state education, argues that schools should 'embrace creative subjects' but that this should be achieved through extra-curricular activities such as plays, art clubs, and orchestras (Spielman in Jeffreys, 2018). This view was supported by Nicky Morgan, who declared arts education must be used to 'complement' the core subjects (Morgan's 16<sup>th</sup> July 2015 speech quote in Snow, 2015a) which can be undertaken as either an additional subject or outside of school.

With current arts education regarded as 'complementary', consigned to the fringes of the curriculum, after-school clubs, and community groups, what then does this mean for students who do not have ready access to extra-curricular arts? As Nicholas Hytner, then director of the National Theatre declared:

Good arts provision in schools is essential and it needs to be written into the curriculum and delivered by specialist teachers. If it's voluntary and extra-curricular, many children will of course continue to be taken to the theatre or join after-school drama clubs, but many more will miss out. (Hytner in NUT, 2012).

Hytner here highlights a key aspect of extra-curricular arts; whilst it may be considered by governments that the arts are not essential subjects, worthy of inclusion in the core curriculum, by excluding their presence from schools entirely they are not merely reducing their influence, but for many students, they are being denied access to creative thought, artistic interaction, and self-expression completely. As Sir David Hare announced in reaction to the EBacc:

The arts will now be denied to the very pupils who have the least chance of exposure to them in their daily lives. Insanity and worse – class-reinforcing insanity. (Sir David Hare in NUT, 2012)

The provision of arts to 'opt-in' 'extra-curricular' outlets demonstrates an increasing socio-economic inequality. The Department for Culture, Media and Sport in their survey (2008/09) observed 33% of 11-15-year-old boys and 20% of girls from lower socio-economic backgrounds do not gain any access to the arts outside of school. One contributing factor leading to these figures is the incurred financial expense associated with extra-curricular activities. Cairns found that 22% of parents in the higher social groups pay over £500 per year on extra-curricular creative activities compared to just 10% of parents in middle and lower groups (Cairns, 2013), therefore the removal of vital artistic access and creative thinking within the classroom has a far more dramatic impact on those disadvantaged students than their more affluent peers (DCMS, 2011). This issue has not gone unnoticed, the Department of Education demonstrated concern regarding the consigning of arts to purely extra-curricular outlets, apprehensive that:

Low-income families would be less likely to support their children to take part in extracurricular creative activities to compensate for a reduction in key stage 4 arts subjects. (DfE, 2017: 10).

This concern for learners from lower-income families was further signalled in the Cultural Learning Alliance's analysis of the EBacc:

If the Arts are simply relegated to after-school, or optional activities, then the Government's ambition for social mobility will not be realised. The Arts, and all the benefits and opportunities they offer, will become a postcode lottery, or exclusive to those who can afford a private, arts-rich education. (CLA, 2016)

The noticeable effects of the EBacc were also recognised by the commercial and professional arms of the creative sector, with *Drama UK* chief executive Ian Kellgren declaring in *The Stage*:

Without the arts included in the EBacc and with no clear plan on how children from disadvantaged groups will have access to theatre, galleries, and technology, we fear that this admirable goal [young people training and entering the performing arts industry] will not be achieved. (Kellgren in Snow, 2015b).

The widespread disapproval at arts demise within the main curriculum, and the consequent impact this may have on disadvantaged children, was further discussed in an open letter to *The Guardian* (3rd July 2016), in which many industry experts and professionals put their name to a statement of concern over the EBacc and the side-lining of arts, especially drama, as extra-curricular for those in

state education, stating: 'By squashing access to the arts for those in state education, the government is reinforcing the division in life-chances between the privileged few and the majority' (2016).

This sentiment was reinforced by Deborah Annetts, founder of the *BACC for the Future* campaign, demanding: 'The EBacc must be reviewed or scrapped if we are to avoid access to the arts in secondary schools becoming the preserve of those who can afford it' (Annetts in Hill, 2018).

As witnessed in these statements there is a strong opinion of disapproval and anger towards the recent educational reform. Whilst government attitudes may promote the importance of STEM subjects, and their necessity for future economic growth, another social battle is being fought. State schools, which must adhere to the set curriculum, are being stripped down to their essential core subjects. The relegation of creative opportunities to extra-curricular events and clubs is both advocating their unimportance and often denying students access entirely. Indeed, after the arrival of EBacc, many schools have reported rapidly decreasing numbers of creative clubs, often attributed to budget cuts and ever-present pressure by local governments to focus on academic targets; for example, The Association of School and College Leaders (ASCL) Funding Survey 2017 found that 68% of schools had had to reduce the number of after-school clubs, trips and visits, and enrichment programmes due to rising costs, and public funding cutbacks, with the main victims being 'arts activities' (ASCL, 2017; 7).

Furthermore, The Sutton Trust revealed that whilst 70% of schools stated life skills were improved through extra-curricular performing arts clubs, this benefit was not equally affordable to young people from less well-off backgrounds, as they 'don't have access to the benefits that enrichment activities outside the classroom can bring, such as debating, volunteering and the performing arts' (Cullinane & Montacute, 2017). It can be argued that the state's role within well-rounded artistic teaching is finished; creative education has become the responsibility of the attentive parent,

supportive community, or paid professional, alienating the many students who do not have access to the opportunities once explored within school.

In sum, the decade since 2010 has seen an education reform which has placed STEM subjects at its core, with a deepening inattention for the creative arts, especially drama. The impact of EBacc can be felt across the arts disciplines, industries, and communities. The exemption of arts from the core curriculum has seen a dramatic fall across GCSE, A-Level, FE, and HE courses. The consequences of this decline are both academic, in terms of exploring the disciplines and creating world-class products, and holistic, in terms of equipping people with 'soft' skills to work in teams, collaborate, interact, and inspire.

Alongside the reduction in student numbers is the fall in teacher training courses to stimulate the next generation of creatives. The creative and cultural industries, which have continued to be vital in the UK economy, are revealing concerns about the deficit in qualified professionals, and the future training of creative individuals. Whilst EBacc is in its infancy, the sociological costs are unknown, but as history demonstrates, educational reform can have long-lasting consequences.

The government's position, promoting the primacy of STEM subjects, has a wider impact socially on the communities and lives of many young people. Whilst it may seem a quick, easy, and cheap solution to encourage extra-curricular arts, the reality is one of unfair opportunities across society. Access to music, art, performance, and design (to list only a few), is not a universal right. There are many young people in the UK for whom school is their only gateway to creative thought and appreciation, and educational reforms have a powerful role to play in supplying artistic engagement.

The following sections in this chapter seek to better understand the role of drama within education through its developments and aspirations. They consider where drama-in-education began its turbulent journey, how drama pedagogies have been used over the past 60 years to promote new approaches to learning, and why these approaches have witnessed such demise in recent times.



### 3.4 Post-War and the Child-Centred Approach

This section of the literature review addresses the progressive educationalists' promotion of child-centred learning which recognised the importance of the individual learner, and the role that drama could play in learning. Focusing on the theories of Jean Piaget, Lev Vygotsky, Maria Montessori, and John Dewey, the theme of 'play' and free exploration are considered, and applied to the concept of Child Drama, as conceived by Peter Slade.

The creation of the Welfare State in 1944 led to an overhaul in the British education system which changed the structure, method, and aims of schooling. The 1944 Education Act raised the school-leaving age to 15 and initiated the formation of the primary, secondary, and further education configuration, which is still in place today. Perhaps prompted by the degradation and hardship experienced throughout the Second World War, an egalitarian approach to education favoured a more nurturing and moral teaching; schools were no longer to be a preparatory avenue for the job market, and formalised rote-learning was being questioned by new educational philosophies (Gallagher et al., 2017; Hornbrook, 2002; Wooster, 2007).

Wooster argues that this 'progressive' move towards more holistic styles of learning was stimulated by the struggle of post-war reconstruction, continued rationing, and the predisposition of parents to seek a happier and freer childhood for their own children (Wooster, 2007: 7). Whilst the conditions driving progressive pedagogies may have been stimulated by social upheaval, the ideas themselves had long been discussed. Progressive educational theory has often been attributed to the visionary critic of traditionalism and the forerunner of active, child-centred learning John Dewey (1859-1952).

John Dewey in *The School and Society* (1915) observed:

The old education . . . may be summed up by stating that the center of gravity is outside the child. It is in the teacher, the textbook, anywhere and everywhere you please except in the immediate instincts and activities of the child himself. . . . Now the change which is coming into our education is shifting the center of gravity. . . . The child becomes the sun about which the appliances of education revolve; he is the center about which they are organized. (1915: 35)

The prediction made by Dewey fights against the 'transmission' model of education which sees students as mere empty vessels ready and willing to be filled with knowledge by the teacher (transmitter), but rather promotes learning through 'transaction' (Boyes, 2018). 'Transaction' learning, closely associated with constructivist learning, sees knowledge not as passively received, but rather, actively constructed by students as they engage with the world around them, building on previously acquired knowledge and experience with new information (Hein, 2002; von Glasersfeld, 2013). The major difference between the two models is that of *'role'*. In the 'transmission' model the teacher is in a dominant role, imparting wisdom to the passive child. On the other hand, the 'transaction' model sees the child at the centre of their own learning, with the teacher supporting, encouraging, and stimulating the acquisition of knowledge. The learner is no longer the passive recipient of information but the active producer of knowledge (Hooper-Greenhill, 1999; Jackson, 2002).

Dewey believes that the teacher's role within learning should be to provide guidance, and the creation of environments that would stimulate a child's intelligence rather than stressing any control over the learning (Tzuo, 2007). This freedom to explore and the promotion of a child's individuality is supported by educationalist Maria Montessori. Montessori sees the child at the centre of their own learning, with the teacher taking a very much smaller role, 'the teacher's task is not to talk, but to prepare and arrange a series of motives for cultural activity in a special environment made for the child' (Montessori, 1949: 7).

Both Dewey and Montessori champion a child-centred curriculum which focuses on a child's individual interests, providing a variety of opportunities and outlets to explore within the classroom. Within the child-centred approach, group and project work were highly praised too, as methods of teaching cooperation and understanding, both rationally and emotionally (Wooster, 2007; Tzuo, 2007). Dewey and Montessori's approaches do, however, disagree in one prominent aspect; whilst Dewey believes teachers should give guidance and direction, in order to support a child's learning,

Montessori argues teachers should refrain from interrupting a child's exploration unless they are exhibiting explicitly negative behaviours. Both educationalists promote a child-centred and explorative philosophy, instilling the creation of free environments, and with an emphasis on 'play', themes that would come to have a great influence on educational practices and the inclusion of drama within education.

The child-centred educational philosophies outlined by Dewey and Montessori, and influences including early-twentieth-century unconventional educationalists Harriet Finlay-Johnson (1911) and Caldwell Cook (1917), were soon to become incorporated and enshrined within Jean Piaget's and Lev Vygotsky's theories of child development.

Piaget and Vygotsky both support child-centred approaches to learning, both in educational and social environments. Within the two philosophers' theories, social interaction plays an irreplaceable role within cognitive development. As a child develops, according to both theorists, they use others, whether peers or adults, as a means of testing and enhancing their learning. There are, however, some specific differences in their theories. Jean Piaget's cognitive constructivist theory posits that children construct knowledge based upon previous experiences, new experiences, and the comparison between the two. Piaget believes knowledge to be the interplay between experience, environment, and the individual, whilst, ultimately, maintaining learning to be a journey of self-discovery. On the other hand, Lev Vygotsky's socio-constructivism sees learning as a social experience. Vygotsky's theory suggests learning is a constructive and interactive activity, where people around us create 'scaffolding' to help us learn and build on our previous knowledge (Gupta, 2009; Macy, 2016; Siraj-Blatchford, 2009; Tzuo, 2007). Fundamentally, whilst both approaches to learning have inherently social aspects, the difference stems from the direction of influence. Vygotsky purports knowledge is acquired through interaction and then internalised, with society providing both the source and the repository for learning (Berk & Winsler, 1995), whilst Piaget

believes knowledge is individually constructed and then tested and refined through social experiences (Wadsworth, 1995; Dockett & Perry, 1996).

Dewey, Montessori, Piaget, and Vygotsky all provide approaches which are labelled 'child-centred', differentiation stems from the degrees of teacher-support provided and direction of influence through interaction. Interestingly, whilst both Dewey and Vygotsky are looking for a balance between social-child (e.g., play, conversation, and imaginative games) and teacher-initiated activities, with guided assistance offered, Piaget's learning environments offer much greater individual freedom to explore, with closer links to Montessori's interruption and obstacle-free approach.

Piaget (1962) outlines different approaches to play, including *practice play*, *symbolic play*, and *games with rules*, highlighting 'make-believe' and dramatic play as important in a child's social, cognitive, and moral development. Believing drama to be especially useful as it allowed a child to try out different possibilities free of judgement or punishment in, what Dorothy Heathcote would later call, a 'no penalty zone' (Heathcote in SCRYPT, 1982: 23; Heathcote in Johnson & O'Neill, 1984: 129). Vygotsky, too, promotes the use of play, but in addition to Piaget's development approach, sees the benefits as intrinsically sociable, whilst also improving knowledge and language development (Vygotsky, 1978). Vygotsky believes that through symbolic and dramatic play children create meanings which they can then impart to others, stimulating interaction, shared experiences, and language. One such shared interaction that Vygotsky highlights is that of 'rule creation'. During his 1933 lecture on 'Play and Its Role in the Mental Development of the Child,' Vygotsky describes: 'Whenever there is an imaginary situation in play, there are . . . rules stemming from the imaginary situation . . . In play the child is free. But this is an illusory freedom' (Vygotsky, 1933/1967: 10).

Here, Vygotsky pronounces how even within 'make-believe' a child will instinctively create a shared vocabulary, one which can be understood and adhered to by their playmates, for example, a stick represents a sword, a banana – a phone, or the carpet – the sea. The symbolic rules at play allow the

child to grasp and explore the world around them, whilst also building an expansive knowledge of the rules of social interplay and building vocabulary.

As child developmental psychology gained attention and validity, so too 'play' became an essential part of child education. Indeed, throughout the 1940s and 50s, strong support for 'play' and child-centred learning was established. Unrestricted by a centralised curriculum, teachers were able to focus on the social and moral aspects of their students' education, adapting to individual needs, and exploring through creativity and freer practices; 'education was not just about preparation for work,' but rather about the 'development of an individual's capabilities' (Jones, 2003: 55 in Wooster, 2007: 8). Early progressive educators, in their desire for a more holistic approach to learning, looked to drama as a means of delivery. Drama was child-centred, maintained elements of play and make-believe, supported language development and social interaction and promoted self-expression. As Bolton describes, it was not that drama would innovate the curriculum in terms of content, but it was through its pedagogic approach and the processes of delivery, that drama's impact would be felt (Bolton, 1985: 152). Jackson (2007) supports this theory arguing that it was drama's flexibility, to be used across subjects, and at varying rates according to the ability of the child, that saw it flourish throughout the post-war years.

It was at this time, within the field of drama, that the child-centred approach to education became associated with Peter Slade and *Child Drama*. In 1943, Peter Slade, a pioneer within educational drama, became the UK's first drama advisor and, in 1944, the Education Act outlined the provision of powers to Local Education Authorities (LEA) to subsidise extracurricular activities such as visits to galleries and theatres. The appointment of Slade and the change to policy demonstrated drama's growing endorsement, not just with educators and theorists, but also within the establishment. An internal report from the new Ministry of Education in 1951 applauded the use of drama, stating:

It is true that many schools still include little or no drama in any part of their curriculum, but so many others do find room for it in one form or another that drama can be regarded as an established and worthwhile part of school life. (Ministry for Education, 1951 in Hornbrook, 1989: 9)

As the decade progressed, positive attitudes towards drama grew and the benefits of drama within an educational context were seen to reap rewards. Hodgson and Banham's *Annual Survey* (1972) highlights the growing support for drama within the state education system of the 1940s, crediting drama with the power to help develop 'speech, movement and confidence' supplying an 'opportunity for each child to develop to the full his mental and physical resources' (1972; 21). Indeed, within *Story of a School* (1949), an HMI document, drama, and creative arts were praised extremely highly due to their capacity to inspire confidence, interest, and concentration, with its author declaring 'the development of the personality of the child, his (sic) growth as a whole, demand greater attention than the three 'R's' (Stone, 1949: 9).

The newly accessible funding available through the LEA in the late 1940s led to the production of many new theatre shows aimed specifically at young audiences, with child-focused theatres forming across the country, for example, Belgrade Theatre, Amersham Playhouse, Compass Players, and Greenwich Young People's Theatre. Child-specific theatre had achieved validation and the formation of the Theatre-in-Education (TIE) movement had begun.

In 1954, Peter Slade's *Child Drama* was published, promoting many elements of drama's role within education, but one specifically had a lasting impact on the form. Within the text, Slade adamantly prioritises the spontaneous process of drama, as opposed to a more familiar product-driven theatre approach. Slade believes drama and its constituent parts are of fundamental educational benefit to the child, as approaches to 'self-discovery' and creative investigation of the world. He sees the creative process undertaken within child drama as a 'high art form in its own right' (Slade, 1954: 68), and one which should be supported and guided by a teacher, but which would be destroyed by an external audience, maintaining, 'the audience is often the enemy of the moment' (Slade, 1954: 68).

Of course, theatre has its place. It can be wonderful and beautiful, but it is only a small part of Drama, and we shall not get the balance right unless we see this quite clearly; and, unless we do see, it is difficult to understand the supreme and innate culture of Child Drama. (1954: 2)

Within *Child Drama*, Slade emphasises, as promoted by Dewey and Vygotsky, the role of the teacher as a 'loving ally' (1954: 85), the duty being to nurture and support a child's creative exploration and experimentation. Slade's belief that the education of all children requires free movement and play, as a means of learning and self-betterment, sees drama as the obvious method of delivery. Ken Jones (2003) characterises the post-war period as a time of light-handed discipline, a broad curriculum, with a belief in creativity and emotional development, geared towards the 'development of an individual's capabilities' (2003: 55). The 50s desire for a more holistic education system, supporting the individual learner, was taking hold and, as Hornbrook describes, 'there is no doubt that the pioneering work of Peter Slade in the years following the war enthused huge numbers of young teachers and succeeded in establishing drama as a force in state education' (Hornbrook, 2002: 11).

The legacy of Peter Slade and the theories advocated by the progressive educationalists would continue to have a great impact over the next two decades. The next section explores the 1960s and 70's love/hate relationship with child-centred learning and the important role theatre-in-education and drama-in-education played within the education and the wider society.

### 3.5 The Demise of Progressive Pedagogies

Following the progressive pedagogical theories of Vygotsky and Piaget, and the new drive towards a child-centred, play-driven approach to drama, the sixties and seventies saw drama take on a more appreciated role within young people's education.

In 1967, The Plowden Report was published as a wholesale review of all primary education in England. The report summarised the progressive education style being championed within schools and celebrated the curriculum in which 'the child is the agent in his own learning' (DES, 1967: 194). Within the report, drama itself was both identified and praised, with consideration given to the fact

that 'the provision of materials for dramatic play [...] will help children to give expression to their feelings as a preliminary to understanding and controlling them' (DES, 1967: 194).

At this same time, it was theatre practitioner Brian Way, who had previously worked with Peter Slade, that had become the driving force behind children's drama and drama within education in the UK. Way's attitude had been widely influenced by Vygotsky and Slade and championed the progressive, experiential, child-centred attitude towards child learning and development. Drama was a pedagogical tool becoming 'a way of teaching and a way of learning for everyone' (Way, 1967: 7). Way saw the purpose of drama as a tool for the development of the whole person, the effects of drama education should be long-lasting and a means of exploring children's creativity and achieving life-long happiness – a life-long practice.

Way continued to build on the ideas outlined in Slade's *Child Drama*, developing, alongside the child psychological theory of the time, a passion for 'play', with an emphasis on the social and psychological value of make-believe, role-play, and imagination to the child. Way, like Slade, was pushing for a divide between the role of theatre and drama in education. It is important to note the distinction between theatre and drama; as Way (1967) explained, theatre is principally concerned with communication between actors and audience, whereas drama focuses on the experience of participants: irrespective of any function of communication to an audience. Whilst theatre, therefore, considered staging, stagecraft, skills, and form, drama was dominated by experience, process, and development. This would become of key significance as drama in education progressed and became more closely linked with the concept of Process Drama.

Throughout the sixties, educators had been widely influenced by progressive education theorists, and the child-centred approach was widely adopted. As part of this movement, drama had been recognised as a tool for learning, as much as a subject within its own right. 'Drama in primary schools is not a subject... but a method of, or an aid to teaching.' (Way, 1967: 5)



At this time, drama was being used within the classrooms as a means of teaching and learning, without the structure of traditional performance, and Theatre-in-Education (TIE) too had established its position, with many touring theatre companies working with schools on social outreach, subject-specific, and cultural activities. As O'Toole (2009) discusses, the central work of TIE was the 'exploration of dramatic situations through participant role-play without an external audience, where the purpose of the activity was to experience directly or obliquely the dilemmas and tensions encountered by the characters in the dramatic context the situation and story [...] and invariably by negotiation or collective improvised roleplay to contribute to some of the essential elements of the context.' (2009: 480) The work of these companies, however, was becoming considered 'radical' or overtly 'political' by those on the right-wing, and a backlash against progressive education was beginning to take hold.

In 1969, criticism was mounting, and a collection of articles and essays were published by The Critical Quarterly Society magazine (Cox & Dyson, 1969) in what became known as The Black Papers. A swathe of complaints against progressive education, which they saw as synonymous with 'liberal' values and 'ineffectual' teaching, was presented within the papers and called for a return to traditional teaching methods, stricter discipline, and an education system that would prepare students for a world of work.

In total, 5 black papers were published between 1969 and 1977, and the right-wing were championing their growing popularity. This was further bolstered in 1976 when Neville Bennet delivered controversial findings in the publication *Teaching Styles and Pupil Progress*. Bennet claimed that his study of primary education proved that silent, formal, traditional education, in which students are regularly assessed, and competition is encouraged, resulted in, an attainment advantage of, on average, four months ahead of their 'informally' taught peers. Bennet's study was widely praised within the mainstream press, and the return to 'traditional' teaching methods gained

momentum, with many parents blaming the progressive educators and child-centred pedagogy for the breakdown in law and order (Chitty, 2009).

Indeed, The CCCS (Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies) at Birmingham University in 1981 stated: 'The reforms of the 1960s, especially the introduction of progressive methods and of comprehensive schools, were held responsible for an alleged decline in the general standards and basic skills, for a lack of social discipline and the growing incongruence between the world of school and the world of work' (CCCS, 1981: 212).

The whole concept of child-centred learning and progressive education (including drama) were increasingly being blamed for social disquiet and industrial disharmony. As Wooster (2007) states, the post-war educational consensus can be seen to have been breaking down at this time and, with the election of a Conservative government in 1979, it was clear that accepted educational theory was going to come under scrutiny (2007: 2).

### 3.6 Theatre in Education / Drama in Education

Progressing from early experimental methods of TIE, through Way's principles of younger audiences as active performers, and the teacher as facilitator, drama's role within education began to come into force. The TIE programme had progressed from performances in schools, as stand-alone productions, to carefully planned, organised and co-ordinated activities, researched and developed by the company. The form had become less linear, more process-driven and included combined games, techniques, and skills, all aimed at enhancing participants experience, sensitivity, awareness, and imagination over one or two-day events. Whilst the Black Papers had led to less progressive approaches to learning, TIE was continuing to develop in communities and outside of the school setting.

The creation of TIE projects required a substantial amount of research, development, and training (Jackson, 2013; Nicholson, 2009; Redington, 2016; Somers, 1996). TIE team members were often referred to as actor-teachers, due to the additional pedagogical approach to their performance work. Actor-teachers preparation would include the devising and learning of the scripted work, alongside improvisation and active participation with young audiences, this would often coincide with providing teacher training too, as a means of follow-on learning after the event.

Theatre in Education, at its core, is both social and political (Nicholson, 2009; Wooster, 2012). It has social aims and strives to promote harmony and understanding within communities. The issues raised by productions varied from race, gender, class, and bullying through to confidence building and teamwork. Progressive governments in the UK saw the benefits of these programmes and were willing to invest in their delivery, as seen with the rise in community arts funding under mid-1970s Labour governments (Jackson, 1993; Nicholson, 2009; Wooster, 2016). However, as Britain voted in more conservative governments, the funding for such programmes was cut. This was most notably evident with the election of Margaret Thatcher in 1979 and the immediate 4.8% cut to Arts Council grants and funding. As the Conservative government withdrew funding from LEAs, there was an added pressure for schools to perform on smaller budgets and in-turn cut funding to projects whose impact could not be quantifiably measured. TIE was one area which saw a dramatic fall in funding as schools were unable to justify the expenditure without correlating and associated academic achievement (Nicholson, 2009).

This did not call an end to drama's role in schools, but a shift in the style of delivery. Schools were no longer funding one-off productions from outside theatre (TIE), rather discovering a new model of active learning. Drama-in-Education (DIE; UK), often linked to Creative Drama (US), promoted the use of drama to explore experiences in-role. Key proponents, such as Dorothy Heathcote and Gavin Bolton, encouraged enactive learning across the school curriculum throughout the 80s. All academic subjects and social themes were considered open to the possibility of being explored through

drama, through embodiment, storytelling, improvisation, and reflection. The practice was promoted as informal, created by participants, to 'explore, develop, and express ideas and feelings through dramatic enactment' (McCaslin, 2006: 7), and remained linked to the school curriculum, thus supporting standardised learning outcomes. Encouraged by Heathcote and Bolton's teachings, drama shifted focus from an approach to personal development to a legitimate process of learning. Drama activities were shown to support learning and research across subjects, and significantly aiding the development of language skills (Kao and O'Neill, 1998). Drama had begun to receive acceptance as a universal educational tool as well as an academic subject, or extra-curricular activity.

Many TIE practitioners found DIE's participatory approach highly relevant to their practice, allowing children and facilitator to 'discover' or 'stumble across' the significance in their work, whereas TIE was often accused of pushing children through a programme, manipulating and controlling the involvement towards a predictable outcome (Bolton, 2002).

As Bolton (2002: 44) outlines, TIE and DIE are setting up dramatic experiences for 'change in understanding'; in turn, they have the capacity to improve both the students' understanding of and skills in theatre. However, Bolton goes on to argue that DIE possesses an upper hand when it comes to 'change in understanding'. Drama has the opportunity to influence and discuss personal and social themes, and within the process of drama-making, problems such as self-esteem, group interaction, discipline, and language can all become objectives to be explored. The flexibility of DIE allows classes to explore these themes and build on ideas shared within the group. On the other hand, TIE, with its set goals and activities, does not permit the switching of objective nor can it be influenced by the participants in the same spontaneous way.

Over time, in the UK, DIE has become an umbrella term used to describe drama's use in schools, and other educational settings, in a number of forms, including full scale performances, TIE, roleplay, playmaking and arguably now the most active forms Applied Drama and Process Drama. As Schewe (2013) explores, DIE has traversed being a school subject, method, and sub-discipline and continued

to evolve as a wider pedagogical performance approach. Within this thesis, we will follow Schewe's (2013) classifications of DIE, TIE, Process Drama, and Applied Drama as approaches all within performative teaching and learning. Within each of these approaches there exists a further subset of strategies or techniques (e.g., roleplay, improvisation, hot-seating) as ways in which to go about a task.

### 3.7 Applied Drama

Challenging and building on the established fields of TIE and DIE, applied drama is fundamentally engaged with political and social activism. Influenced by the radical theatre groups throughout the 1960s and 70s, practitioners and artists witnessed the abandonment of traditional space and form, often looking to works outside of the Western or professional canon and seeking collaboration and fusion of performance within a community.

Applied drama too was stimulated by movements in philosophy, and sociological notions of 'performance', which were being analysed and stripped bare, for example in sociologist Erving Goffman's seminal text *The Presentation of the Self in Everyday Life* (1959). Goffman and others framed much of culture, gender, sexuality, and race in terms of performative acts, which in turn led artists to explore and play with the conceptions of identity and performance.

Whilst TIE and DIE strove to create a 'change in understanding', applied drama sought to 'question and challenge the given order,' specifically designed to benefit individuals, communities and societies (Landy & Montgomery, 2012: 130). Combining artistic disciplines (including but not limited to theatre), philosophy and social sciences, Helen Nicholson (2014) speaks of applied drama developing 'new possibilities for everyday living rather than segregating theatre-going from other aspects of life' (2014: 4). Applied drama has become the widely accepted term given to drama engaging with education and communities with the shared belief of creating something greater than the form itself. Ranging from community-specific issues relating to identity, struggle or celebration through to professional development or industrial action, the intentions of applied drama vary

vastly. A frequent belief by those practising applied drama is that after the action, the audience/participants might interact differently both with one another and the wider world. The political agenda, being to improve social, community and personal situations through drama, is often likened to the ideas at the heart of Bertolt Brecht's theatre theory and practice (Prentki and Preston, 2013).

Applied drama can be seen to have been influenced by the European models of TIE / DIE, community theatre, political theatre, and the changing philosophical and sociological thoughts emanating through academic theory and political movements. There was, however, another great pedagogical inspiration, that of Brazilian educator Paulo Freire and theatre-maker Augusto Boal.

Freire was a strong proponent of placing the learner at the centre of the learning experience. His methodology saw the teacher acting as a facilitator within the learning process and a notable emphasis on the active rather than passive learner. Freire was chiefly concerned with adult literacy, believing that an active participation in social democracy could only be achieved through an ability to read and write. Freire promoted the connections between language and agency, describing literacy as 'word-and-action' rather than 'mere vocabulary' (Freire, 1972: 6); through creative and active learning, participants were able to take a role within their language learning. Following Marx, Freire argued that education should encourage sharing through dialogue with others, and not a passive environment where students listen, receive, and memorise. This process-driven approach would also encourage participants to engage with their cultural, social, and political knowledge to develop new ways of expressing themselves and their opinions. Freire's promotion of creative participation and critical reflection has become central to pedagogies in applied drama (Nicholson, 2014). Freire's techniques of active engagement in dialogue and learning through action are fundamental in the principles of language learning through drama, which will be explored later in this thesis.

Indebted to the teachings and theories of Freire, Boal created socially engaged theatre, encouraging audiences to become 'spect-actors', who would take part in the action themselves creating a 'forum' whereby debate would form part of the performance itself. Whilst Boal often noted the importance of drama as a strategy for social change and experimentation, he argued that it was 'not the place of theatre to show the correct path' (Boal, 1979: 141); as far as Boal was concerned, the active learning within a drama/theatre environment is to equip the participant with the tools of thought, to ask questions, stir debate, but not to proffer solutions. The process, which Boal endorsed, would promote political engagement and allow the community to discover its own resolutions to shared issues. Drama, according to Boal, was not a method of delivering a political message, but a way of collectively creating that message through a process of dialogue and discussion, between actors / non-actors and spect-actors. Boal's work with disadvantaged communities around the world, and his 1979 text *The Theatre of the Oppressed*, have been broadly celebrated, and commonly considered precursors to applied drama. Later in this thesis, Boal's techniques are practically implemented and analysed within the EAL classroom.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### 4 DRAMA IN LANGUAGE LEARNING

From the early days of TIE, through progressions of DIE and applied drama, the form, and name by which drama and education have become entwined, has developed and altered, whilst retaining many key principles. Ultimately, TIE desired to influence and engage younger audiences, through stimulating and provocative work, with the hope of changing minds. DIE progressed with this notion by making all subjects avenues for dramatic interpretation, placing the learner at the centre of the process, and applied drama took this further still by encouraging active participatory learning, not only in classrooms but in any context imaginable. Another strand of this shared journey is that of process drama.

Developing from Heathcote and Bolton's non-linear DIE movement, Heathcote pioneered a new approach to drama as a tool for learning. Process drama, a term first appearing in print in 1991 in *The Drama Magazine* in an article by Brad Haseman, is an improvisational methodology which seeks to empower students' learning by providing a structured imaginary world, in which they can become different characters, reacting to a variety of situations, over an extended period of time. The aims of process drama, similar to that of DIE and applied drama, are to allow participants to consider alternative perspectives, and to take ownership of their decisions (Landy & Montgomery, 2012: 19); this, in turn, can develop insight and allows students to better understand themselves and the world in which they live (Kao & O'Neill, 1998: 12).

Process drama, in a classroom context, is used to explore themes and issues, both social and based on curriculum content. The process, by which process drama gets its name, will normally begin with a pretext. The pretext, an expression coined by O'Neill (1995), refers to the stimuli selected by the teacher to establish situation, location, atmosphere, or theme; this can often be a visual, auditory, or literary impulse, from which a framework for exploration can develop.



The course of exploration is never brief, but rather carefully organised, by the facilitator, in 'episodes' (Kao & O'Neill, 1998: 13). This episodic, non-linear, approach allows themes to be explored cumulatively extending to create a fictional landscape, with all participants contributing and negotiating. As Kao and O'Neill explain, the process is much more complex than a linear chronological sequencing, unlike 'a chain of beads. It is more like linking them together into a web of meaning' (1998: 13).

The cumulative nature of process drama and its emphasis on the development of an imagined world allows for the participants to take ownership of their work. It is then over time that participants create identities within their context and have freedoms to explore actions and their outcomes. This shared experience focuses on active role-taking and problem solving, in which attitudes, not character, are of the chief concern (Johnson & O'Neill, 1984; Kao & O'Neill, 1998). This emphasis on experience is capitalised further by the lack of performance within process drama. The 'end product' is always the participant's experience within the process and the reflection which follows. Johnson and O'Neill (1998) put forward the idea that the key to eliciting trust and developing commitment to the process is through reflection. It is argued that reflection can be a great tool in framing an activity in terms of learning objectives, achievements, asking questions, and reviewing progress. The reflective process can take many forms, from verbal discussions, non-verbal tableau, drawing, map-making, and writing tasks. The reflective process can be both formal and informal but is always essential in the process drama experience. Later in this chapter, the reflection process will be analysed with specific attention to the language learning drama experience.

Another key pedagogic strategy used in process drama is teacher-in-role; Heathcote (1973: 80 - 89) outlined that the teacher should take on a role within the improvisation alongside the participants. This innovative technique allowed for a status change, so often present in classrooms, where the learning is teacher-centred; in process drama, the teacher is both facilitator and fellow participant, thus allowing for a more interesting dynamic in terms of agency, power, and control (Piazzoli, 2012;

31). This status change is linked to Freire's notion of creative participation, Boal's Forum Theatre, and social psychologist Erving Goffman's *Presentation of the Self*, as all call for the identity or power roles to be called into question.

Process drama has been used in a multitude of situations, including many language learning classrooms, the results of which have been generally positive and have pushed for further research to be undertaken. Little research has however observed the use of process drama with primary-school-aged pupils, such as those this thesis discusses. Landy and Montgomery (2012) discuss the benefits of process drama with younger children, promoting its use for a number of reasons, not only the introduction of drama and theatre practices, the analytic and reflective processes, and the more complex critical thinking skills, but specifically because of younger pupils' proximity to periods of 'natural play', the capacity and willingness to explore and commit to pretend environments.

TIE, DIE, applied drama, and process drama are all linked through their shared history and their desire for social change. Their legacy and future are driven by the passions of practitioners, willingness of communities and political systems, and the openness to engage with creativity and free thought.

This brief introduction has touched on the history of drama and its connection to education, with an awareness of the immense quantity of work that has gone before and exists in tandem, areas including Theatre for Development, Children's Theatre, and Drama Therapies.

This thesis has, at its core, English as an Additional Language learners, at Key Stage 2, and specifically how drama can improve their levels of fluency. It also examines process drama, and the techniques, games, practices that this approach associates. Process drama does not exist in a vacuum, and at times, other forms of drama will be included to add analysis, comparison and depth to the study, as too shall other forms of English language pedagogy and foreign language teaching.

## 4.1 Language Learning

Whilst behaviourist theories often favour passive product-based approaches to language learning, relating to linguistic forms, skills, and habit formation, constructivists and cognitivists favour a process-driven exploration of ideas and understanding. Language learning can often be framed by teacher instruction, the training and mastery of grammatical forms and the inflexible structures of 'correct' language usage. However, social constructivism favours an emphasis on the active connection between learners and context. Within a successful constructivist language classroom, learners are required to inquire, set goals, explore, and generate learning, within a supported environment, characterised by Horwitz (1986) as 'systematic thinking skills'. Language learning is best achieved when actual language is being used (Gee, 1997), as ultimately language is a social tool for communication. Within the language learning classroom, it can be argued that the best results can be achieved when an constructivist approach to learning, in which learners are required to think creatively and use language as an strategy for exploration, through the action of cognitive processing, is used in conjunction with a innate desire to achieve a common goal based on the learning objectives.

Task-based learning has recently become a popular approach for language teaching, as it combines both approaches to language learning. Prabhu (1987) defined task-based learning as an 'activity that requires learners to arrive at an outcome from given information through some process of thought, and which allows teachers to control and regulate that process' (1987: 17). As Ellis (2000) further explains task-based activities have two composite parts (1) some input (i.e., information that learners are required to process and use), and (2) some instructions relating to what outcome the learners are supposed to achieve (2000: 195). Task-based activities therefore are structured through *task* (set by the teacher and governed by the rules prescribed) and *activity* (a process of discovery experienced by the learner).

Kumaravadivelu (2006), an advocate of task-based language learning, recommends structuring task-based activities so as to stimulate new levels of language proficiency. Outlining that task-based learning can focus on language-centred tasks, learner-centred tasks, and learning-centred tasks, it is important for the teacher to understand the learning objectives of the lesson and keep the activities geared towards the chosen outcome.

Language-centred tasks should focus on the development of new vocabulary, grammar structure, expression, and should promote the comprehension and usage of these linguistic elements.

Outcomes from these tasks should solidify understanding and require learners to error correct, construct (and deconstruct), and problem-solve based on target language.

Learner-centred tasks should require learners to use previously explored language to express opinion, discuss concepts, and embody language elements. Tasks should include role-play, simulation, and expressive writing and creative output.

Within learning-centred tasks, language learning tasks should vary between auditory, visual, and kinaesthetic, promoting previously taught language elements in multiple formats. Learners should feel provoked to use language in new ways and explore new contexts for language. Drama, within the English language class, is situated firmly as a task-based learning activity. Often, a drama language lesson can contain all three styles of task, but it is important to acknowledge which objective is being targeted at which stage of the activity, especially as drama-based lessons transition between language-centred activities (pre-teach and teaching of language) and learner/learning-centred activities. As Nunan (1988) states, task-based language activities 'stimulate learners to mobilise all their linguistic resources and push their linguistic knowledge to the limit' (cited in Seedhouse 1999: 154). The learner is here challenged to learn new target language items but also use those language items as a means of communication and technique for learning.

## 4.2 Drama and Language Learning

This section examines various forms of drama and their use within the field of language teaching, in the context of theoretical analysis, review, and response. The work is placed within an academic framework and their role within an English language learning praxis is explored across themes of *communication, embodied learning, identity, and safe space*.

Drama, and its complex educational history, including TIE and DIE, has long been championed by drama practitioners and educators as a pedagogical approach across subjects and disciplines (Anderson, Michael & Dunn, 2013; Howell & Heap, 2013; Heathcote & Bolton, 1995; Jackson, 2002; Landy & Montgomery, 2012; McCaslin, 2006; Neelands, 2000; O'Neill, 1995; Wagner, 1998). Its role has been promoted in terms of creativity, confidence, comprehension, and camaraderie, to name a few. However, its specific use within the language classroom and the benefits drama has to offer, have been rather slower to be acknowledged.

Actor and educator Richard Via was one of the first practitioners to publish accounts promoting theatrical and dramatic methodologies with language learners. Working in Japan from 1966, he led classes through staged productions advocating performance as a means of contextualising language skills and introducing cultural conventions. He believed it amplified language learning as it made target language necessary and meaningful, improved speaking skills, built self-confidence, and lowered inhibitions (Via, 1992). According to Via (1987: 10), 'Few would disagree that drama has at last established itself as a means of helping people learn another language. A great deal of our everyday learning is acquired through experience, and in the language classroom drama fulfils that experiential need'. Yet, despite a widespread desire for more contextually situated, creative, and communication driven language use, language teaching has not undergone any dramatic changes to pedagogy, nor have performance techniques, such as process drama, applied drama, and DIE, and their associated conventions been widely implemented within the teaching of language subjects

(Belliveau & Kim, 2013). That is not to say that it has not been encouraged and supported in research findings.

Since the early 1990s, the subject of language acquisition and drama has received a diverse body of literature, focusing on the strengths, not only to fluency, but also the social aspects of language learning, including issues of identity, confidence, and community (McGovern, 2017). Stinson and Piazzoli (2013) acknowledge the increased interest in the field citing the growing numbers of TESOL (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages) conferences focusing exclusively on drama and, following several years of development, the launch of the journal *SCENARIO* in 2007, concentrating on a wide selection of topics within the field of drama and language education. Drama and language learning has gradually expanded as a research subject and has attracted attention in the fields of education, sociology, psychology and drama, with an edition of *RiDE* (Research in Drama Education, 2011) Journal specifically dedicated to the subject.

Over the past three decades, a wealth of resources have been produced and gradually (although arguably not widely) made available to educators and practitioners, building on the works of Maley and Duff (1984), Di Pietro (1987) and Wessels (1987), who, for a long time, had been the outspoken few proponents on the subject. The surge in online documents, forums, and sharing platforms have made access to research easier and proliferation more global. However, these resources are still shared mainly within a community who are already interested in the subject matter rather than those working in other parts of the language teaching industries. From humble 'how-to' guides and lesson plan ideas, the benefits of drama began to be witnessed, and a flurry of excitement, throughout the 1990s and 00s, saw pedagogical interest gather momentum. The international call for the use of drama in language teaching, no doubt in part due to the internet's dissemination of resources, grew and research began to appear across Europe, Asia, North and South America and Australasia (Araki-Metcalf, 2001, 2007; Bournot-Trites et al., 2007; Dicks & Blank, 2009; DOL 2006, 2008; Early & Young, 2009; Even, 2008; Giaitzis, 2008; Kao & O'Neill, 1998; Kao, Hsu & Carkin, 2001;

Lauer, 2008; Matthias, 2007; Ntelioglou, 2011; Piazzoli, 2010, 2011; Ronke, 2005; Rothwell, 2011; Stinson, 2008; Stinson & Freebody, 2006; Stinson & Piazzoli, 2013; To et al., 2011).

As the field of interest has expanded, the diverse nature of literature has focused on a variety of themes, from specific learning outcomes (oral ability, literacy, and receptive skills), motivation and confidence, methodologies (roleplay, text-based work, gesture and mime, process drama) and teaching practices, through to differences between EAL, EFL (English as a Foreign Language), ESL (English as a Second Language) and specific age groups, and their precise language needs. These themes will be discussed over the following sections, in relation to their diverse theoretical considerations.

### 4.3 Communication

When included in a curriculum or undertaken as part of extra-curricular or outreach programmes, drama, as a means of improving language ability, has presented positive impacts across research studies (Bournot-Trites et al., 2007; Galante & Thomson, 2017; Kao, 1995; Podlozny, 2001; Rothwell, 2011; Stinson, 2008; Stinson & Freebody, 2006; Stinson & Piazzoli, 2013; Wagner, 1998). This growing selection of studies all demonstrate participants' development with communicative skills; however, this is not to be misinterpreted as 'correctness', which many classroom environments aim towards. Communication involves more than merely achieving the 'right words', it is concerned with being understood by the receiver, which is dependent on many variables, including appropriateness, comprehensibility, speed, tone, volume, and pitch (Stinson & Freebody, 2006). Back in 1975, Crystal explained that controlled classrooms are not equipping language learners with the tools they need to converse in the real world. He highlighted how people in textbooks do not stumble over grammar, hesitate, get interrupted, talk over one another nor make mistakes; they are not real. Crystal argues for language to be taught in situations which are contextual or 'real', where the focus is on communication rather than accuracy (Crystal, 1975: 3).

Drama seeks to communicate through imitation and action in a precise context, therefore, it is unsurprising that through drama activities, which promote communication, the presentation of ideas for meaning, is an ideal method for stimulating fluency. As Dodson (2000) notes, the strengths of drama are, in part, the combinations of grammar, reading, writing, speaking, listening, and pronunciation together in a context where fluency and meaning are promoted over rigid form. This is emphasised by Davies (1990), who argues language learners' main want is to make themselves understood in the target language; therefore, drama activities, which encourage communicative fluency, contributes to this goal.

Schewe (2002) indicates the reasoning behind drama teachers' successes within the language classroom are due to the inherent link between effective communication and the ability to interact. Both drama/social interaction and communication skills are embodied processes; the holistic nature of drama allowing for language to be explored and personified by the participants in a shared environment. Participants have the capacity, and often desire, to express themselves, to demonstrate their feelings, thoughts, imaginations, and opinions. When correctly supported by an educator, the drama/language learning environment encourages interaction, dialogue, communication (verbal and non-verbal), and embodied learning which allows participants to express themselves; the common goal being that of language proficiency.

Self-expression, interaction, and open communication are inherently social. Dialogues, debate, and sharing one's opinions involves input, consideration, and reaction to other participants within an exchange. It is through these exchanges that the construction of meaning is conveyed and drawn. Ultimately, communicative exchanges occurring in social situations are pieced together from language, non-verbal cues, and context; the drama environment, and its creation of contexts, its freedom of expression, and its opportunity for imitation and representation, allow participants of lower language ability to observe, construct language, and contribute in interactions with higher level participants, thus allowing for a higher language level to be present in the shared



communication space, than in a standard classroom (Greenfader, 2014). This sharing of communication, through multiple cues, facilitates comprehension which, in turn, promotes fluency, confidence, and the enjoyment of language learning. As Savignon (1983) describes, language learning, much like drama activities, creates experiences between people in contexts, which in turn builds networks, where comprehensive communication is the currency propelling language learning.

#### 4.4 Embodied Learning in Context

As outlined by Vygotsky (1978), language acquisition and its subsequent development can only exist within a context of social interactions. According to Vygotsky's *Social Constructivism Theory*, learning occurs through exposure to others, at varying levels of proficiency; it occurs through the signals emitted, for example, the reactions, non-verbal cues, attitudes, and dialogues, which allow a learner to consider and shape their own reactions, which in turn will stimulate comprehension, communication, and expression. Vygotsky maintains that knowledge is not an isolated item, which can be implanted into the receiver. Cognition, he argues, is a process distributed across the knower, through the environment in which knowing occurs, and the activity in which the learner participates (Barab & Squire, 2004). The acquisition of knowledge through a developed understanding are achieved when the participant engages in spontaneous, symbolic play, taking on the personae of others and socially interacting with those above their level. Vygotsky called this practice of socially constructed learning Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), believing all learning to be enhanced through interaction with those who can educate, instruct, and inform us.

The drama class, with its created contexts, roles, and varied stimuli (visual, non-verbal, literary, auditory, etc.) inspires social interactions and communication. In a collaboratively constructed context, the participants are inspired to imagine, to think freely and to react instinctively, allowing the opportunity to experience real-life situations; placing language in context builds confidence for 'real-world' application (Davies 1990; Belliveau & Kim, 2013). This is all achieved, as Bruner (1976)

earlier hypothesised, whilst minimising the consequences of one's actions, and providing opportunities for experimentation without external pressure (Stinson & Freebody, 2006; Neelands, 2010).

Dodson (2002), explores the educational potential of drama, and details the benefits of drama activities and their use of target language in realistic contexts, through roleplay (Harmer, 2007) and DIE (Miccoli, 2003). Indeed Dodson (2002: 8; 31), Harmer (2007), and Ntelioglou (2011: 605) all give special mention to collaboration and interaction which, they argue, support learning through a social constructivist approach. Miccoli's (2003) research, analysing the oral development of Brazilian university students through drama activities, reported that participants' improved vocabulary and pronunciation, alongside confidence and motivation, was in part down to the social interactions and genuine language use embedded in context. Participants reflected that as the contexts felt real so did their English. Miccoli's learners appreciated the weight of language in context, reflecting that in drama situations the social interactions were real and, therefore, the language use had meaning (2003: 127).

The embodied Vygotskian approach to learning is not merely an individual psychological process but an inherently social action: learning from one another, absorbing signals emitted and spontaneously reacting. Following these principles, the drama language classroom stimulates discovery and promotes learning through social interaction (Byram, 1997; Dodson, 2000; Even, 2011; Morita, 2000) and the communication between peers occurring in the shared space. Following Vygotsky's notion of ZPD, the drama language classroom allows for facilitators, and more advanced students, to model target language, providing a level of scaffolding for lower-level learners; learners are empowered and exposed to authentic language registers and are able, in collaboration with their peers, to problem-solve and construct and convey meaning.

Through a critical sociocultural lens, language learning through drama sustains interactions between participants using the target language and facilitates comprehension. Participants are connected

through their imagined world and their created social roles; the drama space requires learners to become active participants, rather than passive receivers. The effect is that of meaningful language production, and through reflection, opportunities emerge for further language exploration and written skill production (Reig & Paquette, 2009). Norton (2000) supports this theory adding, that not only are participants acquiring new language skills, but they are also in the process of constructing complex new identities. It is due to these multifaceted benefits that, as McGovern (2017: 6) discusses, language educators and drama practitioners have begun to explore drama as a means of teaching English, less as a supplementary part of the lesson but rather as the main method of language teaching.

#### 4.5 Identity

Studying a new language can carry a huge weight, especially if that language is being acquired in an unfamiliar environment and with unfamiliar people. In learning a language, we encounter a number of negative emotions, including anxiety, inhibition, embarrassment, and self-awareness. The thrust behind these emotions is the desire to succeed and the fear of failure (Andres, 2002). Language learning is a complex task, which requires attention, perseverance, and drive. Whilst academic ability and hard work can reap rewards, Andres (2002) proclaims self-esteem, motivation, inhibition, and anxiety the four key affective factors that impact on success in language learning.

Anxiety can take two forms: trait anxiety, the permanent predisposition, and state anxiety, the feelings triggered by specific situations. A number of studies have been undertaken to observe behaviours in those learning languages and the resulting emotional states. Inherent in the findings (MacIntyre & Gardner 1991; Phillips, 1992; Young 1991) is that often a state anxiety towards language learning is present and can have debilitating effects on the language learning process, in both acquiring new language and demonstrating language ability. It is therefore key to follow teaching practices which keep anxiety to a minimum.

In her analysis of communicative oral fluencies within Asian (Chinese, Korean, Japanese) learners of English, Gill (2016) discovered high levels of stress and anxiety experienced by students, due to the demands for linguistic correctness and clarity of speech. This drew stark contrast when dictated lessons were swapped for drama activities and free speech was encouraged. The interactive, group-based, contextually grounded approaches led to enhanced confidence, motivation and spontaneity of oral output. As Stern (1980) had previously claimed, the key to long-term improvement, greater speech production, and reduced anxiety, is through the removal of shackles, the opportunity for self-initiated communicative learning and, ultimately, when learning becomes enjoyable.

Enjoyment of task has been proven to raise self-esteem, encourage motivation and enthusiasm, instil confidence, and in turn foster successful learning (Stinson & Freebody, 2006). Dora-To, Phoebe-Chan, Lam, and Tsang's (2011) study revealed that the interaction and group-based tasks undertaken during process drama activities makes learning more relaxed and enjoyable. The results indicated that the creation of a non-threatening environment, as advocated by Finch (2001), alongside opportunities for collective group work, contextual framing of task, performing in role, and increased amounts of student-talk all contributed to more effective language learning. The outcomes, drawn by To et al. (2006), included improvements in motivation in learning and confidence in speaking, greater engagement of students, more active participation, better use of language in context and for purpose, and an overall more engaged, appreciative and active learner. The results achieved by To et al. (2006) are supported, with similar outcomes, by much literature in the field (Al-Saadat & Afifi, 1997; Baldwin, 2004; Bournot-Trites et al. 2007; Kao & O'Neill, 1998; Liu, 2002; Maley & Duff, 1978; Neelands, 1992; Piazzoli, 2011; Rothwell, 2011; Stinson, 2008; Stinson & Piazzoli, 2013; Tseng, 2004). Motivation and confidence, often suppressed through anxiety within language learning, have been proven to increase significantly when drama is included in the language classroom (Bournot-Trites et al. 2007; Kao & O'Neill, 1998; Stinson & Piazzoli, 2013). Improved confidence has been seen to stem from specific aspects of drama, including the increased opportunity to speak, risk-taking, and the 'safe-space'.

The quantity of talk time within a drama-based language lesson has been studied with remarkable results. Within a traditional English language learning class, comprising of 30 students, the average student's speaking time is approximately one hour per year, this figure rises by more than 500 percent when learning in a communicative / drama-based language learning environment (Long & Porter, 1985). This is supported by Kagan (1995), who observed more language output in two minutes within an interactive session, than a traditional class in one hour. Kao and O'Neill (1998) claim that this increased confidence with language is due to students speaking time being situated in context, whereby they are free to spontaneously express their ideas without the pressure of accuracy. This idea is expanded by Spada (2007) who outlines the benefits of communicative language teaching, in which fluency is prioritised over accuracy and where the emphasis is on comprehension rather than correction. In addition, Celce-Murcia and Olshtain (2000) suggest that it is students strive for fluency and clarity to communicate through free speaking opportunities over longer stretches of discourse that delivers confident language use.

A key characteristic which has noted reduction in anxiety, and a heightened self-confidence and motivation, is inherently linked to feeling comfortable to experiment and make mistakes. Whilst the goal is to be understood in the target language (Davies, 1990), this is often kerbed by a preoccupation with accuracy. Erbaugh (1990) argues that drama, and the opportunity to create worlds and perform in 'make-believe' roles protects language learners, as they are less fearful of making mistakes, as errors are attached to the character rather than the learner. This theory is supported by Kao and O'Neill (1998) and Dodson (2002), who argue that the supportive nature of the drama class reduces inhibitions and encourages students to take risks with language in a relaxed, shared setting.

The reduction in anxiety and the increased motivation and confidence present within a drama-based language learning classroom are linked to communication over accuracy, spontaneous oral output, language in context, increased talk opportunities, working in groups, and risk taking. All these key

elements, which increase language fluency, occur when students find themselves in a safe environment, where they can work in role (Gill, 2013; Stinson & Freebody, 2009; Stinson & Piazzoli, 2013; Wagner, 1998).

## 4.6 Safe Space

Stinson (2008) declared one of the main aims of drama, specifically process drama, within language learning, is the creation of a 'safe space of drama'. Stinson defines this space as a safe physical, cognitive and emotional space allowing for the expression of ideas (2008: 201). The notion of 'safe space' is here based on Boal's 'Affective Space' or 'Affective Dimension' (1995: 21). Boal believed that when an affective space is established, the supportive environment enables participants to take risks, lose inhibitions, connect emotionally, and to feel protected. Finch (2001), Piazzoli (2011), To et al. (2011) and Gill (2013) have all supported this theory and promote 'safe spaces' as a means of reducing anxiety and promoting self-esteem within language learning.

The 'safe space', in its ability to support and protect, can over time stimulate exciting elements of language production. Stinson and Freebody (2006) found that the security of the drama class allowed students to experiment with changes in status, attitudes, physicality, and speech styles. In role, students were far more likely to play with alternative vocabularies and tones as they were no longer feeling 'judged' as themselves but were communicating through their characters. Indeed, the fictionalised reality, as described by Medina and Camapano (2006), opened critical spaces within which participants could converse, negotiate, interact and generate knowledge in the target language, following a social constructivist model in which learning becomes a shared communal act without 'wrong answers'.

The conditions that achieve a 'safe space' are in part physical, but fundamentally emotional. The main characteristic outlined as essential in the creation of a 'safe space' is that of trust (Nicholson,

2002). An atmosphere of trust, in which participants feel sufficiently comfortable with one another, must be established before active drama and language learning can occur. This trust and comfort is limited, not only towards other participants (with whom role, power, status, and identity all play a part), but toward the facilitator, the activity and process, language ability, and self. In Bundy (2002), the role of trust within drama activities was investigated and it was found that the more participants trusted within the activity, the more open, responsive and productive their work became.

## 4.7 Teaching

Drama 'by itself does nothing. It is only what teachers do with drama that makes a difference' (Neelands, 2009: 11). Neelands' argument here supports the notion that whilst drama can favour variants, for example, process or product driven, improvised, scripted, skills based or concept driven, ultimately the pedagogy remains the same. It is, according to Neelands, the teacher, their drive, passion, and interaction with a class, that can make an impact on the participants and their relationship to learning.

Within a drama lesson, a teacher is having to make decisions throughout the process, these decisions are constant and affect approaches to learning, peer-to-peer interaction, energy levels, curriculum intent, stimulation, outcomes, and reflection. It is when a teacher is able to master the intended learning and the artistic endeavour together, whilst governing a spontaneous environment, that the potential of working with drama and language learning can be achieved (Dunn & Stinson, 2011). Bowell and Heap (2005) maintain that within process drama these decisions and teaching skills are heightened due to the free-form, spontaneous nature of the improvised work. They consider the facilitator to be working simultaneously as, not only teacher, but also director, actor, and playwright. However, as Dunn and Stinson (2011) proclaim, when language learning classes are delivered through drama, by a facilitator who is skilled in the form, aware of the necessities and able to stimulate the artistry, then the results are optimised.

## 4.8 Process Drama and Language Learning

As explored earlier in this Literature Review, process drama stems back to developments made by Bolton and Heathcote within the field of Drama in Education (1979). Unscripted, communicative, and relying heavily on active co-creation and improvisation, process drama has gained recognition and increased engagement in the field of language learning since Kao and O'Neill's pioneering work with Taiwanese students, which led to the production of the seminal text *Words into Worlds* (1998). Indeed, since its inception and continued dissemination, process drama has gone on to become a major approach within the field of drama and language learning, for example within Winston and Stinson's *Drama Education and Second Language Learning* (2016), five of the eight chapters concentrate on process drama.

The term process drama is often misapplied to all work which uses active or improvised drama strategies in the classroom (Stinson & Freebody, 2006). Piazzoli (2012) notes the existence of over eighty process drama strategies, each promoting different aspects and outcomes of the approach. However, process drama, whilst reasonably flexible in its form, consists of several specific principles and techniques, which separate it from theatrical performance, and other forms of DIE practice (O'Toole & Mara, 2007).

Within the experimental section of this thesis, process drama forms the major approach used within KS2 English language learning classes. The techniques advocated by process drama are detailed, implemented and evaluated alongside a number of additional 'warm-up' and 'reflective' activities. The following sections outline some of the key characteristics of process drama as a means to better understand the connections between the dramatic approach and language learning.



#### 4.8.1 Pretext and Context

Unlike role-plays or scenarios, which often include, instructions, assignments, or suggestions, with a desired outcome, a process drama, as dictated by O'Neill (1995), always begins with a pretext.

O'Neill regards this initial stimulus as the launch into the 'dramatic world'. It is this stimulus, whether a painting, video, newspaper article, or song, that generates intrigue and drive. Within a language learning environment, this can also be a moment to introduce target language and theme. Where process drama differs from alternative drama-in-education approaches and traditional language learning systems is that this initial impulse will go on to form a thread, connecting all aspects throughout the duration of the drama (Piazzoli, 2012).

The pretext has the opportunity to become a platform onto which participants can co-create their situation and apply their roles. Good planning and engaging pre-text choices should imply a sense of tension which will encourage adventures within the dramatic world, creating mood and focus. This starting point should quickly involve participants creativity and language skills in the creation of a fictionalised world, that will be inhabited and expanded upon during the drama (Kao & O'Neill, 1998).

The fictionalised world co-created by the participants and facilitator can take unlimited forms, whether real world environments close to home, culturally similar spaces or those alien to the group, folkloric or imagined realms, there are no set rules that govern nor suppress the creativity within this process stage, except that the creation is shared and determined by the participants.

The majority of humans have the capacity to imagine, manipulate and alter the roles we inhabit day-to-day, indeed it is the method by which many of us learn, play, and interact in our formative years.

Drama activities allow opportunity to embody someone or something else, transcending the limits of form, social roles, and allowing freedom to explore alternative personalities. Whether on a west-end

stage or a child playing pretend in a cardboard box, the result is that of suspended disbelief and liberation through performative play. Within language learning, drama is installed, most often, through short dialogues, scripts, and roleplay, in which roles are predetermined and language is restricted by texts or instruction, process drama liberates this language and offers fresh linguistic possibilities in role, stimulating spontaneity and levels of discovery (Johnson & O'Neill, 1984; Kao & O'Neill, 1998; Moody, 2002). Heathcote claimed that drama allowed students to access what they already know but did not realise that they knew (Wagner, 1976: 8). It can be argued that in life, people often play safe, sticking to well-trodden paths, and surrounding themselves with the familiar, in the hope not to disturb the status quo, whereas, in role participants have the opportunity to pose and answer questions from alternative points of views, problem solve from other perspectives, argue opposing thoughts, and persuade all from new viewpoints by means of unrestricted language, all within a safe environment.

The co-creative approach to process drama is strengthened by the inclusion of all the participants, all of the time, throughout every activity. Unlike many other teaching approaches, process drama does not see selected participants demonstrate, model, or perform for the rest of the group. Every practice is collaborative and sees everyone drawing on their experiences and sharing equally within the co-created supportive context. This approach promotes communication, negotiation, and encourages meaning-making and confidence in role, avoiding any sense of alienation and negative self-awareness (Stinson & Freebody, 2006).

Within the co-created context, participants are involved in the creation and maintenance of situations and dialogues, whereby learning is continual and natural. As Kao and O'Neill (1998) describe, when an action is taking place, there is a desire to progress or move forward. Participants are required to activate their language resources so that they can relay their meaning to the group. As the context has been co-created by the group, the action is under their control, and so,

communication between the group, developing dialogues, and social interaction is key to the progression of the drama.

#### 4.8.2 Non-Verbal Activities

Within a language learning classroom, it can be assumed that the methods of production should focus on words, their form and function. However, as Kao and O'Neill (1998) maintain, inclusion of non-verbal activities within a learning process can be highly valuable. Communication, as it is experienced constantly and universally, is in part, gestural.

Across educational and linguistic disciplines, research has shown that the incorporation of expressive movement and gesture, especially when working with younger participants, benefits both language comprehension and memory in language learners (Gersten & Geva, 2003; Peregoy & Boyle, 2008; Rieg & Paquette, 2009; Silverman, 2007). Non-verbal languages, including gesture, involve communication through universal representations. Vygotsky (1978: 108) pointed out that is only through 'gestures that play-things themselves gradually acquire their meaning;' indeed as we, as learners, observe our peers interacting with the wider world, we recognise patterns and reactions, learn from these interactions, and build our knowledge. Language learning and the process of acquiring new vocabulary can exploit the gestural, and non-verbal cues as a means of enhancing communication and fostering comprehension (Greenfader et al., 2014).

Gesture and non-verbal practises are deeply engrained in drama; for example, within process drama techniques such as 'tableau' are incorporated, both as a creative exercise, presentation device, and strategy for reflection. These still images, created by participants, can provide information and develop understanding about a specific situation through a non-verbal mechanism. Selective use of tableau can free participants from the reliance on linguistic response, slow down action, install co-operation and teamwork, encourage composition, and embody learning. As the Department for

Education highlighted, learning through drama does not necessarily require oral competency, as gestures, facial expressions, and the reactions of pupils all aid understanding (DfES, 2006d).

Another non-verbal activity often encouraged within the drama-based language learning classroom is that of mime. Much like tableau, mime releases participants from the constraints of verbal language with which they might struggle. Through economies of expression, participants are free to express themselves through their bodies and spatial awareness. Mime calls for focus, precision and consideration, as means of delivery without misunderstanding. Mime can often work based on verbal or visual cues, group decision making, or individual reactions to stimuli. It is a great tool in testing understanding of language and instruction, and in the promotion of considered reflection (Kao & O'Neill, 1998).

#### 4.8.3 No External Audience and Reflection

A key factor in the process drama approach is the lack of public presentation. Process dramas, from their planning, through pretext, and improvisation can never be repeated, they are, thanks to their collaborative, experimental structure, ephemeral. The focus is on the participants and their journey throughout the action, because of this the audience is exclusively internal, the participants are both the theatrical ensemble producing, and the spectator receiving (Bowell & Heap, 2005). The themes, voices and learning explored is owned by those who have taken part, and not for outside voyeurs.

Boal (1979) labelled the process whereby a participant in role is able to both perform and view that same performance '*metaxis*'. The simultaneous position allows for a reflexive action or active reflection, free from the pressures of outside eyes, in what Heathcote described as the 'penalty free zone of drama' (Johnson & O'Neill, 1984: 128). This freedom from consequence and external judgement allows the participant to consider their action through layers of reflection, not merely as a performative act, but also as a learning process and a holistic journey (O'Connor, 2007). As Bolton

(1972: 127) proclaimed, the most powerful form of reflection 'is the reflection that goes on at the same time as the drama, that is from within the drama'.

A principal component of successful learning is reflection. As one of the forefathers of drama in education, Bolton proclaimed, 'experience in itself is neither productive nor unproductive; it is how one reflects on it that makes it significant' (1979: 111). Bolton here states the importance of reflection as means of installing awareness, of the self, the task, and of the learning.

Many scholars highlight the importance of reflection as a strategy for language reinforcement and an explanation of linguistic devices which have emerged throughout the session (Liu, 2002), as a consolidation of learning (Stinson & Piazzoli, 2013), and as a revision and acknowledgement of the language explored (Kao & O'Neill, 1998).

Within the language classroom, the most frequent use of reflection is as a means of error correction and language review. As Kao and O'Neill (1998) outline, over-emphasis on errors and language correction can have a detrimental effect on the participants. Whilst language teachers generally prioritise accuracy, it is important to focus on positive reinforcement, congratulating participants for successful language use, and working towards language expansion in future activities. Rather than corrections, Kao and O'Neill (1998) recommend offering further alternative vocabularies, structures, and idioms which can improve future communication. This can be done within groups, with ideas being proposed by peers, which should result in participants feeling they are connected, contributing to the class and dealing with their challenged head on.

Reflection, within a drama language learning environment, can take many forms and is stimulated by emotional responses to the tasks undertaken. Boud, Keogh and Walker (1985) call for dialogue-based reflection, evaluating experiences, and sharing feelings, as part of a group discussion. Boud et al. propose that through shared observations and opinions, in conjunction with their peers, new attitudes and meanings are able to be appropriated. O'Neill and Lambert (1982) argue, however,

that discussion may blur and dispel the significant elements of the task that has been experienced. Within discussion, teachers can often steer attitudes towards the desired outcome, and more vocal students can dominate the reflective process. O'Neill and Lambert promote action-orientated reflection involving an outsider or visitor, who, in character, can ask questions, check on progress, and engage participants in reflective talk. The reflection process, Kao and O'Neill claim, is the way of making participants aware of the significance of their actions and achievements, both socially and linguistically; this does not necessarily need to be explored vocally, nor after the task (1998: 32).

Heathcote promotes the use of non-dramatic activities, often including writing newspaper reports, diary entries and letters, poster design, drawing or map-making as a way of qualifying the drama experience, deepening and embedding learning. The reflective tasks at hand are linked toward the drama, contextually framing the language learning and extending the practice through target language. This also allows participants the opportunity to experience moments of quiet reflection, utilise alternative skills, and find space to forge their opinions.

Process Drama, as opposed to other drama and language teaching approaches, is characteristically a *praxis* rather than *practice*, in as much as it is a process of learning and exploring ideas through action, rather than the repetition of an action as a means of improving a skill. Since its conception process drama has maintained the importance of a cyclical *action – reflection – action* design. Within a process drama approach, critical thinking and implicit meaning-making are explored through the reflective segment of the process; it is further explored through action, developed and then re-reflected. This continual cycle builds on previously practised themes and language and allows for explicit knowledge and understanding to be achieved.

It is important to note that reflection is not evaluation. Reflection can occur 'in-action', at any time, throughout the process of learning. Often self-reflection and consideration of space, relationships, and identity occur almost continuously, whilst structured task-based reflection made need encouragement or instruction. Reflection can be fast or slow, involving multiple participants or the

individual; it can be discursive and loud, or introspective and silent. Reflection is part of a larger continued action as does not signal finality to a task. Evaluation, on the other hand, is concerned with the quality of the experience, its successes and failings, and as to whether a task has been worthwhile. Participant feedback is incredibly useful here, with regards to future planning of activities, resources, and operation, but not explicitly in the future learning experiences of the participants themselves.

#### 4.8.4 Roles – Teacher and Learner

Within a learning environment Vygotsky, and other social constructivists, believe the role of the teacher should be that of facilitator or guide. Teachers have the capacity and capability to provide varying degrees of assistance, a responsibility which can enhance learning, stimulate knowledge, or destroy the process all together. For example, within the language learning classroom a teacher may offer clues, make suggestions, hint at grammatical structures, or direct learning strategies. It is the role of the teacher to assess the needs of the learner, support them but not to proffer the answer directly. In a situation where a language learner may require extended support, the teacher can 'scaffold' learners by offering more direct advice or by twinning that learner with a more capable peer. The desire of this approach is that, as the learner progresses, the scaffolding can gradually be removed and the challenges can become more complex, allowing the learner to become more confident with the language by themselves (Scarcella & Oxford 1992).

Donato (1994) discusses the role of scaffolding and ZPD as mutually beneficial social processes. Scaffolding sees the learner become more proficient through support by more experienced peers, and at the same time, the more proficient learner improves through opportunities to communicate their knowledge. In collaborative learning, more capable learners are able to fill in gaps in their own

knowledge, gain new insight through interaction, explore language in a new context, and develop qualitatively different methods of understanding (Nyikos & Hashimoto 1997). As Ohta (1995) explores, ZPD and scaffolding dramatically increase learner's language usage between independent use 'and the higher level of potential development as determined by how language is used in collaboration with a more capable interlocutor' (1995: 249). Ahlquist (2015) and Wells (1999) discuss the role of ZPD and collaboration with more capable peers as not only improving language use, but also as socially transformative, and cognitively beneficial. According to Bruffee (1993: 3), 'collaborative learning is a re-aculturative process that helps students become members of the knowledge communities whose common property is different from the common property of knowledge communities they already belong to'.

In language learning classes, the theory that collaborative learning is beneficial is well supported (Ahlquist 2015; Donato 2000, 2004; Enever 2011; Pinter 2007; Scarcella & Oxford 1992; Van Lier 2004). Many argue that individual language learning in isolation, without assistance, is less successful as it does not provide support, instruction, and fundamentally excludes the crucial social aspect of real language use. Donato (2000) emphasises the importance of a 'teacher' role as a mediator and assistant who can help guide and provide clarity, as learners negotiate, develop, and explore the communicative power of language. When working with young language learners, it is often important that the teacher pre-task models. When a teacher demonstrates what learners need to do this leads to more successful work, but also promotes a more harmonious group dynamic (Kim & McDonough, 2011). Wiener (1986: 5) also focuses on the importance of group dynamics within collaborative learning stating that students placed in a group and asked to work together are merely 'individuals not collaborators'. However, in effective collaborative learning, learners achieve constructive interdependence. Tasks are required which demand a unification of group members, require interaction and promote the achievement of a common goal. This has further been explored by Moran and John-Steiner (2003: 36) who comment on teachers who 'throw strangers together to perform a short-term task' and call the work collaborative, essentially missing the time required for



the emergence of trust and complementarity, which are essential for creative development and production (Tin, 2016: 439).

The benefits of collaborative language learning have been greatly explored, especially with regards to younger learners (Cameron 2001; Moon 2005; Pinter 2006, 2007). As younger learners' L1 language skills are still in developmental stages, the additional challenge of L2 acquisition can be both a blessing and a curse (this can vary between multilingual and monolingual language classes). Significantly, it has been discovered that allowing younger learners to converse in their L1 can be highly beneficial to the development of L2 language learning (Enever, 2011). The findings outline a number of elements of L1-L1 conversation which can support the acquisition of new additional languages, these include: discussion of task (Van Lier, 2004; Storch & Aldosari, 2010) – as means of clarifying instructions, formulating answers and expressing points of view, L1 discussion can contribute to more confident and rounded answers to task-based activities; self-expression (Fuller, 2009) – cultural identity and security are important in developing a young person's confidence with linguistic expression and may ease the development of L2 self-confidence; motivation and staying on task (Platt & Brooks, 1994) – through discussion in L1, language learners can remain focused as they are less likely to make mistakes or become distracted through confusion; talking about L2 (Lantolf & Thorne, 2006) – both discussion about the task at hand, opinions regarding the task, and feelings regarding the specific L2 can all keep a younger learner focused on the process of language learning and the goals needed to be achieved. Ultimately, all these aspects of L1 usage within the language classroom combine to support a smooth learning environment, where task, language, and communication are at the core (Ahlquist, 2015).

When working with young language learners, collaborative and group talk is widely encouraged. Pair-talk allows for learners to share in the understanding of a task, discuss and negotiate opinion, and to formulate answers with confidence, before sharing with the wider class. This benefits learners greatly, as they are required to form more complex linguistic sentence structures, practise

linking statements, and to react within real conversation contexts. As Ahlquist denotes (2015), the format or group and pair work encourages shy or less secure language learners to take risks and build linguistic confidence.

## 4.9 Collaboration and Language Learning

Within a language teaching context, Oxford (1997) proposed three distinct strands of group or collective communication: cooperative learning, collaborative learning, and interaction. Within this section we will analyse these strands and discuss their usage in EAL learning.

In much of the research regarding group language learning, the terms *cooperation*, *collaboration*, and *interaction* are used interchangeably, as synonyms with little difference between them.

However, as Oxford (1997: 443) argues, ‘each has developed special connotations and classroom applications’, [...] ‘which, when understood, can be used to help us better comprehend language learning and teaching.’ It is important, as language teachers, to understand the differences between these concepts, as a means to employ them in classroom environments to improve both the language learning outcomes (product) and experiences (process).

Building on the work previously discussed regarding collaborative learning in the drama classroom, collaborative language learning will also be considered in relation to Vygotsky’s (1978) theory of social constructivism. The main body of this section will discuss the importance of creative peer-to-peer talk, problem solving, and the notion of learning as an inherently social act. The section will continue by drawing comparisons between collaborative language learning and the two other proposed educational concept strands. In the analysis of *cooperative learning* we will discuss accountability, the role of the teacher, and some examples of cooperative learning within the English language learning classroom. Later, the broader concept of *interaction* will be discussed, with special consideration given to the application of drama, simulation, and role-play within the English language learning environment.

As a fundamental basis with which to analyse collaborative language learning it is essential to consider Vygotsky's social constructivist theory and its relationship to language. Crucially, there are three specific elements to Vygotsky's theory which are important with regards to language learning:

1. Critical thinking (problem solving) – Language learners are not purely given answers and information. In collaborative language learning the starting points are problems, which through application are solved and knowledge is acquired.
2. Learning is an active process – in the acquisition of new language, learners must integrate the new materials with their existing knowledge. They must recognise what they already know and apply this to new contexts and activities.
3. Role – Learners and teachers bring to a language class a plethora of perspectives, experiences, cultures, and ideas. A collaborative environment should benefit from the variety of knowledge within a class and build on the wealth of resources available.

Underlying all three of these elements is the notion that language learning is an intrinsically social activity.

Collaborative learning has as its main feature a structure that allows for student talk: students are supposed to talk with each other...and it is in this talking that much of the learning occurs. (Golub 1988 cited in Smith and MacGregor, 1992: 2).

#### 4.9.1 Cooperative Learning

Building on the notions explored within collaborative learning, this section will define, demonstrate and compare the subject of cooperative learning. Olsen and Kagan define cooperative learning as:

Group learning activity organised so that learning is dependent on the socially structured exchange of information between learners in groups and in which each learner is held accountable for his or her own learning and is motivated to increase the learning of other (1992: 8).

Instantly identifiable within this definition are two main features which are integral to cooperative learning activities. These are the concept of 'structured exchange' and the 'accountability' of the learner.

Cooperative learning's emphasis on structured exchanges follows the principle that successful learning occurs through interaction and with guidance (Fisher, 2005). Similar to that which is seen in collaborative learning, the role of the teacher is important in cooperative learning too. The teacher must be on-hand to delineate structure, and monitor progress being made within the cooperative working groups, but fundamentally taking a backseat with regards to knowledge imparting. As Hertz-Lazarowitz (1992: 77) states, the teacher is 'the guide on the side, not the sage on the stage'. Within a cooperative learning environment, the language used by the teacher is supportive, caring, and personal rather than informative and instructional. Hertz-Lazarowitz and Shachar (1990) alongside Bosworth (1995) discuss the language used within cooperative classrooms, promoting the spontaneity and creativity of a teacher's language as a means of inspiring learners, in opposition to the authoritarian, impersonal, and rigid teacher talk often witness in traditional classrooms.

Within a cooperative learning class, learners are placed into smaller randomly selected or interest-based groups. It is generally understood that heterogenous random selection can lead to more tolerant, culturally accepting, working groups (Slavin & Oickle 1981; Kagan 1985; Oxford 1997). However, it has been discussed within language learning, that groups selected on levels of language proficiency can stimulate more successful learning outcomes, as learners are not dominated by more competent peers, nor are they made to feel out of their depth with subject matter. It can be argued that group selection should often be decided based upon task. In classes with very high differentiation levels, group tasks can be set which advance learners' language skills based on specific needs and thus homogenous proficiency groups can be useful to promote language learning throughout the class. However, within tasks where communicative language use is being practised, or where teamwork is the main objective, then heterogenous random groups are much more

important. Generally, heterogenous groups can promote more dynamic peer-to-peer scaffolding, whilst homogenous groups target specific learning objectives.

Working within cooperative groups promotes multidirectional language usage, as opposed to bidirectional or unidirectional, often practiced in traditional dialogic language classrooms. As discussed earlier, Vygotsky believed verbal interaction was a catalyst for cognitive development, knowledge, and social skills acquisition. By increasing dialogic opportunities, learners are able to scaffold across multiple areas of learning, and develop a stronger sense of learning identity, both individually and as a group. As outlined in Gillies (2006), 'the open discussion that occurs in cooperative groups enables participants to clarify ideas and perspectives in a context that is free of the perpetual scrutiny of the teacher and the wider class' (Howe, 1990 cited in Gillies, 2006: 272). Cooperative groups are able to make decisions on role, approach, and outcome, through negotiation and with others. It is within these multidirectional dialogic groups that the relationship between interdependence and individual accountability becomes apparent.

Interdependence, Cohen (1994) argues, is best achieved within cooperative groups through the allocation of specific roles. For example, within a language learning task a more able learner may be assigned the role of 'scribe' (focusing on written language), other learners could be assigned roles such as 'explainer' (speaking), 'director' (logistics), or 'idea generator' (creative thinking), which can be allocated by the group themselves or the teacher, dependent on age or level. Interdependence is seen as a generally positive goal as it encourages individuals to work together towards a shared aim. Working within small cooperative groups, learners become aware of the need to work as a team to complete the task. Every member of the team has a role and a responsibility, and any member of the group who is not contributing to the team effort will incur negative feelings due to the inhibition of learning and overall under-achievement. Slavin (1991) argues for the importance of both individual and group grading within these cooperative learning groups, as approaches which only grade as a group, without making each personal accountable, do not consistently produce achievement gains.

It can be argued that the inherent individual accountability could stifle some learners and potentially lead to friction within groups who may have a weaker or less focused member. However, Oxford (1997) found that cooperative learning promoted motivation, created altruistic relationships and lowered anxiety for the majority of learners, with only the gifted and highest achieving learners favouring individualistic and more competitive learning styles.

#### 4.9.2 Cooperative versus Collaborative

Cooperative learning has been widely promoted within the field of language learning (Apple 2006; Ghaith 2003; Holt 1993; Jacobs & Hall 2002; Jacobs & Small 2003; Olsen & Kagan 1992; Oxford 1997; Zhang 2010), primarily due to the promotion of the interdependent learner within a group dynamic. Cooperative learning balances between tight organisation (grouping, techniques, role, and task) and creative opportunity (extended talk time, hands-off teaching, project based). Whilst collaborative learning has a deeper epistemological basis, focusing on social interaction, scaffolding, ZPD, and the wider learning experience, cooperative learning can be seen as a technique to encourage sharing, improve teamwork, and promote higher-achievement on task, whilst remaining overall centred on the individual learner outcomes.

Both cooperative and collaborative learning strategies promote working in groups and discuss the benefits of heterogenous proficiency learners working together. Collaborative learning promotes mixed-ability groups due to the benefits of peer-peer scaffolding, and Vygotsky's notion of the ZPD. On the other hand, cooperative learning sees rotation of learners, and the sharing of ideas, regardless of specific ability level as a means of widening participation and encouraging discussion of task.

#### 4.10 Problem-Solving

Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) posits that learning takes place through interaction with others within a context. These situations must be challenging enough to push the learning into new territories of thinking, but not too difficult as to stifle the learner's desire to learn, or embarrass the learner resulting in rejection of the task. Learners need to think critically, and the best way to achieve this is to create activities in which they must consider alternative points of view or entertain new concepts. For example, within the English language learning classroom, new concepts could be raised through topic choice, grammar structures or methodological approach. This learning can be stimulated and enhanced through collaborative activities, which instantly include varying points of view combining to decipher a new concept. Researchers (Nyikos & Hashimoto, 1997; Tudge, 1992a) have emphasised how Vygotsky's theory of intersubjectivity and joint problem solving lend themselves perfectly to language learning development:

Individuals come to a task, problem, or conversation with their own subjective ways of making sense of it. If they then discuss their differing viewpoints, shared understanding may be attained [...] In the course of communication, participants may arrive at some mutually agreed-upon, or intersubjective, understanding. (Tudge, 1992a: 1365)

Through collaboration within each person's zone of potential understanding, the knower and the learner may reach intersubjectivity or a shared understanding. Two processes – cognitive apprenticeship and critical thinking – help intersubjectivity to flourish. (Nyikos & Hashimoto, 1997: 508)

As Nyikos and Hashimoto (1997), and Tudge (1992a) discuss, essential to the process of problem-solving is language, in its mediational role. Here interpretation, planning, negotiation, and solution are explored, using language, within a collaborative act. As Vygotsky states 'social instruction actually produces new, elaborate, advanced psychological processes that are unavailable to the organism working in isolation' (Vygotsky, 1989 cited in Donato, 2000: 46). Collaborative problem-solving, following instruction and engaging in social interactive learning develop the individual's cognitive and linguistic capabilities.

In collaborative language learning, learners are challenged to work together to solve linguistic problems and/or to co-construct language or knowledge about language. Language, within this situation, mediates the process and formulates meaning making. As Qualley and Chiseri-Strater

(1994) posit, reflexive dialogue allows for knowledge 'deeper than reason' (1994: 111). In collaborative learning, the process of discussion develops an acculturation into a shared knowledge community, where consensus is champion. Whilst in discussion with peers, learners are expected to direct, negotiate, and reflect upon their learning experience (Oxford & Shearin, 1994); language becomes a vehicle which allows for consideration, opinion, and idea formulation to rise above the basic and become enriched through social interaction. This process is highlighted in the work of Palmer (1987), a sociologist, who emphasised the cyclical nature of learning as a communal act, constantly rolling through a social process of discussion, disagreement, and consensus (1987: 4).

One specific aspect of collaborative problem-solving, that is inherent to both Vygotsky's social constructivist approach to cognitive development and English language learning, are the conditions which govern whether a learner *has* to communicate to solve the problem, or is simply *allowed* to (Light & Glachan 1985). Light (1991, 1993) explored English language development through collaborative computer-based problem-solving tasks. They suggest that planning, negotiating, decision making, and reflecting, in pairs, all promoted expressive language usage and understanding. It was also found that pairs who did most verbal negotiation were more successful in solving the problems during the task, whilst children working alone or not collaborating were less successful. Interestingly, pairs who had differing points of view, and thus needed to reconcile differences of opinion before progressing were the highest achievers (Barbieri & Light 1992). These results are supported by Pugh (1996), who argues that 'the ability to see any issue from many points of view and realize that people can address an issue constructively without necessarily agreeing with each other' (1996: 2) is key to the problem-solving process. Within more complex problem-solving tasks language was the greatest tool with which to creatively explore, adapt, and develop.

#### 4.11 Case Studies

Subsequent to Kao and O'Neill's ground-breaking work in Taiwan in 1998, process drama has gone on to facilitate language learning around the world and in a variety of cultural contexts. In Asia,



Stinson has experimented with English teaching to Singaporean adolescents as part of the Drama and Oral Language Project (DOL; 2006 & 2008). This multiple site case study, involving four 10-hour workshops, was aimed at specifically improving oral fluency. Results revealed positive correlations between process drama and, not only, oral communication scores, but also enhanced motivation and self-confidence (Piazzoli, 2010; ; Stinson, 2008; Stinson & Freebody, 2006; Stinson & Piazzoli, 2013) Araki-Metcalfe used process drama with Year 6 English language learners in Japan (2001), and later with Japanese participants learning in Australia (2007). Her results showed success in terms of process drama as an additional teaching approach, and great benefits drawn from the reflective elements of the approach. In Hong Kong, To et al. (2011) worked alongside students, educators, and parents to observe process drama's effect on English language learning and creativity. They found barriers between students and teachers were broken down with far more open student talk occurring. To et al. also presented a shift from didactic discourse to more creative speech production and a sense of enjoyment for English language learning. Kao, Carlin and Hsu (2011), investigated process drama's effect on questioning and the role of the teacher in Taiwan. Working with Taiwanese university students, Kao et al.'s outcomes showed a strong advantage to language learning in context, and the framing of questions in role. Within Europe, Piazzoli (2010) investigated process drama and its use in language learning, focussing mainly on adult learners of Italian. Her work garnered positive outcomes on, not only language acquisition, but also agency and cultural awareness. In a French Canadian immersion school, Bournot-Trites et al. (2007) utilised process drama as a means of reducing teacher-centred pedagogies and promoting oral fluency with primary aged children. They found that, through process drama, contextual framing and performance-in-role helped stimulate natural communication, meaning-making, and enjoyment. Ntelioglou's (2011) work, also in Canada, on adult learners of English, saw language learners improve in all aspects of oral fluency, literacy, and meaning creation through context, thanks to the 'multiliteracy pedagogy' framing process drama.

As evident in these previous studies, process drama has generated encouraging results. All the studies listed have suggested that within the language learning classroom process drama can be a potent agent for active learning (Stinson & Piazzoli, 2013). The research already undertaken has demonstrated that, through process drama, language learners reap benefits in terms of language skills, intercultural awareness, comprehension, confidence, and motivation. It is also evident that, whilst endeavours have been made to explore the affordance of process drama within the language learning classroom, it is still somewhat overlooked by researchers, policy makers, and teachers (Belliveau & Kim, 2013). This lack of support and empirical research is no more evident than in the UK. So far not a single study has analysed the use of process drama with non-native speakers of English.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### 5 METHODOLOGY

The thesis aims to examine the effect of drama-based collaborative learning activities on English language oral fluency with KS2 EAL learners in the UK. As discussed in earlier chapters, this study is placed within both a Drama-in-Education context and an EAL context. The research undertaken will navigate and blend practices from both fields, in order to design and deliver a drama-based learning course that will benefit EAL learners. The experimental study aims to investigate improvement in the oral language fluency of EAL KS2 students, which will be measured using a series of standardised language tests (CELF-4; Wiig, Semel, & Secord, 2004). The students' performance on these measures related to oral fluency will be analysed in tandem with the National Curriculum examinations, as well as qualitative responses to the process, including field notes and interviews.

Based upon findings presented in the literature review, this chapter will begin by introducing the methodological considerations of the present study and outlining the specific aims and research questions. Then, it will outline the experimental design of the study, including approach, context, and materials. Finally, the methods of data collection and procedure will be addressed.

In recent years there has been much discussion and debate about the perceived “instrumentalism” of arts policy, suggesting a lack of clarity and consensus about the outcomes that arts policy should seek to achieve (Bunting, 2008). The creative arts are often used and adopted by other industries and research areas without acknowledgement of the effectiveness of the arts-based practices themselves. This has led to many asking for research models which produce more empirical evidence of how and why arts based practices are effective when used in socially engaged contexts (Beadle-Brown et al., 2017; Shaughnessy, N, 2012).

Coming from a drama and performance arts background and then moving into the field of applied linguistics, my own trajectory has been one of someone who works interdisciplinarily. Personally, I

am interested in the effectiveness of creative arts practice and the social impact this plays. However, going into this experimental study, I was aware that I would need to work in a mixed-methods approach and that my research would require the rigor of both quantitative and qualitative research methods.

The arts and humanities research style (of which I was more aware) called for a thematic analysis (Clarke & Braun, 2015) of the learner's and teacher's responses, alongside my field notes and diaries. As mentioned above, it was thought valuable to support this analysis alongside the empirical data collection achieved through formal statistical data collection. Within linguistics, this is the standard approach to research and so the combination of both approaches saw greater rigor achieved through a two-pronged (qualitative and quantitative) experimental design.

Being unfamiliar with statistical data analysis, I had to teach myself how to undertake ANOVA testing. In the pursuit of accurate evidence, it was important that I gained a solid understanding of my quantitative outcomes and how to build them into the wider mixed-approach study. The addition of empirical data, considering criticism of the arts for not collecting statistical evidence-based outcomes, supports a deeper mixed-methods study design. I believe the research greatly benefits from having both qualitative and quantitative results.

## 5.1 Methodological Considerations

As Duff (2006) outlines, quantitative and qualitative are 'over-stated binaries' and we should see research on a sliding continuum, rather than a clear-cut dichotomy. Whilst this experimental research study has a quantitative data collection at its core, it will be supported and analysed in the context of qualitative field notes, observations, and interviews. The research design is therefore considered a mixed-method experimental approach, with the aim of increasing the reliability and validity of the study (Cohen, et al. 2000).

The research design and methodology follow an experimental intervention framework as a method of establishing a cause-effect relationship. The intervention study involves two groups: one experimental, who will receive the treatment being investigated by the research, and a control group, who will receive normal practice. By administering pre-testing assessments prior to the intervention and post-tests following the intervention, a comparison can be drawn as to whether the experiment has had an effect on the outcomes (Dörnyei, 2007).

The experiment allows us to observe, under controlled conditions, the effect of drama-based English teaching practices on EAL oral language fluency. Within the conditions outlined, and through my own teaching of both the experimental and control groups, greater control over the intervention impact and potential variables is achievable.

## 5.2 Aims and Research Questions

The present study aims to evaluate, in terms of specific aspects of oral language production and English language assessments, whether drama pedagogies can benefit KS2 EAL learners within UK primary school education. The objective and motivation behind this thesis and experimental design were to help understand the ways in which oral language production can be fostered within the classroom and give EAL students opportunities to practise and expand their spoken English. With this in mind, and based on the research into the wider field of EAL and drama teaching (as presented in the literature review), this project will try to answer three key research questions:

1. Will children who have undertaken a drama-based English programme improve their oral fluency more than those children who have not undertaken a drama-based English programme?
2. Will children who have undertaken a drama-based English programme perform better in their National Curriculum Grammar examination than those children who have not undertaken a drama-based English programme?

3. Will children who have undertaken a drama-based English programme reveal any other benefits related to confidence, motivation, or social integration in comparison to those children who have not undertaken a drama-based English programme?

## 5.3 The Study

### 5.3.1 Context

When I planned this study, I intended to recruit UK state primary schools (either singular or multiple) that had large groups of EAL students. Being based in the South East, I originally anticipated that London-based schools would provide larger sample sizes of the participants needed and expected to find schools with just a handful of EAL pupils in each year group. However, on further inspection, I was able to find individual schools that could offer widely diverse classes with a large number of EAL students.

Through a number of meetings and discussions with headteachers, heads of year, and EAL liaison officers, I decided to work alongside a school in the borough of Newham in East London. Newham has the youngest overall population and one of the lowest indigenous White British populations in the country, according to the latest published UK Census (ONS, 2011). As revealed in their previous Ofsted reports:

A high number of pupils come from many different minority ethnic groups. Over two-thirds speak English as an additional language. One-quarter of pupils come from other White backgrounds, mostly from Lithuania. Ofsted (2014, 2017)

Further research into the population demographic of the Newham area (see Table 7) revealed further insights into the diversity of the school itself.

**Table 7:** Population in Newham, London, and England by nationality (excluding UK) in 2019 (ONS, 2019)

|                               | <b>Newham<br/>Count</b> | <b>Newham<br/>%</b> | <b>London<br/>Count</b> | <b>London<br/>%</b> | <b>England<br/>Count</b> | <b>England<br/>%</b> |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------|-------------------------|---------------------|--------------------------|----------------------|
| European Union                | 62,000                  | 17.3                | 1,146,000               | 12.8                | 3,323,000                | 6                    |
| Non-EU European               | 3,000                   | 0.8                 | 105,000                 | 1.2                 | 203,000                  | 0.4                  |
| Middle and East-Central Asian | N/A                     | N/A                 | 52,000                  | 0.6                 | 189,000                  | 0.3                  |
| East Asian                    | N/A                     | N/A                 | 63,000                  | 0.7                 | 142,000                  | 0.3                  |
| South Asian                   | 17,000                  | 4.7                 | 225,000                 | 2.5                 | 684,000                  | 1.2                  |
| South East Asian              | N/A                     | N/A                 | 53,000                  | 0.6                 | 154,000                  | 0.3                  |
| Sub Saharan African           | 5,000                   | 1.4                 | 141,000                 | 1.6                 | 396,000                  | 0.7                  |
| North African                 | N/A                     | N/A                 | 16,000                  | 0.2                 | 55,000                   | 0.1                  |
| North American                | N/A                     | N/A                 | 66,000                  | 0.7                 | 164,000                  | 0.3                  |
| Central and South American    | N/A                     | N/A                 | 82,000                  | 0.9                 | 160,000                  | 0.3                  |
| Oceanian                      | N/A                     | N/A                 | 59,000                  | 0.7                 | 118,000                  | 0.2                  |
| Rest of the World             | 10,000                  | 2.8                 | 364,000                 | 4.1                 | 892,000                  | 1.6                  |

The borough of Newham is broken into wards, with areas of mixed and more homogenous national groupings. The ward in which the school was situated was Beckton and, as I came to discover, this ward had a large Eastern European, mainly Lithuanian, population. This was not a community I had previously worked with, and I was interested to see how, and if, this would have an impact on my lesson design, teaching approach, linguistic needs, and outcomes. As the Ofsted report stated, one quarter of the school population were from 'white-other' backgrounds, and 67.8% of the school identified as speaking English as an additional language. The languages within the school were highly diverse and varied, ranging from African, Baltic, Chinese, Indo-Iranian, Romance, and Slavic languages, and this, in turn, was a challenge for the school to balance. Whilst talking with the headteacher, I was made aware of several issues that the school faced, especially due to issues surrounding English language fluency and literacy. On further questioning, I discovered that the headteacher had only recently been brought into the school following two low-achieving Ofsted inspections requesting improvement. During our

conversations, I was made aware of a number of the issues the school had faced under the previous governance, part of which was in relation to English language, especially in KS2:

Staff do not enable pupils, including those who speak English as an additional language, to develop the necessary breadth of vocabulary to use in their writing to achieve highly. Nor do they insist that pupils use essential skills learned in literacy in all aspects of their work. Pupils are not making consistently good progress across key stages 1 and 2. As a result, a significant number of pupils do not achieve the standards of which they are capable.

Ofsted (2014, 2017)

### 5.3.2 Set-up

The new headteacher was keen to improve the school's English language attainment levels and to see a promotion of all the skills which go hand-in-hand with developing fluency, literacy, and a wider vocabulary. Throughout our talks, we discussed the demographic of KS2, their backgrounds, specific requirements, and how the research project could fit best with the smooth running of their current curricula – I was also able to partake in classroom observations allowing me to see the background and characteristics of the pupils and the approach of the teachers. The relationship and shared understanding of how the project could be run, and how the pupils could benefit from the study was really encouraging, and we were very keen to work together on a structured plan.

I produced a number of template lesson plans and a schedule of how I foresaw the rollout of the study, and together the headteacher and I planned a course of action. It was at this stage that I was introduced to the head of Year 3. As a group, we decided that Year 3 would be the best fit for the project due to the class composition, the language learning objectives and literacy targets. We started to discuss set texts, timetables and specific language requirements.

I had several follow-up meetings with the head of year and further opportunities for class observations. This time was incredibly useful, as I became aware of the lesson structure, the classroom layout, the balance of teacher-student talk, and ultimately how the project could fit within the environment.



### 5.3.3 Ethics

Following the internal process of gaining ethical permission from the University of Kent Research Ethics Advisory Group, the school was contacted, and a meeting was arranged to review the specific ethical considerations from the school. As the project involved working with young people, I was required to pass a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check. I was then able to work alongside the school in creating a consent form for the headteacher, head of year, and the individual class teachers to sign, and an opt-out consent form for the participants. This opt-out consent form, alongside a letter outlining the project and process, was sent to the children's home to receive consent from the parents to test the children.

I was able to meet with all the participants, class teachers, and teaching assistants, and explain the project in full. This was a great opportunity to field any queries or concerns and build a shared understanding of how the project would fit with the normal running of the school business.

Introducing myself in person, and describing the work I would be doing, allowed for a personable rapport to be created, and especially for the children, an opportunity to become more familiar with me as a teacher and examiner.

The meetings with staff and participants and the documents sent to the parents were a good way of clarifying our aims and demonstrating that the intervention had been designed to benefit those taking part. It also indicated that all the data collected would be used with total anonymity and confidentiality. The school and the participants were also informed that they were able to withdraw from the project at any time and that we would keep a constant line of communication throughout, as a means of keeping a harmonious professional work environment for all.

### 5.3.4 Participants

Within Year 3, there was a high ratio of EAL pupils from heterogeneous backgrounds, providing a large and varied sample for the study. The cohort consisted of 75 pupils, two of which had learning disabilities and were taught separately, so they were excluded from participating. The remaining 73 students were split across a three-form entry. Each of the three classes was taught by a different class teacher, although they were streamed for Maths and English. I indicated that to allow for randomisation of participants, I wished to work with the pupils in their form classes, as I did not wish to skew the data by having the students in attainment level classes. This was agreed upon from the outset. Based on the timeline structure, staff availability, and space, it was requested that classes K and M become the experimental groups, and class J become the control group.

**Table 8:** Group breakdown by age and gender

|   | <b>Mean Age (SD)</b> | <b>Age Range</b> |
|---|----------------------|------------------|
| <b>Control Group<br/>(N= 24, 13 girls)</b>        | 7.63 (0.29)          | 7y1m - 8y1m      |
| <b>Experimental Group M<br/>(N= 24, 16 girls)</b> | 7.66 (0.30)          | 7y1m - 8y2m      |
| <b>Experimental Group K<br/>(N= 23, 16 girls)</b> | 7.69 (0.29)          | 7y2m - 8y1m      |

The three classes were comprised of pupils ranging from 7 years and 1 month through to 8 years and 2 months at the time of pre-testing. As shown in Table 8 above, there was an even distribution of ages across the classes, and there was a higher proportion of female pupils than male across the year group as a whole. Within these groups, there was a higher ratio of female to male pupils within the two experimental classes.

As previously mentioned, 67.8% of the school identified as EAL. Within Year 3, the EAL number was at 83.6%, with only 13 pupils identifying as native English speakers. In preparation for my testing, I requested a native language breakdown from the school, and the data revealed a wide array of

native languages spoken, with similar native English and EAL numbers across the groups (see Table 9).

**Table 9:** Group breakdown by home language

| <b>NATIVE LANGUAGE</b> | <b>Experimental -K</b> | <b>Experimental -M</b> | <b>CONTROL</b> | <b>TOTAL</b> |
|------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|----------------|--------------|
| Arabic                 | 0                      | 0                      | 1              | 1            |
| Bengali                | 8                      | 2                      | 0              | 10           |
| Bulgarian              | 1                      | 1                      | 0              | 2            |
| English                | 3                      | 5                      | 5              | 13           |
| Farsi / Persian        | 0                      | 1                      | 0              | 1            |
| French                 | 0                      | 1                      | 1              | 2            |
| Hindi                  | 0                      | 1                      | 0              | 1            |
| Hungarian              | 0                      | 1                      | 0              | 1            |
| Italian                | 0                      | 0                      | 1              | 1            |
| Lingala                | 0                      | 0                      | 1              | 1            |
| Lithuanian             | 5                      | 6                      | 3              | 14           |
| Polish                 | 0                      | 1                      | 1              | 2            |
| Portuguese             | 1                      | 0                      | 0              | 1            |
| Romanian               | 2                      | 2                      | 3              | 7            |
| Romany                 | 1                      | 0                      | 1              | 2            |
| Russian                | 2                      | 0                      | 3              | 5            |
| Spanish                | 0                      | 1                      | 0              | 1            |
| Swahili                | 0                      | 1                      | 1              | 2            |
| Urdu                   | 1                      | 0                      | 3              | 4            |
| Yoruba                 | 2                      | 0                      | 0              | 2            |
| <b>TOTAL</b>           | <b>26</b>              | <b>23</b>              | <b>24</b>      | <b>73</b>    |

However, as Demie et al. (2013) explain, the EAL learning needs of pupils vary greatly from beginners to advanced learners. The one-size-fits-all labelling of 'EAL' can make it difficult, at first, to distinguish the needs of individual pupils. The classroom observations clearly demonstrated that the year group contained a wide variety of EAL learners with different English language proficiency levels, with only a couple of students identifying as Code B or C, and the majority as D and E (see Figure 2). This being said, all of the classes seemed to have an even mix of native language speakers, academic attainment levels, and English language proficiency.

### **National 'Proficiency in English' Codes**

**Code A.** New to English- May use first language for learning and other purposes. May remain completely silent in the classroom. May be copying/repeating some words or phrases. May understand some everyday expressions in English but may have minimal or no literacy in English. Needs a considerable amount of EAL support.

**Code B.** Early acquisition- May follow day to day social communication in English and participate in learning activities with support. Beginning to use spoken English for social purposes. May understand simple instructions and can follow narrative/accounts with visual support. May have developed some skills in reading and writing. May have become familiar with some subject-specific vocabulary. Still needs a significant amount of EAL support to access the curriculum.

**Code C.** Developing competence- May participate in learning activities with increasing independence. Able to express self orally in English, but structural inaccuracies are still apparent. Literacy will require ongoing support, particularly for understanding text and writing. May be able to follow abstract concepts and more complex written English. Requires ongoing EAL support to access the curriculum fully.

**Code D.** Competent- Oral English will be developing well, enabling successful engagement in activities across the curriculum. Can read and understand a wide variety of texts. Written English may lack complexity and contain occasional evidence of errors in structure. Needs some support to access subtle nuances of meaning, to refine English usage, and to develop abstract vocabulary. Needs some/occasional EAL support to access complex curriculum material and tasks.

**Code E.** Fluent- Can operate across the curriculum to a level of competence equivalent to that of a pupil who uses English as his/her first language. Operates without EAL support across the curriculum.

**Code N.** Not yet assessed

**Figure 2:** National 'Proficiency in English' Codes (Department for Education, 2020)

Access to background data on the participants was considered important to build a deeper understanding of the sample and also to gather statistics which could inform our outcomes. A background questionnaire was designed to discover more information about the participants' proficiency in English (speaking, listening, reading, writing) and their English language exposure at home and the community (e.g., TV, books, family, day-to-day). The school expressed their concerns about sending questionnaires to the children's homes, as they said they rarely were able to retrieve requested information from the parents. Therefore, I designed a simple form (see Appendix A) hoping to receive them back. Unfortunately, of the 73 questionnaires distributed, only 24 were returned, and the answers were incomplete or unclear. After discussion with the head of year, we

decided to ask for background information from the pupils in class and hoped to gather further data this way.

Unfortunately, mainly due to the age group of our participants, questions regarding the number of hours spent watching TV / reading / listening to music, etc. in English was met with responses of uncertainty through to complete unawareness. Therefore, we were unable to collect reliable data on the participants' exposure to English outside of school, so this could not be included in our analysis.

It is important to note that within the classes taught there were no participants who were considered to have special educational needs (SEN). This was in no means due to the study and all representation across young learners would have been included if available. Due to the school structure, those learners who are identified as SEN are taught separately in a different part of the school. The study itself was focused on oral fluency and drama-based pedagogical approaches. Within further research it would be interesting to further examine the effects on those young people who identify as neuro-divergent or have other special educational needs.

## 5.4 Quantitative Data Collection

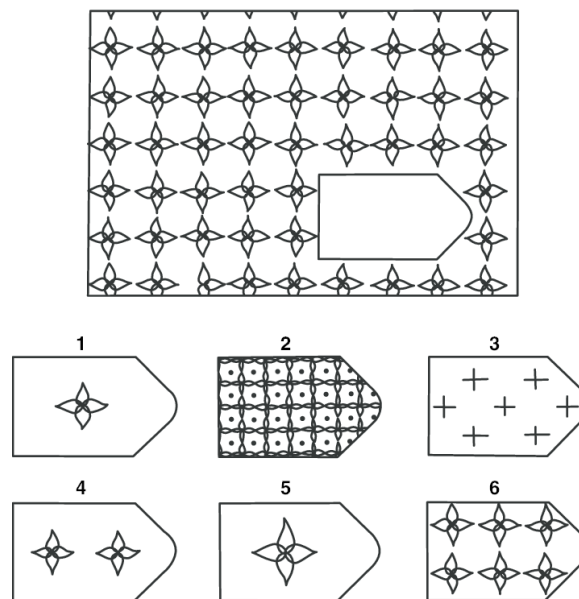
### 5.4.1 Materials

This section will describe the quantitative data collection materials and the process in which they were administered. The testing materials selected were a combination of assessments to measure different aspects of oral language fluency (CELF-4) and English language ability and attainment (National Curriculum). To be able to measure participants' improvement after undertaking the drama-based English programme, these tests were administered before and after they attended the programme. In addition, a non-verbal reasoning test was also administered at the pre-testing stage (Raven's Progressive Matrices).

### 5.4.2 Non-verbal reasoning

The Raven's Progressive Matrices (Raven et al. 1995) was implemented to assess children's non-verbal reasoning, as it is a widely used standardised test suitable for young children. This measure is not influenced by language, educational, or cultural factors, so it is an important background test to assess the validity of the participants for the study. This test was chosen because it can be completed in groups, which makes its administration easier with large groups of participants.

This measure was administered in the pre-test phase to all participants in their respective classes, without a time limit, following the procedure outlined in the test manual. In this task, participants were asked to select the correct missing piece of a given pattern out of the six options provided (see Figure 3). One point was given for each correct answer, and the total score was the sum of all the correct answers, with a maximum score of 36.



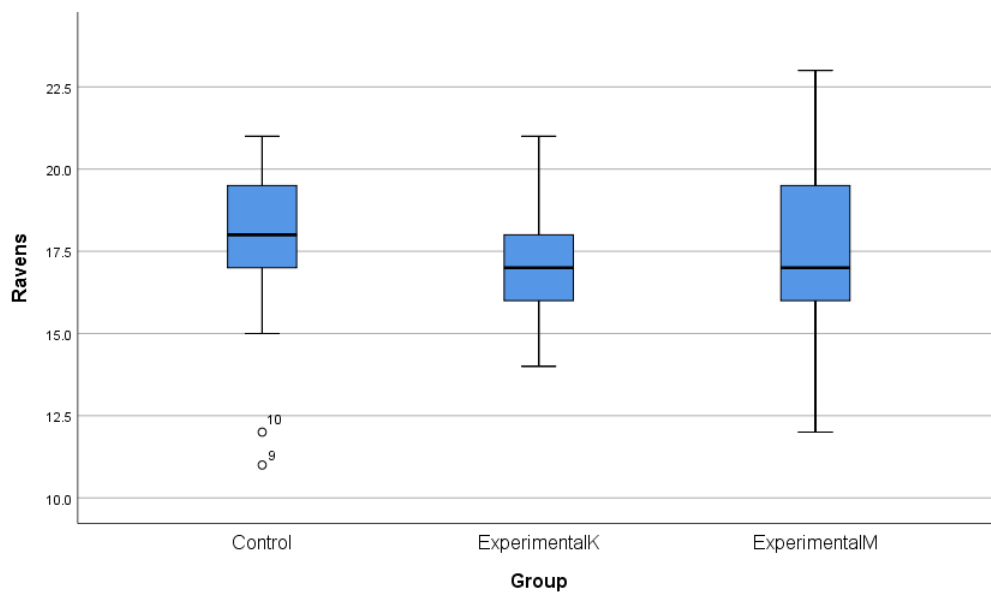
**Figure 3:** Example question from Raven's Progressive Matrices

The importance of administering this test was to control for participants' non-verbal reasoning and ensure that all participants included performed within the expected standardised score for their age. The results revealed that the 73 children were able to take part in the testing, as their results all fell within the expected standardised scores (see Table 10 for mean scores).

**Table 10:** Mean scores and SDs for each group on the Raven’s test.

|  | Mean  | SD    |
|--|-------|-------|
| <b>Control<br/>(N = 24, 13 girls)</b>        | 17.67 | 2.461 |
| <b>Experimental K<br/>(N = 26, 16 girls)</b> | 17.08 | 1.623 |
| <b>Experimental M<br/>(N = 23, 16 girls)</b> | 17.30 | 2.721 |

To explore potential group differences, a between-groups ANOVA was conducted and it was found that the difference between the groups was not significant ( $F(11,61) = 1.192, p = 0.312$ ), revealing that children’s non-verbal reasoning abilities were similar across the groups. The importance of these results, alongside each individual participant’s score, was to ascertain no underlying reasoning issues that could affect the results of the study. The scores revealed that all participants were able to take part in the testing and that, whilst two outliers were found within the Control group (see Figure 4), all of the individual scores, including these two, fell within what was expected for the participants’ age.



**Figure 4:** Mean scores for Raven’s Progressive Matrices.

### 5.4.3 Oral fluency

Following similar studies, the Clinical Evaluations of Language Fundamentals – Fourth Edition (CELF-4, 2006) was selected to measure oral fluency, as it includes a battery of useful instruments that are appropriate for the aims of the study, the age group to be tested, and the testing time available.

The CELF-4 is a standardised test suitable to evaluate receptive and productive language abilities in children and young adults, aged 5 to 21 years. The full battery of tests is made up of 18 tasks that assess morphology, syntax, semantics, pragmatics, and phonological awareness of the English language. As advised in the supporting manual, specific subtests can be administered to gather information about different aspects of a participant's language ability, need, or disorder. We decided to only use tests from subtest 1, which includes Expressive Vocabulary, Formulating Sentences, and Word Structure, as these are aspects related to oral fluency, which is the specific language area we wanted to investigate.

As the CELF-4 is used to assess language skills, it is important to address the potential EAL linguistic bias that can arise during these studies. According to Paradis (2005), children learning English as an Additional or Second Language may show similar results to children with Specific Language Impairments when assessed by language tests that are not designed to test non-native speakers. Since the CELF-4 standardised scores are based on native English speakers, the results from EAL learners cannot be interpreted based upon these scores as their language exposure and, therefore, proficiency is different from that of native speakers. Therefore, it is expected that these participants will perform lower than the standardised scores for their age.

### 5.4.4 Expressive Vocabulary Test

The Expressive Vocabulary (EV) assessment was chosen for this study as a means of testing productive vocabulary, breadth of vocabulary, and ability to spontaneously retrieve correct words



(Dockrell et al., 2003). This test enables the evaluation of a child's ability to name illustrations of people, objects, and actions (referential naming). This ability relates to school curriculum objectives for labelling and remembering names for people and objects (nouns) and actions (verbs) and using them in academic contexts in response to pictures, graphs, diagrams, and other illustrations, and in spontaneous language to express concise meaning.

In this task, participants are shown an illustration (see Figure 5) and asked a simple directed question from the examiner (e.g. 'What's this?', 'What is she doing?'), and are expected to name the picture. For each question, the examiner's manual offers expected and allowed answers (e.g. car and motorcar; drawing and colouring) and disallowed answers (e.g. red or bus; reading or boat). Target words are nouns or verbs and get progressively more complex over 54 questions (e.g. talon). If a participant answers 7 questions in a row incorrectly or provides no answer at all, the assessment is finished early.



**Figure 5:** Example pictures from the CELF-4 Expressive Vocabulary assessment.

The EV task does not involve any written language elements, so it focuses solely on oral language production. In its presentation of images, the participant is required to react instinctually and summon a correct corresponding word. The productive nature of the task was also important as I did not want to prompt answers (e.g. 'is this a dog?' 'point at the dog'); I wanted to gauge language production, as a means of assessing oral language fluency, without the opportunity of guessing or just providing receptive knowledge.

Vocabulary is a core component of language that is continually developing; it is, therefore, both important and challenging for learners of languages. By building up a wider vocabulary, it allows EAL learners to form greater connections and improve their comprehension of texts (Beck, McKeown & Kucan, 2013; Stahl & Nagy, 2006). It is argued that EAL learners need to hear, see, and recycle a word at least 15 times until it becomes part of their working repertoire (speaking and writing) (de Courcy et al. 2012). Therefore, the EV assessment is a useful indicator of how spontaneously and confidently the participants can summon this vocabulary, demonstrating their comfort with the language within their personal working English repertoire. Indeed, as Cameron (2012) considers, vocabulary levels reflect language development more widely, so vocabulary testing such as the EV assessment offers a relatively quick and easy way for researchers and schools to monitor general progress in language development.

The inclusion of this test was selected due to its appropriacy, as the pictures were both suitable and designed with the age group in mind, and also bright and vibrant, and therefore engaging to the participants. The number of questions featured within this test was also key, as the assessment needed to be long enough to be thorough, but not too long as to lose the participant's interest and therefore skew the data due to lack of engagement.

#### 5.4.5 Formulating Sentences Test

The Formulating Sentences (FS) assessment is a multi-levelled test, which highlights a number of key elements in oral language proficiency. This test evaluates student's ability to form complete, grammatically and semantically correct spoken sentences of increasing length and complexity using given words and contextual constraints imposed by illustrations.

In this task, participants are required to produce a complete sentence about the picture stimuli using one keyword instructed by the examiner. For example, in the picture in Figure 6, the participant must produce a sentence using the word 'first', with accepted answers including 'First, he ate his

apple and then his rice' and 'The boy in the blue shirt was first in the queue'. Participants are allowed to speak of the picture in any person form they wish, e.g. 'I was the first to sit down in the canteen'. As with the EV task, the stimulus words presented get progressively more complex over 48 questions, ending with higher-level stimulus words such as 'although' and 'nevertheless'. All stimulus words must correctly follow semantic, syntactic, and pragmatic rules, and must relate to the image presented, so 'The man in the car said: I'm first' or 'Hello, my name is First' would not be acceptable answers for the question shown below.

Write student's responses verbatim. See the Examiner's Manual for scoring rules and guidelines.

Demo book

*The girl is reading a book.*

Trial 1 reading

Trial 2 first

FS Trial 2

**Figure 6:** Examples of examiner's stimulus guide (above) and participant's stimulus picture (below) from the CELF-4 Formulating Sentences task.

Participants' answers can score 0, 1, or 2 points. An answer like 'The children playing tennis', where the auxiliary verb 'to be' is omitted, would result in a score of 1. If the stimulus word is not used, then a score of 0 is allocated. If the sentence does not make sense or is unrelated to the picture, a

score of 0 is also allocated. If the participant receives 5 consecutive scores of 0, either through incorrect answers or giving no answers, the assessment is brought to a close.

In this task, the participant must acknowledge characteristics within the given picture and spontaneously create a sentence based upon the image. This skill indicates confidence with the language, whilst also building on elements of expressive vocabulary, as seen in the previous test. Within the formulation of the sentence, there is the added constraint of having to integrate a specific word given to them by the interlocutor (e.g. car, if, because), which affects the appropriacy and contextuality of the sentence.

This assessment not only tests lexical, semantic, syntactic, and pragmatic rules but also reflects the spontaneity and reactionary aspects of natural speech production. This test assesses proficiency with oral language production as the participant is having to integrate this variety of components into a grammatically accurate sentence.

The FS assessment evaluates language use, in part, by assessing the internalisation of language rules, and then the production of oral sentences using these rules correctly. These are skills required for proficient language use. The FS also highlights the ability to produce sentences using a varied and complex vocabulary, which has implications for the participant's academic and social skills.

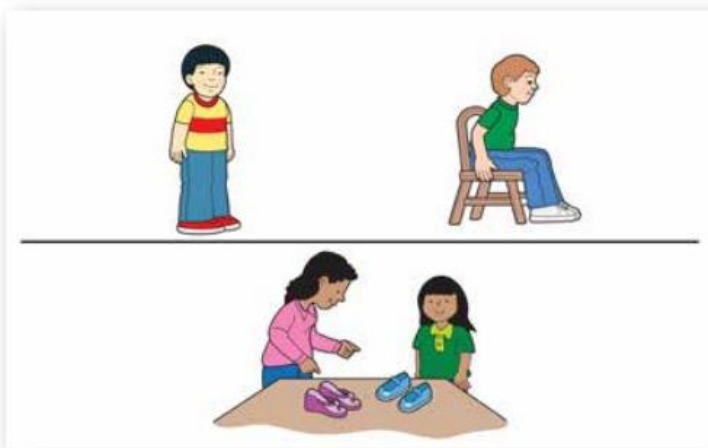
#### 5.4.6 Word Structure Test

The Word Structure (WS) assessment was selected to evaluate the expressive morphological abilities of the participants. This test evaluates a student's ability to apply word structure rules (i.e. morphology) by using inflectional, derivational, or comparative/superlative affixes and referential pronouns.

In this task, participants are required to finish the examiner's sentence using the correct morphological structure or pronoun. As it can be seen in Figure 7, the questions relate to a variety of

morphological rules, including derivational (prefixes and suffixes) and inflectional affixes (plurals, case, gender, and comparative and superlative suffixes), and personal, reflexive, possessive, and demonstrative pronouns. As Figure 7 shows, each question is preceded by an example, and all questions are supported by a stimulus image. There are 32 questions in total and they get progressively more complex as the test advances. If participants answer 7 consecutive questions incorrectly, or no answer is given, the task is concluded.

|  |   |              |
|--|---|--------------|
| <b>Trial 1</b> This boy (point) is standing and this boy is (point and pause) _____ . [sitting]                                    |   |              |
| <b>Trial 2</b> Mom said, "These shoes (point to shoes on the left) are mine and those shoes are (point and pause) _____ ." [yours] |   |              |
| <b>A. Regular Plural</b>   |   | <b>SCORE</b> |
| <b>Demo</b> Here (point) is one cup. Here are two (point and pause) cups.  |   |              |
| 1. Here is one book. Here are two _____ . [books/more books]   | 1 | 0            |
| <b>Demo</b> Here (point) is one watch. Here are two (point and pause) watches.   |   |              |
| 2. Here is one horse. Here are two _____ . [horses/more horses/horsies/other horses/ponies]  | 1 | 0            |



**Figure 7:** Examples of examiner’s question guide and participant’s picture stimuli from the CELF-4 Word Structure assessment.

This rules-bound assessment analyses the grammatical knowledge of the participant, whilst also requiring them to recall the appropriate lexical item. This is an interesting assessment for EAL learners, as native speakers often recall the correct morphology instinctually, but EAL learners, depending on the amount and type of L2 exposure received (e.g. academic, social), may approach

the linguistic process differently. Often within additional language learning, grammar rules are acquired through guided teaching methods, rather than mere exposure. As mentioned in the CELF-4 examiner's manual, the learning of grammar and morphological rules should be imparted with an emphasis on function and reason. Morphological rules (e.g. regular pluralisation: dog(s), but watch(es); irregular pluralisation: mouse – mice) are not always simple and may require explanation, rather than just rote memorisation.

#### 5.4.7 National Curriculum Assessments

The National Curriculum for England and Wales is the framework used by all state schools, in which children are educated and assessed according to their age and ability. Since 2013, following the publication of the Bew Report (2011), the Conservative government made grammar tests a compulsory assessment as part of Key Stage 2 (DfE, 2013a), which covers ages 7 to 11 (Key Stage 1 goes from age 5 to 7). As Lord Bew advised, English teaching should be focused upon, and test, the technical parts of language such as grammar, spelling, and punctuation, 'on the grounds that there are clear 'right' and 'wrong' answers' (DfE, 2011: 60). It was this change in 2013 that saw a shift in primary school English education from communicative and expressive language use to more prescriptive rules and linguistic 'correctness'. Within the new assessments, pupils are tested on their ability to identify elements of grammatical form-function in decontextualised, synthesised example sentences (see Figure 8).

8

Which sentence is grammatically correct?

Tick one.

Tomorrow we went shopping at the sales.

In three weeks' time, I will be on holiday.

Next weekend, we had gone to the river to fish.

Last summer, we swim at the beach and collect seashells.

12

Which option completes the sentence in the **past perfect**?

Soon after a Frenchman \_\_\_\_\_ the first land speed record, it was broken.

Tick one.

has set

had set

set

was setting

**Figure 8:** Example questions taken from Key Stage 2 Grammar test (2018)

This study addresses English language learning in KS2 Year 3 (age 7-8), so it was decided to use the final year English test results from the National Curriculum. Key Stage 2 end of year examinations in English have two test papers: English GSP (grammar, spelling, and punctuation) and English Reading.

The English Grammar, Punctuation, and Spelling test has two parts:

- Short answer Grammar, Punctuation, and Vocabulary test (45 minutes).
- Spelling test, lasting approximately 15 minutes (untimed). There are statutory spelling lists for Year 3.
- The English Reading test contains short answer, several line answer, long answer, and multiple-choice questions and lasts one hour. The test comprises of three texts and three sets of questions.

The examination results are broken into three separate results: English Grammar, English Spelling, and English Reading. Due to the type of intervention being carried out, we will only be using the data

from the National Curriculum Grammar assessment, as it is the only one relevant to the content of the intervention.

It is interesting to note, within this study on oral language fluency, that the English National Curriculum for England and Wales' state schools does not feature any assessment criteria for English as a spoken language. Indeed, the only part of the National Curriculum which mentions oral language production is:

Specific requirements for pupils to discuss what they are learning and to develop their wider skills in spoken language form part of this programme of study [English]. In years 3 and 4, pupils should become more familiar with and confident in using language in a greater variety of situations, for a variety of audiences and purposes, including through drama, formal presentations, and debate. (DfE, 2013b)

#### 5.4.8 Data Collection Procedure

The procedures put in place to collect the CELF-4 pre-test data commenced on 1<sup>st</sup> October 2018 and lasted approximately 2 weeks. Each participant's testing took around 30 minutes in total, depending on their error rate and thinking time. Following the pre-testing period was the Autumn half-term break and then both the drama intervention and control English language teaching commenced and lasted for the subsequent 14 weeks. During this time, a research journal was kept as a means of logging observation notes. The notes were taken following the lessons rather than during as I was teaching the sessions. Following the 14-week intervention, the post-testing phase was conducted by re-administering the CELF-4 tasks to collect the post-intervention quantitative data, which again took approximately 2 weeks.

Running parallel to the CELF-4 testing were the KS2 National Curriculum tests. National Curriculum tests are marked externally, with no teacher assessment involved. The school receives each pupil's raw score, a scaled score, and confirmation of whether or not they achieved the national standard. Key Stage 2 scaled scores fall between 80, the lowest possible score, and 120, the highest possible score. A scaled score of over 100 means that the child has met the expected standard in each KS2



standardised assessment tests (SATs). This study received the scores for all Year 3 pupils in their first term assessment, prior to the intervention, and their end-of-year scores, after the intervention.

Unlike the CELF-4 assessments, which are identical before and after the intervention, the National Curriculum test results are graded and thus more complex than the end-of-year test, based upon the expected attainment trajectory. Therefore, students are expected to achieve scores similar in both tests.

As mentioned above, the Raven's Progressive Matrices test was administered in the pre-testing phase as a background measure. This task was conducted as a group, with participants being tested in their respective classes, without a time limit, following the test procedure.

I was aware that my original presence in the school, due to the age of the participants might be met with some apprehension and potential fear, as I was an unknown man entering the safe space of the classroom. Through site visits and earlier introductions, I tried to ease any anxiety and answer any questions the pupils had in advance of testing and intervention.

Whilst I was not the class's normal teacher, over the weeks of teaching I did build a rapport with both learners and fellow teachers. The groups often looked forward to my arrival each week, and I felt very comfortable within the school environment. During school trips (Shakespeare's Globe Theatre) and whilst taking part in the in-school drama activities, I needed to be careful that the impact of my presence would not skew any of the data. Subsequent to the pre-testing, it would have been impossible for the learners not to become more used to my presence, as the work was so interactive and person-centred. However, as this was true across both experimental and control groups, I am convinced this impact was not going to influence one group over another.

As I was teaching both the experimental and control groups, I needed to be aware of my personality across all of the teaching. Whilst I am passionate about drama-based pedagogies, I could not let my own personal teaching beliefs lead to the detriment of the control group. I worked very hard

instilling the same amount of energy and professionalism into all the classes and felt that the learners were all offered the same teacher, just through a different approach.

I was aware that within the playground, learners would often discuss the work I had done in class, and so sometimes I would need to field questions from control group members as to why they were doing something different. The school was very good at supporting me through this process and I was able to undertake some additional classes with this group after the post-testing was complete. The support of the school here was incredibly valuable and the learners were understanding of our research.

## 5.5 Intervention Design

The intervention consisted of two groups: two classes formed the experimental group and one class, the control group. The groups were made up of one complete 3 form entry year group, in one East London primary school. By having all the groups within one school, we were able to offer more time to each intervention, more attention to the specific needs of the groups, and gain a deeper understanding of the intervention context. Luckily, within the school chosen we were able to have a large sample size who fulfilled the EAL criteria desired by the study. All pupils within the year group (60 EAL, and 13 native English speaking) took part in the study. Each intervention class (experimental and control) lasted 45 minutes and took place once a week over 14 academic weeks (with breaks for school holidays, and one school trip). All classes were taught by myself, as to not add a confounding variable based upon the teacher. Classes were often observed by the permanent class teacher and were supported by the in-class teaching assistants.

Within this study, the experimental group was broken into two classes (Experimental Group K, N=26; Experimental Group M, N=23). These two classes received exactly the same intervention lesson, back to back, using the same materials, and in identical classroom settings. Lesson plans were drawn

up prior to all classes and reviewed with the school head of year before application. Where possible, audio-recordings were made of the classes, but due to sound quality during lively drama workshops, this was not always the best resource for documentation. Observational diaries were kept throughout the process, following each intervention.

Control group classes were taught following similar language and literacy guidelines to the intervention group, but the lessons consisted of paper-based activities, including prose writing, word searches, poster making, newspaper writing, and sentence completion tasks.

### 5.5.1 Drama Intervention

The lesson plans and activities throughout this study were all designed by me, based upon the thematic guidelines outlined by the school and the national curriculum set literacy texts – Julius Caesar: A Shakespeare Story by Andrew Matthews and Tony Ross; Around the World in Eighty Days (Real Reads) by Jules Verne and Stephen Lillie; and Noah's Ark (various sources). The intervention tasks were all grounded in the Drama in Education and process drama approaches explored earlier within the literature review, and further developed in conjunction with strategies promoted by practitioners such as Neelands and Goode (2015), Dickinson and Neelands (2006), Winston (2013), Winston and Tandy (2009), Howell and Heap (2013), and Baldwin (2003, 2009, 2012). Approximately 5 lessons were spent on each set literacy text, but within this loose parameter I was given rather a lot of flexibility and opportunity to design the lessons as I wished.

Using each text as a basis for the lesson design, I was able to structure each week's lesson around a topic and subject matter that I knew the pupils would have covered in other elements of their syllabus. For example, Julius Caesar was being studied at a time when the pupils were also learning about fossils and mosaics and would also be going to go on a school trip to Shakespeare's Globe Theatre (on which I also accompanied the students). I was therefore able to bring in vocabulary, and realia relating to these other topics where appropriate (see lesson 4: Fossils on Table 11). It was

important to design the lessons around the set-texts, and other elements of the syllabus, as a means of pleasing both the school and the parents by linking the classes with the curriculum, but also of benefit for me as the teacher, as I was able to follow a through-line of theme and therefore form a link between my weekly lessons, rather than random unrelated activities.

**Table 11:** Fourteen-week lesson plan outline for Intervention group.

| <b>Lesson</b> | <b>Text</b>   | <b>Drama Approach</b> | <b>Content</b>                       | <b>Lesson Title</b>  | <b>Linguistic Aim(s)</b>                                 |
|---------------|---------------|-----------------------|--------------------------------------|----------------------|--|
| <b>1</b>      | Julius Caesar | Process Drama         | Teacher in Role (TiR)                | Introductions        | Greetings  |
| <b>2</b>      | Julius Caesar | Process Drama         | Tableaux                             | Feelings             | Vocabulary - Feelings                                    |
| <b>3</b>      | Julius Caesar | Process Drama         | Forum, Total Physical Response (TPR) | The Favourite        | Vocabulary - Feelings                                    |
| <b>4</b>      | N/A           | Process Drama         | TPR, Mime                            | Fossils              | Actions (Cont. and simple past) and Feelings             |
| <b>5</b>      | N/A           | Process Drama         | TiR, Teamwork, Memory                | The Wizard           | Instructional Language                                   |
| <b>6</b>      | AtWi80D       | Re-enactment          | Reflection                           | AtWi80D              | Reflection, speaking in character, commentary            |
| <b>7</b>      | AtWi80D       | Process Drama         | Tableaux                             | Compare and Contrast | Language of comparison                                   |
| <b>8</b>      | AtWi80D       | Ritual                | Teamwork, TPR                        | The Ritual           | Gesture and language combination; instructional language |
| <b>9</b>      | AtWi80D       | Ritual                | Teamwork, TPR                        | The Ritual           | Gesture and language combination; instructional language |
| <b>10</b>     | AtWi80D       | Script                | Performance (in-class)               | Play                 | Reading (silent and aloud), Listening, Commentary        |
| <b>11</b>     | Noah's Ark    | Process Drama         | TiR, Gesture, TPR                    | High Alert           | Plurals  |
| <b>12</b>     | Noah's Ark    | Process Drama         | Problem-solving (PS), Viewpoints     | Power of Water       | Reflection, and past tenses                              |
| <b>13</b>     | Noah's Ark    | Process Drama         | PS, Teamwork                         | Alien Speak 1        | Decoding; Sentence structure                             |
| <b>14</b>     | Noah's Ark    | Process Drama         | Teamwork, Performance (in-class)     | Alien Speak 2        | Creative expression, speaking aloud, appropriacy         |

Whilst designing these lessons, I had the age group (7-8 years old) and linguistic level at the forefront of my mind. I have worked for many years with this specific age group, and so felt confident in my content, energy levels, and how to keep this level engaged with task variety and approach, whilst retaining enough flexibility within each lesson plan to tailor towards the specific class needs. Given that the classes were taking place within a UK state primary school, the linguistic ability was significantly varied, and so I also had to design activities that could support both high and low-level learners and had the capacity to allow varying levels of support, both teacher-student and student-student.

Linguistically, I had outlined key areas of interest that I wished to focus specific lessons based upon mistakes and general language areas highlighted in the pre-testing, comments provided by the class teachers, and target language outlined within the national curriculum for KS2.

Based upon the pre-testing (CELF-4), it had come to my attention that certain errors were being made across the year group. For example, within the Word Structure test, which focuses on grammar structures, nearly every learner had made a mistake with reflexive pronouns (herself/himself – error: his-self; themselves – error: they-selves). There had also been mistakes regarding plurals (both regular and irregular) and varied past tenses. Expressive Vocabulary pre-testing had also highlighted a variety of issues, which I believe could have been most likely attributed to home-exposure to English, length of time within the UK, length of time within the UK school system, and confidence with oral language production. The errors seen during these tasks were generally through attempts to translate, repetition of previous answers given, or giving no answer at all. The Formulating Sentences pre-test demonstrated errors through non-familiarity with the stimuli word, incorrect use of stimuli word (e.g., using verbs as nouns or adjectives) and, again as seen in previous tasks, a lack of confidence with oral language production.

Within each lesson there was a focus on targeting specific linguistic problems where possible, and fundamentally create an environment in which each learner was able to think creatively, work with

others, and build up confidence with oral language production. The pre-testing had shown me which learners were struggling and might require additional support, and also those who were achieving more highly. Therefore, I was able to build into my teaching notes specific language requirements for learners, and design groups and pairings which would support linguistic learning within the tasks. This became easier as the weeks progressed and I started to understand the personalities of the learners and how best to support individual and group learning.

### 5.5.2 Theoretical Principles

Based upon the knowledge gathered through my literature review, previous work experience and practice, and observation, I decided that the approach for intervention lesson delivery that best supported language learning would be process drama. I had an understanding of the key teaching strategies used within the approach and was confident that they would work well within the context in which I was working. As described in the literature review, a growing number of Drama in Education practitioners were using this approach, and it was becoming increasingly popular within the foreign and second language learning arena. As a means of best focusing my planning and organising my thoughts, I decided to follow *Bowell and Heap's (2013) Process Drama* design and to use their key principles throughout my lesson planning and delivery. These planning principles are as follows:

- Theme / Learning Area: with which area of human experience does the teacher wish the pupils to engage?
- Context: what particular fictional circumstances will be created by the drama to explore the theme?
- Roles: who are the teacher and pupils going to be in the drama?
- Frame: which viewpoint will the roles have in order to create tension in the drama, and how distanced will the roles need to be?
- Sign: what artefacts, personal items, sounds, images, and so on will be needed to bring significance to the drama?
- Strategies: what ways of working will be used in the drama? In which combinations? For what purpose?

I was confident that my lesson plans would benefit from the structured principles outlined above and that they were appropriate for the learning objectives I had set. The framework that *Bowell and Heap* recommend also worked in accordance with the National Curriculum (DfE, 2013) guidelines for KS2 Year 3 English and Drama:

- listen and respond appropriately to adults and their peers
- ask relevant questions to extend their understanding and knowledge
- articulate and justify answers, arguments, and opinions
- give well-structured descriptions, explanations, and narratives for different purposes, including for expressing feelings
- use spoken language to develop understanding through speculating, hypothesising, imagining, and exploring ideas
- consider and evaluate different viewpoints

Within the Discussion chapter, I will draw parallels between the expected guidelines drawn up by the Department for Education and relate them to the objectives and outcomes of my intervention.

### 5.5.3 Planned Techniques and Strategies

Having decided that I would be using process drama as my main means of intervention delivery and believing that the principles therein were suited towards actively targeting the KS2 objectives outlined within the National Curriculum, it was now up to me to focus on the content of the lessons. I wished to include specific aspects of additional language learning that I believed were most beneficial and that would fit neatly with the process drama approach I had in mind. These were the key aspects of additional language learning that I thought should be integrated: child-centredness, context and character, gesture and movement, and reflection.



### 5.5.3.1 Child-Centredness

The decision to focus on a child-centred approach was influenced by the Vygotskian idea of re-creating the circumstances and structures of mother-tongue learning through a social constructivist approach. These circumstances may be briefly stated as:

- Using stories and storytelling as the principles means of understanding and discussing the meaning of words, phrases, thoughts, and feelings.
- The importance of first-hand, practical experiences; allowing learners to explore for themselves rather than be 'taught' out of context.
- The requirement for problem-solving.
- The importance of collaborative learning and social interaction – using language to negotiate and work together to build a shared understanding.

Building on Vygotsky's ideas of collaborative learning within the classroom environment, and the awareness that knowledge is not passively transferred to learners but rather between them, was integral to my intervention design and the process dramas I had planned. It was important to me that the intervention had at its core a significant amount of collaborative learning and that learners would have to use language as a means of working together, hypothesising, negotiating, inventing, and presenting their shared ideas. It was through these collective challenges that language would gather meaning, and through its continued use it would become learned.

The use of drama-based activities as a means of stimulating active language use was, in part, based upon the idea that problem-solving, whether in a real or fictional context, creates a social discussion and fundamentally relies on linguistic negotiation and sharing. Wagner (1998) discusses learners as 'active goal-oriented hypothesis-generating symbol manipulators', in as much as through the presentation of problems (practical, social, intuitive, logical) learners are always wanting to discover a solution. Therefore, in the presentation of a drama-based situation in which hypotheses and

outcomes are all open for exploration, learners will want to work together to discover a/the solution.

My intervention lessons would therefore create circumstances in which learners would work in pairs, small groups, or as a class to comprehend, negotiate, and renegotiate ideas with which to advance the story, question the plot or characters, and find solutions to problems. Throughout these activities, I wanted to ensure that English language use was occurring peer-to-peer, teacher to learner, and learner to teacher.

As Neelands (1992: 4) maintains, drama is a 'shared cultural activity' and therefore as we make decisions, negotiate, discuss, and then take responsibility for our decisions, we are learning; not as individuals, not from individuals, but together and from others in a wider social construction of learning.

The influence and importance of a child-centred approach is present across all the lesson plans (see Appendix B). However, it is probably most visible in *The Favourite*, *The Ritual*, and *Alien Speak 1* and *2*.

### 5.5.3.2 Context and Character

In nearly all texts written on the subject of drama, Drama in Education, process drama, drama in second language learning, and also in the literature concerning progressive education, developmental education, and social constructivist approaches to learning, we are made aware of the importance of 'play' and, as part of this, the role of 'the player'. As explored in the literature review (DiNapoli (2009), Kao and O'Neil (1998); Morgan and Saxton (1994), Neelands (1984), and Piazzoli and Kennedy (2014)) are building on the educational theories of Vygotsky and the drama in education practices of Heathcote and Bolton, the role of both context and character are very useful within the language learner experience of play and playing.

The notions of play and player were integral in my lesson planning process, as I wished to consider how each learner would approach the subject matter, the context, and the instructions presented. I was aware that the learners, whilst all pupils within the same school and of the same age, were from a variety of backgrounds and had very different responses to performance-based tasks.

I wanted to create a 'safe space' for each activity to occur within, and for all the learners to feel confidence and freedom to share and develop through the experience. I felt the best way to encourage a shared understanding of the tasks was to lead through example, and so began activities as 'teacher-in-role', as a means of creating a shared vocabulary. By beginning the first lesson with myself as a centurion, I was able to quickly link my presence to the text of Julius Caesar, that they had been studying in their normal classes. This allowed the learners to ask questions and to understand that we were in a playful space, in which we were allowed to pretend, act, represent, and not be tied to our 'real' self. By working as 'teacher-in-role' I was able to create 'the rules of the game' not through explanation and description (linguistic) but demonstration and embodiment.

Throughout the lessons, I wished to create environments in which the learners were aware that there were two states at play, the dramatised world in which they were presenting, feeling, acting, and moving as characters within a designed context, and their post-activity reflective state in which they could comment as themselves. As Vygotsky remarks, through play, the learner 'weeps as a patient, but revels as a player' (1976: 549). I hoped that through this intervention, within both states, the learners would be able to explore and expand their English language usage and build confidence with the language. The activities I designed hoped to encourage language use both in-character and out. Throughout the lessons, learners were encouraged to discover and use new and appropriate vocabulary both for their fictional character and their reflective self. The tasks required learners to try new lexis, use language in pairs, small and large groups, and as varied characters in varied circumstances, as Morgan and Saxton (1994) write, 'Everything that goes on in the classroom must connect with students at both an intellectual and feeling level' (1994: 7). It was useful to note

within observation diaries when learners had begun using new target language items, in both the 'play' and 'reflective' states.

Since it had been a topic mentioned within the KS2 Year 3 syllabus, but also a key part of the process drama procedure, I kept a consideration on 'feelings' throughout each lesson. Both in-character and out, I asked the learners to comment on their feelings during scenes, or in reflection afterwards. As part of our target language, it was an important stage of each lesson; as Bolton (1984) underlines, second-order emotions (in the drama) are no less real than first order emotions (in the actual context); they are just of a different quality (Piazzoli & Kennedy, 2014: 61).

The lessons designed involved learners working in pairs, small groups, larger groups, and sometimes as a whole class, each dramatic context allowed learners to consider their (character's) voice and perspective and offers opportunities for linguistic exploration and development. Unless specifically stated (see *Around the World in 80 Days* scripted in lessons 9-10), learners were encouraged to construct and develop their own characters, the hope here was to differentiate between 'role-taking' from 'role-creating'. As Liu (2002: 10) discusses, role-taking refers to 'the enactment of a character predetermined by the teacher, which is common in traditional language classrooms', whilst role-creating is 'more creative and spontaneous in nature, encouraging learners to use their imagination by utilising both linguistic and non-linguistic expressions'. The power behind role-creating, and to some extent role-taking, within a play context, is that it requires an immediate need for learners to communicate. Through the changing dynamics of character and scene, the power structures and interactions within a class can instantly alter, which in turn stimulates new linguistic needs and opportunities.

In each intervention lesson, learners were required to perform in-role and often to comment upon their emotional response to actions both in and out of the 'play' context. Each lesson had linguistic aims and all learners were given multiple opportunities to communicate in varied group sizes.

Communication, creativity, and self-expression were prioritised throughout the lessons, most notably present within The Favourite, Compare, and Contrast, and High Alert.

### 5.5.3.3 Gesture and Movement

Throughout the planning of the intervention lessons, I kept returning to the skills developed by and integral to the Drama in Education arsenal. The practices of freeze-frames, tableaux, mirroring, Total Physical Response (TPR), gesture, and mime, as many of them require no linguistic output, could appear irrelevant to a study of this type. However, since the 1980s, educators of English as a additional/foreign/second language have investigated and widely encouraged the use of gestures and paralinguistic communication. In Gullberg and McCafferty (2008: 137), their meta-reviews overriding conclusion was that ‘gestural enhancing of input leads to greater comprehension and, possibly, acquisition’. Indeed, as drama practitioners have long thought, the freezing of an image, or holding of a gesture, is an important way of conveying a sign or encouraging a deeper comprehension of an idea. By offering a still image to language learners, they are given a longer time to interpret and process, consider their perspective and build a linguistic (external or internal) response.

Within the intervention lesson design, I wished to include these highly controlled activities as a way of both asking learners to respond to linguistic stimuli and instruction, but also to then consider their feelings within the activity, and reflective responses after the activity. An invitation to create a frozen silent image, based upon a story, a phrase, or a word, according to Liu (2002), will encourage students' linguistic output:

As a frozen image will compel the observers to come up with informed guesses and multiple possible meaning interpretations, it encourages students' linguistic output to be free from anxiety, and thus allows the teacher to identify the forms the students have already mastered as well as those they still need to learn to convey their thoughts and ideas appropriately and idiomatically and to introduce and reinforce these forms based on the needs of communication. (2002: 62)

Further still, by working with still-images and non-verbal tasks, learners were able to represent 'trickier' situations, such as, fights or party scenes (complicated within a Year 3 classroom), whilst classmate observers had opportunities to interpret and reflect upon the images presented. The interpretation of these tableaux allowed for expansive spontaneous vocabulary production and commentary.

Alongside the freeze-frame and tableau activities, the lessons also encouraged TPR approaches to language learning. We are most aware of TPR through the song '*Heads, Shoulders, Knees, and Toes*', and probably all remember the actions which go along with it. Asher's TPR (1969) approach to second language teaching examined ESL learners' language development without engagement in oral practice, building on the notion that as we hear and physically embody language, we are internalising and pushing that language item into memory. This is most evident in the way that young children acquire new language through attachment to actions, but is also true of older language learners, as we maximise our linguistic knowledge by attaching words to action, circumstance, and memory.

A combination of freeze-frame and tableaux, mime, and TPR were used across the lessons, sometimes as a short 5-minute task, and at other times expanded and built up into the main focus of the lesson, this was true in Feelings, Compare and Contrast, and The Ritual.

#### 5.5.3.4 Reflection

Within the intervention lessons planned, I was intent on keeping the drama activities based upon the process drama tenet of praxis rather than practice. The widely encouraged procedure (Boud et al., 1985; Kao & O'Neill, 1998; Liu, 2002; O'Neill & Lambert, 1982; Stinson & Piazzoli, 2013) sees an original action take place, moments for reflection (in/out of character), followed by re-design and re-

action. I have included these reflective opportunities within each lesson design to encourage critical thinking and thus meaning-making in regards to the work taking place. Over the course of the lessons, I hope to return to target themes and language items, allowing for deeper explicit knowledge and understanding to be achieved, as a strategy for language reinforcement and an explanation of linguistic devices which have emerged throughout the session (Liu, 2002), as a consolidation of learning (Stinson & Piazzoli, 2013), and as a revision and acknowledgement of the language explored (Kao & O'Neill, 1998).

Built into the lesson plans are a variety of reflective moments, occurring 'in-action', 'after-action', and at times pre-emptive, based upon previous tasks or lessons for example, '(demonstrates an object) what do you think we might be doing next?'. The reflective moments are sometimes very brief, occasionally gestural rather than verbal (hands up, pulling faces, perform an action) as a means of concept-checking or emotional response; at other times, they are more long-form, orchestrated, language-focused, in-themselves a main task. As Boud, Keogh and Walker (1985) propose, dialogue-based reflection, evaluating experiences and sharing feelings, as part of a group discussion, in conjunction with their peers, allows for the appropriation of new attitudes and meanings, the primary focus of language learning.

It is important that the learners do not see the reflection activities as evaluations of the drama workshops, but rather moments to consider, react and build their personal (in and out of character) ideas and thoughts. Whilst evaluation is concerned with the quality of work, e.g. the reaction to the product, here I wanted to instil the idea of the process being 'on-going' and all our efforts building towards future actions and a continued process of learning.

The planned reflective moments are often undertaken in pairs or small groups, and then gradually fed back into wider whole-class feedback and discussion. Due to the class sizes, reflective ensures everyone has the opportunity to share their opinions, and that all thoughts are regarded as equal and important. These moments are monitored by myself, class teachers, and teaching assistants,

which provides opportunities to observe the learners and to understand their thoughts and feelings, which could then inform future lessons and task design.

As Fels and McGivern (2002: 8) explain, 'an essential component of performative inquiry is a collective sharing of experience and reflections among participants following the performative exploration: what happened, what choices of action were taken, what other actions or responses might have been possible, what insights or feelings or questions emerged, what might have been learned from the experience?' These moments of collective sharing and reflection help encourage diverse and free language production, without the pressure of linguistic accuracy and universal truths.

At other times, the reflective process would be undertaken 'in-action', as promoted by O'Neill and Lambert (1982). Here, questions would be prompted by myself in character, as a means of checking progress, thoughts, and feelings. This process allows for the learner to react and reflect in-character, varying their language use and easing confidence with oral language production.

Both collective reflective sharing and 'in-action' reflective responses are promoting free and spontaneous language use. The aim is to provide multiple and varied opportunities for oral language production, unconstrained by formal questions and answers, right and wrong answers, and the fear of linguistic uncertainty.

This emphasis on self-expression and the promotion of personal ideas of reflection is a key element of the lesson plans, as it differs widely from the traditional model being used with the control group. Within traditional English language classes, for example, Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), moments of reflection are primarily reserved for error correction and review. As Kao and O'Neill (1998) discuss, CLT has an over-emphasis on errors, which in turn can have a detrimental effect on learners. The intervention lessons would provide many opportunities for oral language production and shared thinking, combined with positive reinforcement and encouragement, whilst the traditional classes would primarily focus on accuracy.



All of the lessons designed include moments of reflection, both long and short form; reflection is probably most visible within the lessons Feelings, Around the World in 80 Days, Rehearsal, and Power of Water.

#### 5.5.4 Control Group Intervention

Within the study, the control group was exposed to a more traditional approach to primary English teaching. Again, like the intervention groups, each lesson plan was provided to the school in advance of the teaching, and it was acknowledged they fit with the curriculum being practised within the English literacy module. The lessons were more teacher-centred than the intervention classes and rarely called for learners to leave their seats. The majority of control classes saw the teacher (myself), introduce the lesson from the front of the classroom, often using a Microsoft PowerPoint presentation, explaining the subject matter, linguistic content, and task, which would be demonstrated. This would be followed by concept checking questions and the distribution of materials (worksheets, books, pencils etc). The control group lessons ran at the exact same running time as the intervention workshops and covered the same language content and theme (see Table 12).

The nature of the control group lessons meant they were exposed to more written English sources and would be expected to produce written answers to questions more often than spoken answers. After each task, learners were expected to pair-check and share their answers orally with the class. From the beginning, a more formal approach of question and answer was organised which mirrored their usual teacher-learner style, including the raising of hands and being selected for answers.

Generally, the lesson plans followed a traditional format of:

- Lead-in
- Short activity + concept check + feedback

- Longer activity + pair check + feedback
- Wrap-up

The activities selected throughout the course included gap fills, crosswords, shortform writing (newspaper and short story), matching, and poster design. Within the monitoring and feedback, an emphasis was placed on accuracy (spelling and grammar), with myself and the class teacher marking work as we circulated.

The tone of the class was kept buoyant and encouraging, whilst retaining a sense of focused study. It was important that the class felt smooth and in-line with their normal course of study. Through demonstrations and the tone set within the lessons, the learners were encouraged to be creative and to explore their widest vocabularies, just from their desks and based upon the paper-based work set before them.

**Table 12:** Fourteen-week lesson plan outline for Control group.

| <b>Lesson</b> | <b>Text</b>                   | <b>Content</b>                     | <b>Lesson Title</b>           | <b>Linguistic Aim(s)</b>                |
|---------------|-------------------------------|------------------------------------|-------------------------------|---|
| <b>1</b>      | Julius Caesar                 | Worksheet and Quiz                 | Julius Caesar 1               | Finding information in a text           |
| <b>2</b>      | Julius Caesar                 | Short Story                        | Julius Caesar 2               | Writing short stories                   |
| <b>3</b>      | Julius Caesar                 | Character Profiles                 | Julius Caesar 3               | Descriptive language                    |
| <b>4</b>      | Fossils                       | Crossword and Matching             | Fossils                       | Vocabulary                              |
| <b>5</b>      | Turn your teacher into a frog | Write up the spell                 | Turn your teacher into a frog | Instructional Language                  |
| <b>6</b>      | AtWi80D                       | Fill in the blanks                 | Welcome to My Country         | Noun forms, adjectives                  |
| <b>7</b>      | AtWi80D                       | Comparison Language                | Compare and Contrast          | Language of comparison                  |
| <b>8</b>      | AtWi80D                       | Matching Countries with Traditions | Traditions                    | Listening; Countries and verbs          |
| <b>9</b>      | AtWi80D                       | Reading and Questions              | Around the World in 80 Days   | Reading. Answer selection               |
| <b>10</b>     | AtWi80D                       | Continue the story writing         | What happened next?           | Past tense; Narrative writing           |
| <b>11</b>     | Noah's Ark                    | Plurals slide show                 | Two by Two                    | Plurals                                 |
| <b>12</b>     | Noah's Ark                    | Climate Change Vocab               | Climate Change                | Past and Future Tense; Cause and Effect |
| <b>13</b>     | Noah's Ark                    | Written version of Alien Speak     | Alien Speak (Written)         | Decoding; Sentence structure            |
| <b>14</b>     | Noah's Ark                    | Poster for Aliens                  | Welcome Space-people          | Writing                                 |

## 5.6 Qualitative Data collection

### 5.6.1 Observational Diaries

In order to answer my research questions, alongside my quantitative data collection, I wished to collect qualitative data based upon my experience and observations in class. Maykut and Morehouse (1994: 121) describe the process of qualitative data collection as taking many forms, but fundamentally being 'a non-mathematical analytical procedure that involves examining the meaning of people's words and actions'. I was encouraged by this definition as the study was primarily focused on the use of language (words) through physical embodiment and play (actions).

As Marshall and Rossman (2014) describe, observation is more than just looking and involves noting systematically people, behaviours, settings, artefacts, and routines. It was important that I prepared myself before each lesson to consider what might happen, what to specifically look out for, but also to leave myself the flexibility to acknowledge and recognise events, actions, interactions, language items, and feelings that arise spontaneously and without presumption. This was supported by Taylor, Bogdan, and Devault (2015: 137) who describe diaries as great opportunities to make a note of 'emerging themes, interpretations, hunches and striking gestures and nonverbal expressions essential to understanding the meaning of a person's words'.

I used Wragg's (2011) *Introduction to Classroom Observation* as a guide for how to best collect notes during activities and post-lesson, as I was aware I would be short of time during the practical lessons. Wragg's writing is mainly concerned with general school teaching and how to deal with issues that might arise in a class, and also judging the efficacy of a lesson. His writing, whilst not specially designed with a study like mine in mind, was a useful manual on how to structure my observational field notes, and particular class features I should be looking out for. Following the guidance outlined in Wragg (2011) and the theoretical recommendations from Duff (2018), such as, documentation of anxieties, socio-psychological factors, and personal voice, I kept a systemic account of the impressions, questions, themes and issues that arose throughout the interventions. The reflective

diaries were a useful log of information and feelings occurring throughout the work, whilst also allowing me to conceptualise and articulate my hypotheses.

**Table 13:** Example of observational diary page.

|   |                                 |
|---|---------------------------------|
| 1 | Class:                          |
|   | Lesson:                         |
|   | Date / Time:                    |
| 2 | Predictions:                    |
| 3 | Structure:                      |
| 4 | Questions:                      |
| 5 | Participants and Participation: |
| 6 | Outcomes:                       |
| 7 | Language:                       |
| 8 | Observations:                   |

The categories I selected to use within my observational diaries were included as a means of formalising my thought processes following lessons, and also to recognise specific trends which might lead to further discussion.

The sections began with the practical scheduling elements of the lesson (1) – This was useful when reading back my notes to see if observational trends were linear.

Section 2 outlined my predictions for the classes. This was a stage which I added later within the diary process, as I found the more preparation I could do before each class the more focused my notetaking could become. I did not, however, let my predictions govern my observations or ascribe findings that occurred organically.

The Structure section (3) was useful to note if timings of activities were incorrect, if the order of events changes, or if any aspects of lesson planning needed further scrutiny.

Section (4): *Questions* was an opportunity to note learner questions which arose in class, questions which had triggered issues in class, and occasionally questions which I had overheard learners asking one another about activities or within activities.

Section 5 was highly useful as the lessons progressed, as both 'participants' and 'participation' became very important topics for observation: the dynamic of the learners, their interaction, their varied abilities, and how they supported one another linguistically. I began to create a shorthand on my notes regarding not only T-S (teacher-student) and S-S (student-student) interactions, but also (H-L) Higher level – Lower level, (H-H), (L-L), (H-L-L), (L-H-H). As I began to know the participants better, and understood areas of academic, linguistic, and personal confidence, I was able to note moments of linguistic scaffolding and the sharing of ideas between varying language proficiency.

Section 6, which observed Outcomes, allowed me to note if the desired outcomes were achieved, predictions were correct, or there were unexpected events, linguistic items, or linguistic issues, all of which would be useful in further analysis and discussion.

The final two sections were where the majority of note-taking took place. Section 7 (Language) not only listed lexical items which learners were struggling to excel with, but also whether these items were used in or out of role, or whether they were used within group, pair, or class interactions. I also tried as often as possible to note whether the language had been used with errors (er) or correctly, and whether it had been used based in the context of the drama activity or in the classroom context.

Section 8 (Observations) was a space to note any other occurrences and interactions of note that had occurred within a class. Within some lessons this could be anything from seating arrangements and classroom organisation, through to friendships and teamwork (who works best with whom, etc.)

As I was leading the workshops and classes myself, it was not always easy to find moments in which to make detailed notes. As a means of collecting as much qualitative data as possible, I would always have a small notepad and pencil on my person at all times with which I could scribble down notes of events, actions, and language points as they happened in real-time. I would also liaise with the class teachers and teaching assistants after each class to gather any thoughts or considerations they might have. The most important stage of all my observational note-taking came in the self-reflection and processing stage following each lesson (during the school lunch break), in which I could write up my notes into longhand and further analyse and consider the previous events. This process was highly useful, not only in collating data and solidifying my thoughts but also as a means of tailoring future classes based upon my findings.

### 5.6.2 Interviews and Feedback

Following the intervention, interviews with class teachers and head of year were conducted. These interviews took place within the school and had an informal conversational quality. I hoped to gather each teacher's opinion on the lessons, how they thought the learners reacted to them, whether they thought they were a useful approach to teaching English, and whether they thought they could or would want to teach in a similar way. These interviews were then followed up by a continued email correspondence and Zoom calls with the head of year, to discuss the thoughts of the school, in relation to the project, and how they might integrate some of the techniques and strategies into future teaching.

A few weeks after the final post-testing had occurred, I received a large file of paperwork from the school which included letters from the pupils all commenting on their personal experiences during the intervention, what they had enjoyed or not enjoyed, and what they had learned.

All of the interview data, correspondence, call diaries, and participant feedback were collated and analysed qualitatively. This data was especially useful in answering the third research question concerning confidence, motivation, and social integration.

## 5.7 Chapter Summary

This methodology chapter began by outlining the aim of the study and the research questions. It also discussed the context for the study, the school setting, and the participants taking part. Information was presented outlining the characteristics of the participants, their home languages, age, and gender. This background material was then discussed in reference to the classes in which they are regularly taught and the organisation of teaching groups for the intervention.

It was then indicated, due to the study aims and research questions, that part of the data collected would be quantitative, gathered through a pre-test, intervention, post-test structure. The oral fluency tests selected, The Clinical Evaluation of Language Fundamentals (4<sup>th</sup> Edition), were discussed and explained, with examples provided for each assessment. In addition, the National Curriculum examination results for English Grammar will also be used as a means of observing non-spoken assessment results, and Raven's Progressive Matrices for non-verbal reasoning test data. The procedure for each test was presented and information displayed for assessment criteria and mark schemes.

The chapter continued by detailing the intervention itself, the structure, logistical considerations, and the reason for specific task selection. A guide to the 14-week lesson plan, alongside theoretical, stylistic, and thematic considerations was presented detailing the major pedagogical themes: child-



centredness, context and character, gesture and movement, and reflection. The intervention lessons were followed by a similar 14-week plan, showing the course outline for the control group classes.

Following the intervention design, the methods for qualitative data collection were outlined and details of observation field diaries and interviews were discussed. This data was collected as a support for the qualitative findings, and a method for deeper theoretical analysis and discussion based on thematic and experiential discovery.

This chapter also discussed the ethical considerations associated with this investigation.

## CHAPTER SIX

### 6 QUANTITATIVE RESULTS

The purpose of this study is to examine the effect of drama-based learning activities on English language oral fluency within the Key Stage 2 classroom. This research compares drama-based approaches to language learning with more traditional English language and literacy teaching approaches by examining English language development through a number of standardised language tasks (CELF-4; Wiig, Semel, & Secord, 2004), one National Curriculum English examination, and qualitative observations and field notes.

This chapter presents the findings related to the quantitative data collected during the pre- and post-testing outlined within the previous methodology chapter, which involved the assessment of the children using three CELF-4 tasks that measure aspects related to oral fluency (i.e. Word Structure, Formulating Sentences, Expressive Vocabulary) and one National Curriculum examination that focuses on grammar and vocabulary (i.e. NC Grammar), as these were the areas the intervention focused on. The tests were administered twice: at the pre-testing stage and at the post-testing stage, to explore the improvement within each group of participants. The results of these tests will be presented in the following sections.

As mentioned in the previous chapter, the total number of participants within this study was 73 (45 females, 28 males), who were split into three similarly-sized groups (ExperimentalGroupM= 23, ExperimentalGroupK=26, ControlGroup=24), based upon their form entry. All the groups contained a variety of first languages spoken (20 languages in total – Arabic, Bengali, Bulgarian, English, Farsi, French, Hindi, Hungarian, Italian, Lingala, Lithuanian, Polish, Portuguese, Romanian, Romany, Russian, Spanish, Swahili, Urdu, and Yoruba), and the 13 English native speakers were similarly distributed across the three groups.

## 6.1 Data Analysis

A series of independent t-tests and analysis of variance (one- and two-way ANOVAs) were carried out as a means of analysing the pre- and post-test data collected. For the pre-test data, one-way ANOVA tests were conducted to compare the results of each of the three groups in the experimental tasks. Following the post-test phase, improvement scores (i.e. mean score differences between the pre-test and the post-test scores) were calculated for each group on each the tests mentioned above, and independent t-tests were performed to compare the experimental and control groups on the dependent variables (i.e. the improvement scores of each test). For those comparative analyses where significant differences between the groups were revealed, further analyses using two-way ANOVAs were conducted to explore the potential effects of confounding variables (gender, home language, and age) on the group differences. A two-way ANOVA allows us to observe both individual and joint effects of two independent variables (group and gender/home language/age) on one dependent variable (improvement score).

Within this study, the threshold for statistical significance will be measured against the probability value of 0.05; i.e., any *p*-value below 0.05 will be regarded and reported as significant.

## 6.2 Results

### 6.2.1 Pre-testing

The aim of this testing phase was to establish the English attainment levels of the groups prior to any teaching intervention. The pre-tests, as outlined in the Methodology chapter, include three CELF-4 language assessments and three National Curriculum English assessments, as well as a non-verbal reasoning test (Raven's), which did not reveal significant differences between the groups (see Methodology chapter). These tests are important to ascertain that there were no initial attainment differences between any of the groups, and that all participants were suitable to take part in the

designed intervention. The pre-test results for all assessments are presented in Table 14, which shows the means and standard deviations for all measures.

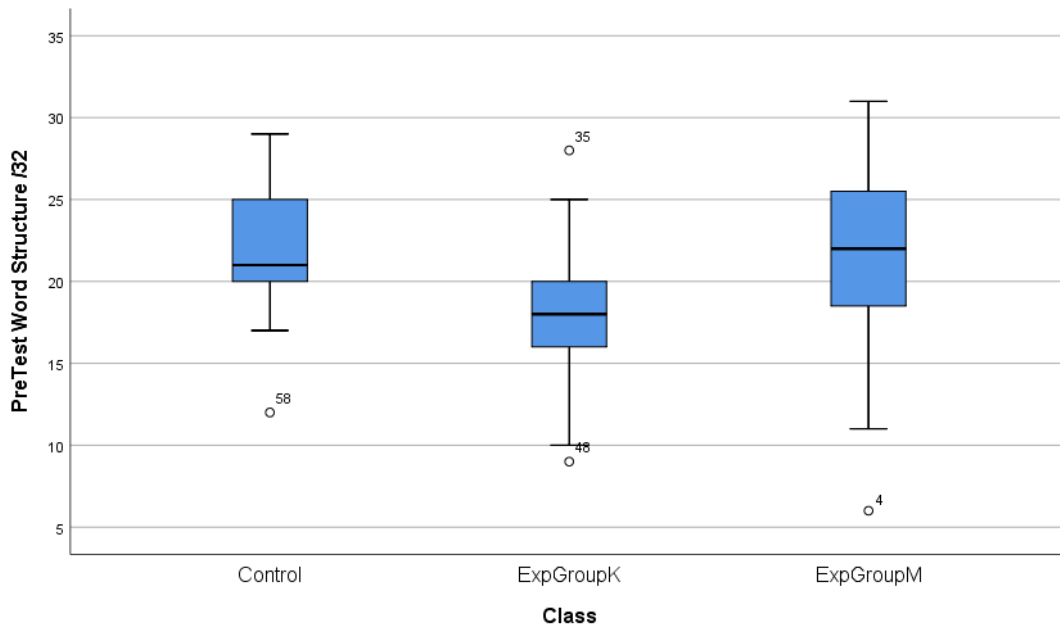
**Table 14** : Mean scores and (SDs) of pre-testing assessments for each group.

|                                   | <b>Control<br/>(N = 24; 13<br/>girls)</b> | <b>Experimental<br/>Group K<br/>(N = 26; 16 girls)</b> | <b>Experimental<br/>Group M<br/>(N = 23; 16 girls)</b> |
|-----------------------------------|---|--|--|
| <b>CELF Expressive Vocabulary</b> | 26.33 (10.75)                             | 24.54 (9.58)   | 22.83 (8.87)   |
| <b>CELF Formulating Sentences</b> | 29.04 (6.62)                              | 29.88 (8.84)   | 27.65 (7.16)   |
| <b>CELF Word Structure</b>        | 21.79 (4.18)                              | 17.6 (4.66)  | 21.48 (5.82)   |
| <b>NC Grammar</b>                 | 107.92 (13.33)                            | 106.65 (16.34)   | 103.96 (14.83)   |

The group means were used to analyse potential performance differences between groups. One-way ANOVA tests were conducted to compare the results of each group in each of the tasks. All the one-way ANOVA tests run revealed no significant differences in the groups' scores for any of the tasks (CELF ExpVoc:  $F(2,70) = 0.756, p = 0.473$ ; CELF FormSen:  $F(2,69) = 0.518, p = 0.598$ ; NC Grammar:  $F(2,70) = 0.430, p = 0.652$ ;) except for one, the CELF WordStr ( $F(2,69) = 5.523, p = 0.06$ ).

To analyse the significant difference found for the CELF-4 Word Structure, an ANOVA Post-hoc Tukey test was run and it was revealed that the scores of the ExperimentalGroupK on this test were significantly lower compared to the Control (Mean score difference of 4.192;  $p = 0.011$ ) and the ExperimentalGroupM (Mean score difference of 3.878;  $p = 0.022$ ).

As Figure 9 shows, the pre-test results revealed that one of the experimental groups (ExpGroupK) began the intervention with lower scores on the Word Structure test. The lower result of the ExpGroupK on this test were taken into consideration when analysing the improvement scores of the post-test results.



**Figure 9:** Word Structure pre-test results across all groups.

The pre-test data analysed within this section compared the three classes participating in the study (one control and two experimental) to confirm whether any group was of higher attainment level prior to the intervention (due to their respective teachers and their different approaches, for example). After seeing that both experimental groups performed similarly in all tasks except for one, we decided to analyse them as a single experimental group for the post-test, as both experimental classes would receive the same intervention taught by the same teacher. Therefore, the next section will present the results as control group vs. experimental group, rather than three different groups, for all the tests except for the one where significant group differences were found (i.e. Word Structure task), where paired t-tests will be conducted to check the improvement of each of the three groups and see if the experimental group with lower initial scores improved more than the other two groups.

### 6.2.2 Post-testing

All results displayed within this section are the improvement results between the pre- and post-testing, which will reveal whether the use of drama techniques and pedagogy to teach English over the course of 2 academic terms led to higher scores for the experimental group in the post-tests. To

do this, the pre-test results are subtracted from the post-test results to leave a new score, indicating the improvement of the participants. The following sections will report those improvement scores and any differences found for each of the measures. The improvement results for all assessments are presented in Table 15, which shows the means and standard deviations for all measures.

**Table 15:** Mean and (SDs) improvement scores for each group.

|                                   | <b>Control<br/>(N = 24; 13<br/>girls)</b> | <b>Experimental<br/>Group K<br/>(N = 26; 16 girls)</b> | <b>Experimental<br/>Group M<br/>(N = 23; 16 girls)</b> |
|-----------------------------------|---|--|--|
| <b>CELF Expressive Vocabulary</b> | 5.17 (3.58)                               | 10.23 (4.58)   | 12.74 (6.07)   |
| <b>CELF Formulating Sentences</b> | 5.79 (3.16)                               | 8.76 (5.96)  | 11.00 (4.01)   |
| <b>CELF Word Structure</b>        | 5.75 (2.59)                               | 9.44 (4.04)  | 4.35 (4.02)  |
| <b>NC Grammar</b>                 | 0.33 (9.74)                               | - 0.85 (10.30)   | -0.30 (8.82)   |

### 6.2.3 Expressive Vocabulary

The first test measured the effect of using drama techniques and pedagogy on the development of Expressive Vocabulary. The pre and post test results for each individual group are presented in Table 16.

**Table 16:** Expressive Vocabulary pre and post-test mean scores (out of 54) and (SDs) for each group.

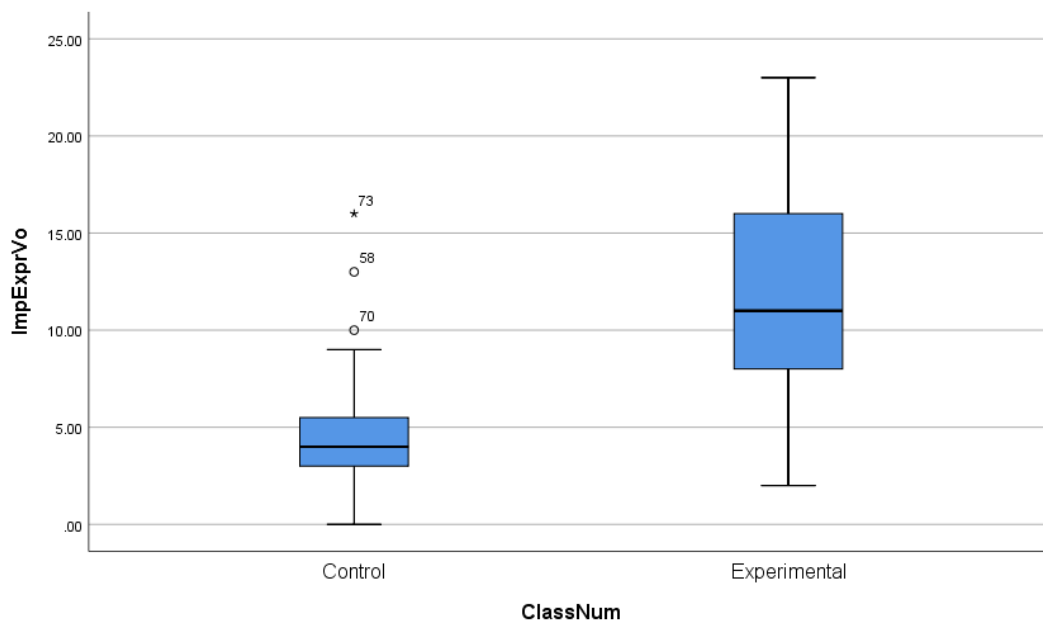
|                            | <b>Control<br/>(N = 24; 13 girls)</b> | <b>Experimental<br/>Group K<br/>(N = 26; 16 girls)</b> | <b>Experimental<br/>Group M<br/>(N = 23; 16 girls)</b> |
|----------------------------|---------------------------------------|--|--|
| <b>Pre-Test Mean (SD)</b>  | 26.3 (10.7)                           | 24.5 (9.5)   | 22.8 (8.8)   |
| <b>Post-Test Mean (SD)</b> | 31.5 (9.8)                            | 34.7 (7.8)   | 33.9 (7.9)   |

An independent-samples t-test was conducted to compare the Expressive Vocabulary improvement scores for the experimental vs. the control groups, which showed a significant difference between the groups (see Table 17 for mean scores). The experimental group ( $M = 11.408$ ,  $SD = 5.404$ ), who used drama-based approaches, revealed significantly higher scores in their expressive vocabulary than the control group ( $M = 5.166$ ,  $SD = 3.583$ ), who was exposed to more traditional English language teaching approaches. This difference was highly significant:  $t(71) = -5.124$ ,  $p < 0.001$ .

**Table 17:** Expressive Vocabulary improvement scores and SDs for each group.

|   | Mean  | SD   |
|---|-------|------|
| <b>Control</b><br>(N = 24, 13 girls)      | 5.16  | 3.58 |
| <b>Experimental</b><br>(N = 49, 32 girls) | 11.40 | 5.40 |

As Figure 10 shows, the experimental group performed better than the control group and all participants within the experimental group improved following the intervention. In addition, as it can be observed from the 2-legged tails, the greatest improvement scores were achieved within the experimental group (improvement score = 23), with some participants in the control group showing no improvement (improvement score = 0).



**Figure 10:** Expressive Vocabulary improvement scores across control and experimental groups.

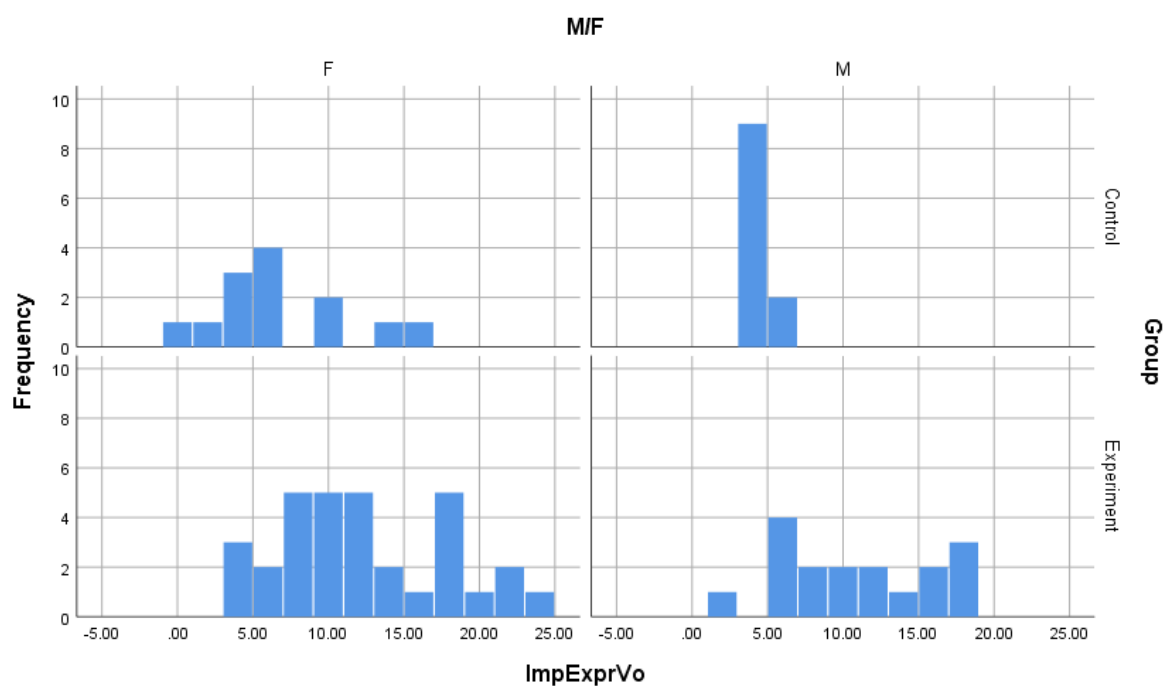
### 6.2.3.1 Correlations between Gender and Expressive Vocabulary

Based upon the outcomes from the aforementioned independent t-test, we wanted to see if there were any correlations with other confounding variables which might be having an effect on the

significant result. By running two-way ANOVA tests, we were able to isolate specific variables within the participant groups (gender, home language, age) and explore whether there was a correlation.

A two-way between-groups ANOVA was conducted to explore any correlations between gender (male vs. female) and group (experimental vs. control) on the Expressive Vocabulary improvement scores. The two-way ANOVA did not reveal a significant interaction of Group\*Gender ( $F=0.181$ ,  $p=0.671$ ). In addition, a significant main effect was revealed for Group ( $F=24.524$ ,  $p<0.001$ ), but not for Gender ( $F=2.517$ ,  $p=0.117$ ), which suggests that differences in the Expressive Vocabulary improvement scores are not due to gender differences (i.e. better performance of males or females) but are due to the use of drama with the experimental group, who scored higher than the control group.

As it can be seen in Figure 11, which shows the results when arranged by gender, whilst improvement was made by all participants, males and females made greater improvements through the intervention drama teaching approach (i.e. male and female participants in the experimental group improved by greater scores).



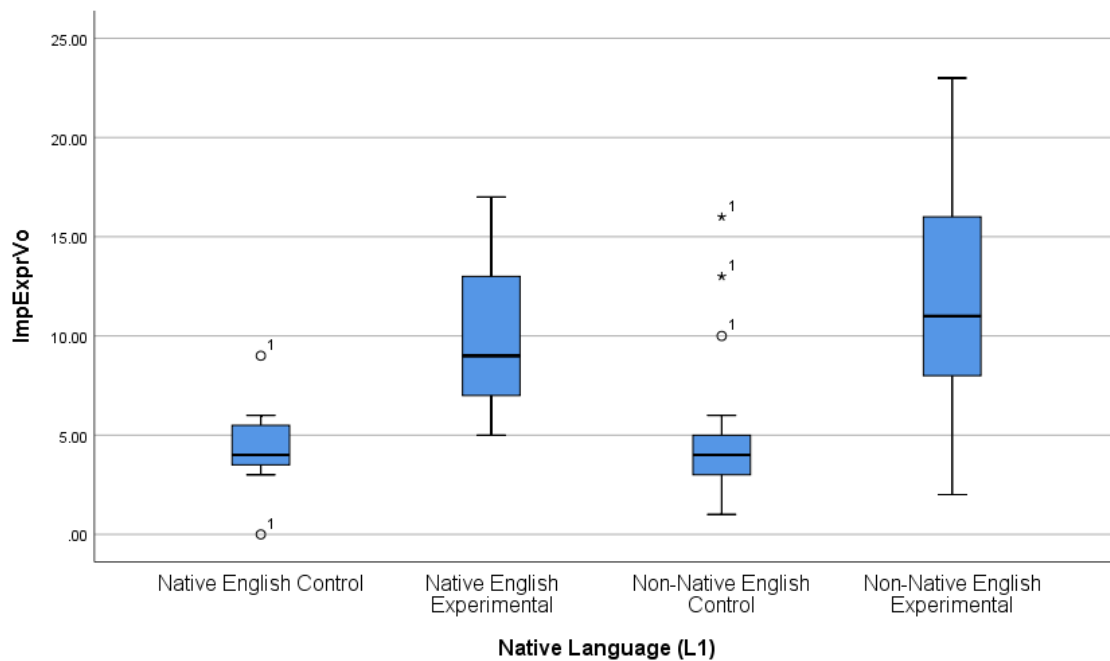


**Figure 11:** Expressive Vocabulary improvement scores for the control group and the experimental group arranged by gender.

### 6.2.3.2 Correlations between Home Language and Expressive Vocabulary

A two-way between-groups ANOVA was conducted to explore any correlations between home language (English vs. other languages) and group (experimental vs. control) on the Expressive Vocabulary improvement scores. The two-way ANOVA did not reveal a significant interaction of Group\*Home Language ( $F=0.001$ ,  $p=0.978$ ). In addition, a significant main effect was revealed for Group ( $F=10.418$ ,  $p=0.002$ ), but not for Home Language ( $F=0.351$ ,  $p=0.555$ ), which suggests that differences in the Expressive Vocabulary improvement scores are not due to Home Language differences (i.e. better performance of native or non-native English speakers) but are due to the use of drama techniques with the experimental group, who scored higher than the control group.

As it can be seen in Figure 12, the mean improvement score for all participants (native English and non-native English speakers) within the control group was 4, whereas within the experimental group the improvement level was higher, with native English speakers improving by a mean score of 9, and non-native English speakers by a mean score of 11. This demonstrates the successful impact of the experimental teaching approaches on both native and non-native speakers of English. Seven languages were commonly spoken in both the experimental and control groups (English, Lithuanian, Polish, Romanian, Romany, Russian, and Urdu) with other individuals speaking alternative home languages in each group. Unfortunately, due to the large variety of languages spoken within the control and experimental groups, no other language except for native English was able to produce a large enough sample to be measured against the other language populations.



**Figure 12:** Expressive Vocabulary Improvement scores for native vs. non-native speakers of English in each group.

### 6.2.3.3 Correlations between Age and Expressive Vocabulary

As mentioned in the Methodology chapter, all participants were part of one academic year group, so there was an even distribution of ages across the groups, with no significant difference between them ( $F(2,70)=0.228, p=0.797$ ). Regardless of the similar age distribution across the groups, we wanted to see if there were any correlations between participants' age and their improvement scores. Therefore, a two-way ANOVA was conducted to explore the impact of age and group (experimental vs. control) on the Expressive Vocabulary improvement scores.

The two-way ANOVA did not reveal a significant Group\*Age interaction ( $F=24.143, p=.128$ ), nor a main effect of Group ( $F=2.149, p=0.433$ ) or Age ( $F=0.530, p=0.826$ ), which suggests that the differences found for the improvement scores of Expressive Vocabulary are not based upon the age of the participants. This is not surprising if we consider that all participants had very similar ages.

## 6.2.4 Formulating Sentences

The next results analysed were those collected for the Formulating Sentences task. The pre and post test results for each individual group are presented in Table 18.

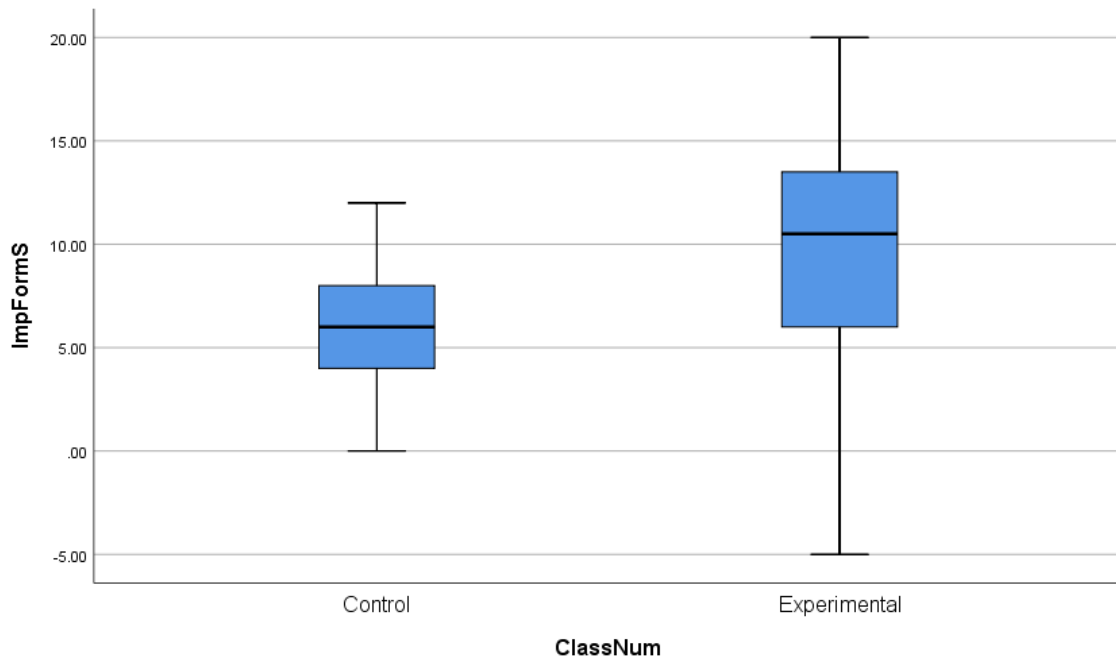
**Table 18:** Formulating Sentences pre and post test scores (out of 48) and SDs for each group.

|                            | <b>Control<br/>(N = 24; 13 girls)</b> | <b>Experimental<br/>Group K<br/>(N = 26; 16 girls)</b> | <b>Experimental<br/>Group M<br/>(N = 23; 16 girls)</b> |
|----------------------------|---------------------------------------|--|--|
| <b>Pre-Test Mean (SD)</b>  | 29.0 (6.6)                            | 29.8 (8.8)   | 27.6 (7.1)   |
| <b>Post-Test Mean (SD)</b> | 34.8 (5.3)                            | 38.8 (5.1)   | 38.6 (5.7)   |

As we did for Expressive Vocabulary, improvement results were obtained by subtracting the pre-test score from the post-test score. Then, an independent-samples t-test was conducted to compare the improvement in Formulating Sentences scores for the experimental vs. the control group (see Table 19 for mean scores), which showed a significant difference between the groups ( $t(70) = -3.396$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). The experimental group, exposed to drama-based approaches, revealed a significantly higher score for the Formulating Sentences task ( $M = 9.833$ ,  $SD = 5.191$ ) in comparison with the control group, who was exposed to traditional English language teaching approaches ( $M = 5.791$ ,  $SD = 3.162$ ). This is also illustrated in Figure 13.

**Table 19:** Formulating Sentences improvement scores and SDs for each group.

|  | <b>Mean</b> | <b>SD</b> |
|--|-------------|-----------|
| <b>Control<br/>(N=24, 13 girls)</b>      | 5.79        | 3.16      |
| <b>Experimental<br/>(N=48, 32 girls)</b> | 9.83        | 5.19      |



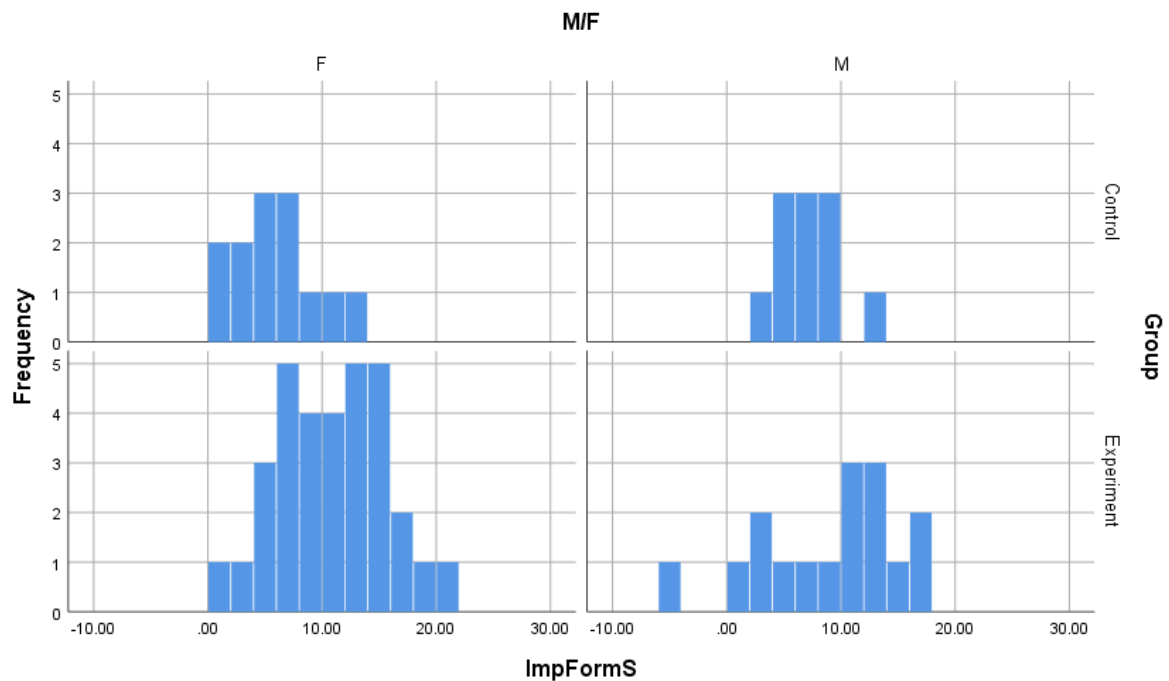
**Figure 13:** Formulating Sentences improvement scores across the control and the experimental group.

#### 6.2.4.1 Correlation between Gender and Formulating Sentences

As with the test results for Expressive Vocabulary, we decided to run subsequent two-way ANOVA tests on the Formulating Sentences data to see if there were any confounding variables having an effect on the results.

A two-way between-groups ANOVA was conducted to explore any correlations between gender (male vs. female) and group (experimental vs. control) on the Formulating Sentences improvement scores. The two-way ANOVA did not reveal a significant interaction of Group\*Gender ( $F=1.758$ ,  $p=0.189$ ). In addition, a significant main effect was revealed for Group ( $F=9.682$ ,  $p=0.003$ ), but not for Gender ( $F=0.84$ ,  $p=0.773$ ), which suggests that differences in the Formulating Sentences improvement scores are not due to gender differences (i.e. better performance of males or females) but are due to the use of drama techniques with the experimental group, who scored higher than the control group.

Figure 14 visually demonstrates that, whilst improvements were made across both groups, there was no difference in the Formulating Sentences improvement score based upon gender, whereas we can see a difference based upon group. That is, as the results for the Expressive Vocabulary task revealed, both males and females made greater improvements through the intervention drama teaching approach (i.e. those in the experimental group).



**Figure 14:** Formulating Sentences improvement scores for control group and experimental group arranged by gender.

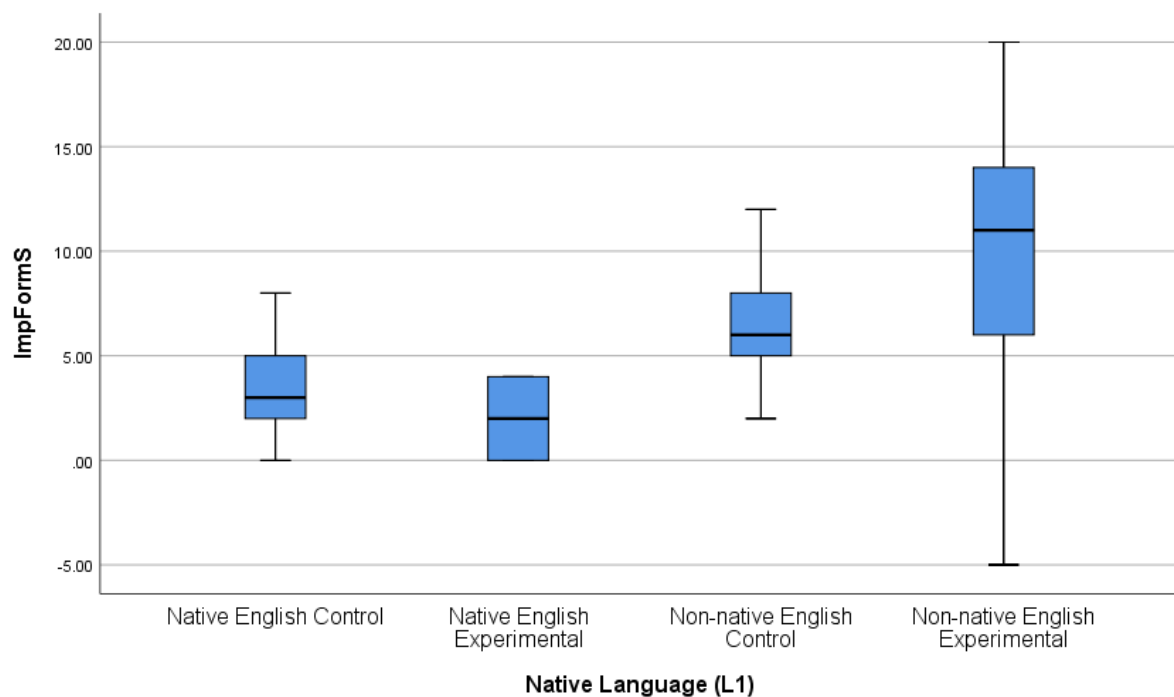
#### 6.2.4.2 Correlation between Home Language and Formulating Sentences

As with the Expressive Vocabulary scores, a two-way between-groups ANOVA was performed to explore any correlations between home language (English vs. other languages) and group (experimental vs. control) on the Formulating Sentences improvement scores. The two-way ANOVA did not reveal a significant interaction of Group\*Home Language ( $F=1.809$ ,  $p=0.183$ ). In addition, there was no significant main effect revealed for Group ( $F=0.256$ ,  $p=0.614$ ). Interestingly, there was a significant main effect of Home Language ( $F=9.107$ ,  $p=0.004$ ), which revealed that group

differences in the Formulating Sentences improvement scores were related to participants' home language, with non-native speakers of English showing a greater improvement than their native-speaking classmates.

As displayed in Figure 15, the mean improvement scores for non-native speakers of English across both the control and experimental groups was greater than that of the native English speakers.

Whilst native speakers' scores only rose by a mean of 3 or 4 marks, the non-native English speakers saw improvement means of 6 (control group) and 11 (experimental group). This result will be explained further in the Discussion chapter.



**Figure 15:** Formulating Sentences improvement scores for control and experimental groups arranged by native vs. non-native speakers of English.

#### 6.2.4.3 Correlation between Age and Formulating Sentences

A two-way between-groups ANOVA was also conducted to explore any correlations between age and group (Experimental and Control) on the Formulating Sentences improvement scores. This comparison did not reveal a significant Group\*Age interaction ( $F=0.000$ ,  $p=1.000$ ). In addition, a

significant main effect was revealed for Group ( $F=553.143$ ,  $p=0.030$ ) but not for Age ( $F=90.790$ ,  $p=0.83$ ), which suggests that the differences found for the Formulating Sentences improvement scores are not based upon the age of the participants. That is, whilst group performance improved, with the experimental group improving significantly more than the control group, this was not affected by the age of participants.

### 6.2.5 Word Structure

Considering the pre-test scores revealed for this task (see Section 6.2.1), the Word Structure improvement scores were subjected to two different comparative analyses: one comparing the experimental vs the control group, as we did with the two previous tasks, and another one comparing the three individual groups (i.e., control vs. Experimental K vs. Experimental M) to account for the initial lower scores of the Experimental K group and see if they improved more than the other two groups. The pre and post test results for each individual group are presented in Table 20.

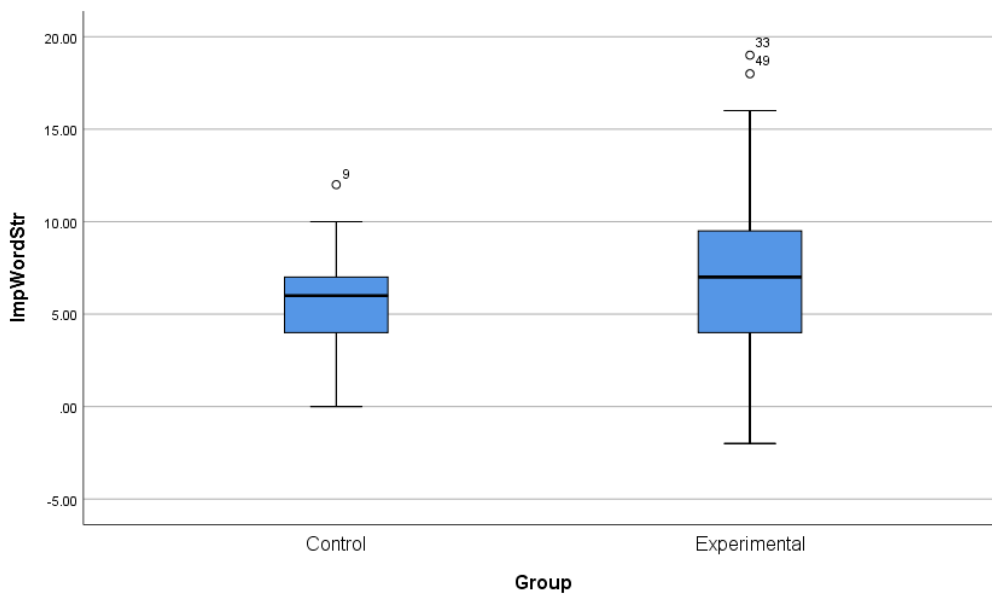
**Table 20:** Word Structure pre and post test scores (out of 32) and SDs for each group.

|                            | <b>Control<br/>(N = 24; 13 girls)</b> | <b>Experimental<br/>Group K<br/>(N = 26; 16 girls)</b> | <b>Experimental<br/>Group M<br/>(N = 23; 16 girls)</b> |
|----------------------------|---------------------------------------|--|--|
| <b>Pre-Test Mean (SD)</b>  | 21.8 (4.2)                            | 17.6 (4.7)   | 21.5 (5.8)   |
| <b>Post-Test Mean (SD)</b> | 27.5 (2.4)                            | 27.2 (2.4)   | 25.9 (3.9)   |

With regards to the first comparative analysis, an independent-samples t-test was conducted to compare the Word Structure improvement scores for the test and the control group (see Table 21 for mean scores). The t-test revealed no significant differences between the groups ( $t(70) = -1.201$ ,  $p = 0.234$ ). Therefore, as Figure 16 shows, even though the experimental group as a whole, exposed to drama-based approaches, revealed a higher Word Structure improvement score ( $M = 7.0$ ,  $SD = 4.744$ ) in comparison with the control group ( $M = 5.750$ ,  $SD = 2.592$ ), exposed to traditional English language teaching approaches, this difference was not significant.

**Table 21:** Word Structure improvement scores and SDs for each group.

|  | Mean | SD   |
|--|------|------|
| <b>Control<br/>(N=24, 13 girls)</b>      | 5.75 | 2.59 |
| <b>Experimental<br/>(N=48, 32 girls)</b> | 7.00 | 4.74 |



**Figure 16:** Word Structure improvement scores across control and combined experimental groups.

As mentioned previously, even though no significant differences were revealed between the control and the experimental group's improvement scores, a second comparative analysis was conducted to account for our pre-test data, which showed a significant difference between the three groups prior to the intervention ( $F(2,69) = 5.523, p = 0.06$ ). The pre-tests revealed that the scores of the ExperimentalGroupK were significantly lower compared to the Control (mean score difference of 4.192;  $p = 0.011$ ) and the ExperimentalGroupM (mean score difference of 3.878;  $p = 0.022$ ). Therefore, a subsequent one-way ANOVA was run to see if there were any differences between the three groups regarding their improvement scores, which revealed a significant difference in the groups' improvement scores for the Word Structure task ( $F(2,69) = 12.839, p < 0.001$ ). As Table 22

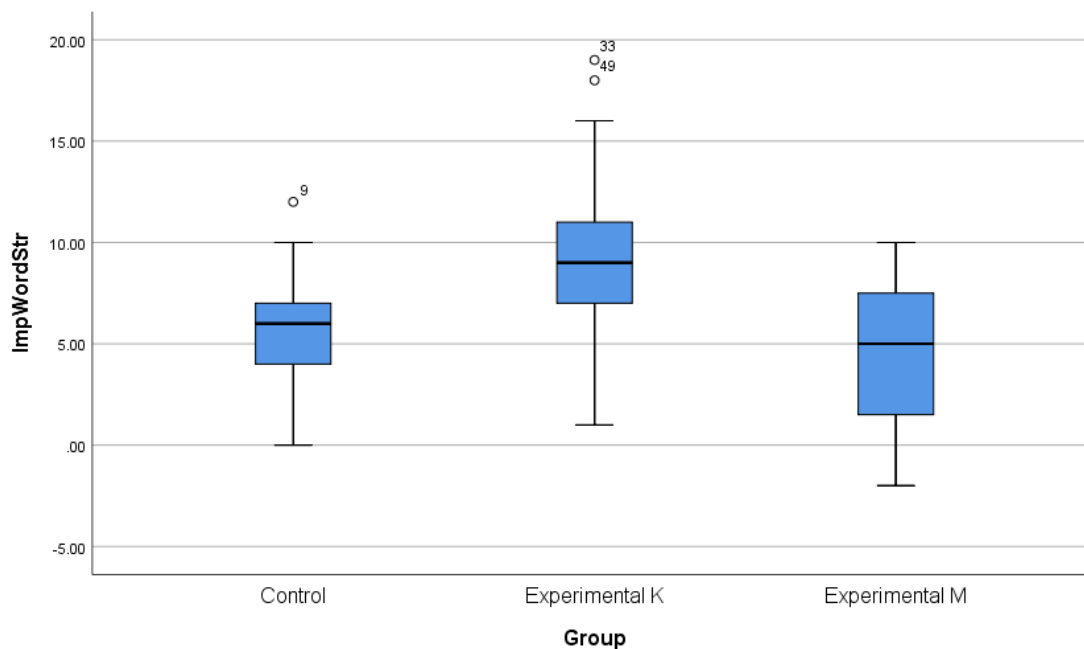


reveals, the Experimental Group K improved significantly more than the Control Group and the Experimental Group M following the intervention.

**Table 22:** Word Structure improvement mean scores and standard deviation for each group.

|  | Mean | SD   |
|--|------|------|
| <b>Control<br/>(N = 24, 13 girls)</b>        | 5.75 | 2.59 |
| <b>Experimental K<br/>(N = 26, 16 girls)</b> | 9.44 | 4.04 |
| <b>Experimental M<br/>(N = 23, 16 girls)</b> | 4.35 | 4.02 |

In addition, as it can be observed from the 2-legged tails in Figure 17, the greatest improvement scores were achieved within Experimental Group K (improvement score = 19), with all participants in this group revealing improvement. On the other hand, in the other two groups, some participants showed no improvement (improvement score = 0) or even a lower score than in the pre-test (improvement score = -2; N=3) in the case of the Experimental Group M.



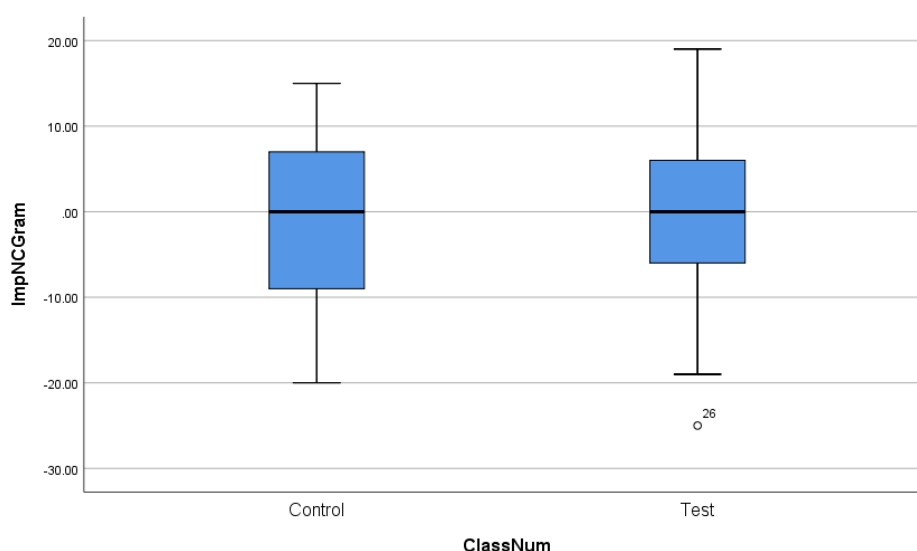
**Figure 17:** Word Structure improvement scores across control and individual experimental groups.

## 6.2.6 National Curriculum Grammar Test

An independent-samples t-test was conducted to compare the improvement scores of the experimental vs. the control group in the National Curriculum Grammar test, which revealed no significant differences in between the groups ( $t(71) = 0.386$ ,  $p = 0.700$ ). As mentioned in the Methodology chapter, the groups were not expected to reveal improvement as the end of year NC test was more complex than the start of the year one (unlike the CELF-4, which was identical in the pre- and post-test phase), so pupils are expected to perform similarly in both. In line with this, the groups show minimal (control group) or no improvement (experimental group) on this test (see Table 23 for mean scores), but the difference between the groups was not significant. This is also illustrated in Figure 18.

**Table 23:** NC Grammar improvement scores for each group

|  | Mean | SD   |
|--|------|------|
| <b>Control<br/>(N= 24, 13 girls)</b>     | .33  | 9.74 |
| <b>Experimental<br/>(N=49, 32 girls)</b> | -.59 | 9.54 |



**Figure 18:** NC Grammar improvement scores across the control and the experimental groups.

### 6.3 Chapter Summary

In this chapter, I have reported the quantitative data collected and analysed during the study with the aim of exploring the effect of drama techniques and pedagogical approaches on the improvement of English oral language fluency in KS2 pupils who have English as an additional language. The quantitative measures tested were based upon three oral English language assessments from the Clinical Evaluation of Language Fundamentals (Expressive Vocabulary, Formulating Sentences, and Word Structure) and one National Curriculum standardised English test (Grammar). The results of each measure in the pre- and post-test phases have been presented for each group (experimental vs. control), as well as in relation to other variables considered within this study (i.e., gender, home language, and age).

The comparative analyses of the four tests demonstrate that whilst there were no significant group differences in the improvement the National Curriculum Grammar test, significant differences were found in the three CELF-4 tasks. With regards to the confounding variables analysed, the overall lack of significant correlations found clearly reveals that the improvement of the experimental group was due to the drama-based intervention.

Therefore, from the data collected, we can report the use of drama techniques as having a significant effect on KS2 primary school EAL learners, in three areas of English oral fluency (i.e., Expressive Vocabulary, Formulating Sentences, and Word Structure, for one of the experimental groups). These tests rely on spontaneous language production, creative thinking, and language confidence skills. These skills, it could be argued, are the basis for many of the drama techniques used within the intervention activities. The National Curriculum Grammar test, on the other hand, rely heavily on written examination and grammar 'rules', which the drama activities did not include.

Going back to our research questions, which were introduced in the Methodology chapter, the results presented in this chapter allowed us to formulate a response. Research Question 1 asked whether children undertaking the drama-based English programme would improve their oral fluency

more than children undertaking a traditional English programme. Based upon the results obtained, we can conclude that that the drama techniques and activities used with the experimental group did have a positive effect on the oral fluency of participants, as a significant improvement was revealed in the areas of Expressive Vocabulary, Formulating Sentences and Word Structure (for one of the experimental groups).

With regards to Research Question 2, we wanted to explore whether children undertaking the drama-based English programme would improve on their National Curriculum Grammar test more than children undertaking a traditional English programme. After examining the results for all groups on this test, it was revealed that, although participants' results were in-line with the school's expected trajectory, there was no significant difference between the experimental and the control groups, which showed no impact of the use of drama-based techniques on this measure.

The above data and analysis therefore support the hypothesis that drama techniques and pedagogical approaches can help improve the development of English language oral fluency in KS2 primary school EAL learners. The Discussion chapter will explain these results further and discuss the potential reasons and implications of these findings. The following chapter will present the results from our qualitative data to answer Research Question 3.

# CHAPTER SEVEN

## 7 QUALITATIVE RESULTS

The data presented within this qualitative results chapter is based upon observational diaries written throughout the intervention process. The chapter is broken into sections based upon the specific research questions and emergent themes. The sections will be comprised thematically based upon the observational notes taken throughout both the experimental and control group interventions, with examples. The decision to group the notes thematically, rather than sequentially, is to aid clarity when building up topics for discussion (in Appendix C, the summarised observational notes can all be seen in chronological order). The majority of the notes taken fall into three specific categories:

1. Language Expressed – actual comments made by the learners during activities, between activities, or in reflective exercises.
2. Language Issues – linguistic issues presented by learners during the interventions.
3. Thematic Observations – social, interactive, and learning observations made throughout the classes.

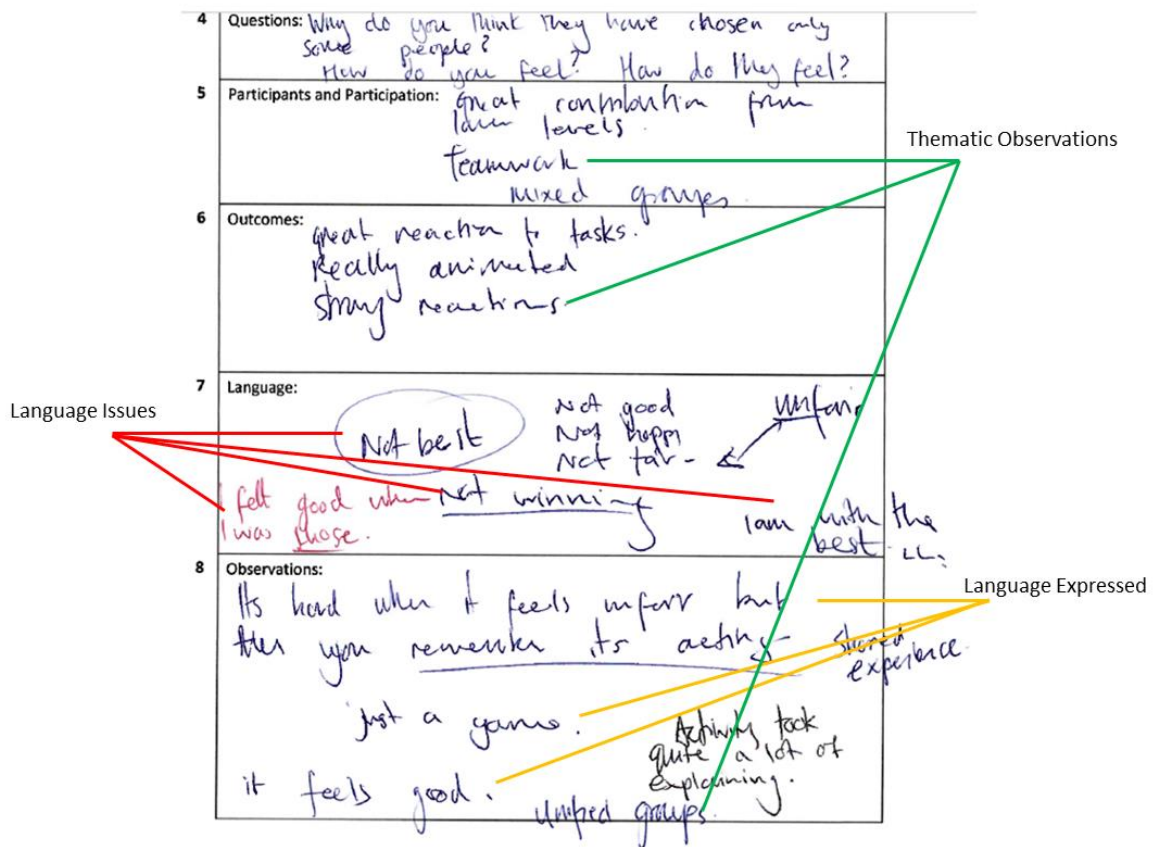
As can be seen in Figure 19 below, observational notes were taken during activities. These notes collected relevant language production, quotes, and language issues in real-time. The notes were then written up in more detail following the classes and later typed to provide clearer logs of the qualitative data. The observational content was then thematically categorised across all lessons for presentation within this chapter.

This chapter will attempt to answer, and provide greater consideration to, both the first research question (i.e. *Will children who have undertaken a drama-based English programme improve their oral fluency more than those children who have not undertaken a drama-based English*

*programme?*), which will be addressed in Section 2, and crucially the third research question (i.e. *Will children who have undertaken a drama-based English programme reveal any other benefits related to confidence, motivation, or social integration in comparison to those children who have not undertaken a drama-based English programme?*), which will be addressed in Section 3. The results are presented using examples of language expression, language issues, and thematic observations. The chapter will also provide a selection of data collected throughout the post-intervention interview stages and the learner feedback forms and will conclude with a summary of the qualitative results.

Within this chapter a number of examples are provided verbatim from the learners and teaching staff. The names throughout this study have all been changed to provide anonymity. Where possible, the anonymised names of the learners have been used. At other times, learners are identified as, for example, Learner A. This is due to examples being taken from very early lessons before I knew the names of all the learners, or from audio recordings where identification is more difficult.

All examples provided are from non-native English speakers, unless otherwise stated. Where possible, I have indicated the native language (NL) of the learners and, at other times, whether the learner is of a specifically low or high level of proficiency.



**Figure 19:** Example of in-class observation notes (Lesson 3 – *The Favourite*), made during the lesson, indicating the main three categories of observation.

## 7.1 Research Question 1

First, specific language observations relating to research question 1 are presented. This section highlights some of the key oral fluency issues faced by the learners and outlines areas of difficulty and improvement.

Close analysis of the learners' in-class language use indicates several significant features. These features are most commonly linked with English grammar; namely pluralisation, preposition and article use, third-person singular and plural, and comparatives. The qualitative analysis also provides evidence of some other features linking to the first research question; most notably the difference in approach to accuracy, marking, and error correction between intervention and control groups.

### 7.1.1 Plurals

A common issue observed across multiple lessons and the CELF-4 test data was that of pluralisation.

During the CELF-4 test, both regular and irregular plurals are assessed. In the pre-testing, most learners scored well on the regular forms but struggled with the irregular.

For example:

Interlocutor: *'Here is one mouse, here are two \_\_\_\_\_'*

Learner: *'Mouses'* [rather than mice]

Interlocutor: *'Here is one child, here are two \_\_\_\_\_'*

Learner: *'Childs'* [rather than children]

This issue was apparent throughout many of the early lessons. Errors occurring included: 'The childs' (lesson 2); "A children" (lesson 2); 'bookses and clotheses' (lesson 6); 'sheeps' (lesson 11); 'mans/womans' (lesson 11); 'mouses' (lesson 11). As this linguistic issue had been recognised in the pre-testing and reoccurred regularly, I decided to build plurals into the lesson plans. For example, lesson 11 was concerned with *Noah's Ark*, so I was able to use the *'animals going in two by two'* as a means to teach, check, drill, and play with the plural form.

Through the in-class activities, learners were able to question their original linguistic ideas, discuss in pairs, and were challenged to select the correct plural form. This led to some positive responses from the learners:

Alicia : *'So it's not mouses?! WOW, why? that's funny.'* (NL- Polish)

Susie : *'I know it, MICE, MICE, MICE!'* (NL – Bengali)

Betty : *'It's silly, but I learnt it'* (NL – French)



In each lesson, correct plural forms were regularly demonstrated, and learner mistakes were corrected through repetition, recasting, and elicitation. In the teaching and concept-checking of plurals, group work and pair checking became an invaluable tool, as will be discussed further in Sections 8.1.1 and 8.1.2 of the Discussion chapter. Over the course of the project, far fewer examples of incorrect plurals were noticeable.

**Table 24:** Number of students giving correct answers to plural questions during the Word Structure assessment.

|  | <b>Pre-Test<br/>Regular<br/>Plurals</b> | <b>Pre-Test<br/>Irregular<br/>Plurals</b> | <b>Post-Test<br/>Regular<br/>Plurals</b> | <b>Post-Test<br/>Irregular<br/>Plurals</b> |
|--|---|---|--|--|
| <b>Control<br/>(N = 24, 13 girls)</b>        | 20                                      | 14  | 20                                       | 17   |
| <b>Experimental K<br/>(N = 26, 16 girls)</b> | 22                                      | 14  | 24                                       | 20   |
| <b>Experimental M<br/>(N = 23, 16 girls)</b> | 20                                      | 12  | 21                                       | 19   |

The numbers in Table 24 represent the students correctly answering questions regarding the morphology of regular and irregular plurals during the pre and post-test Word Structure assessment. As shown above, there was an improvement in plurals across the classes in the post-test assessments. However, within the control group there was no improvement in regular plurals and an improvement of 3 learners in irregular plurals. This is in comparison to an improvement of 2 learners (Group K) and 1 learner (Group M) for regular plurals, and an improvement of 6 learners (Group K) and 7 learners (Group M) within the drama-based intervention group.

### 7.1.2 Word Omission (Prepositions and Articles)

The majority of lower-level learners had issues with word omission. This was most commonly observed in sentences containing prepositions and articles. As it can be seen below, the missing words were often in relation to prepositions of place, direction, or relationship (belonging), and indefinite articles. These mistakes were easily recognised during drama-based activities and were

corrected. The mistakes were less visible in the control group, as they were surrounded by more complex writing errors, or masked by limited expressive language tasks.

Word omission errors during drama-based activities included:

Ben: (miming giving food to customers) *'it is [for] them.'* (NL-Bulgarian)

Ben: *'they go [in]'*

Marta: *'I work [in a] bread shop'* (NL- Romanian)

Freddie: *'I feel like [an] excited man'* (NL- Lithuanian)

As with the plural error correction, repetition, recasting, and elicitation were often used as direct techniques for encouraging the correct form. Where possible, gestural and non-verbal signals were used to demonstrate the missing word or preposition, e.g., *in, out, on, under*. Non-verbal language learning and the use of gesture are analysed in Section 8.1.1.1 of the Discussion chapter. Learners reacted very well to this approach and would regularly revert to the gestures as a means of recall and embodied learning.

The outcomes of the Formulating Sentences assessment are our best indication of improvement with word omission, as words omitted during this test would result in a failed answer. The encouragement of language production within the drama-based workshops, in comparison to the control group which had a more written focus, could be one aspect attributed to the success of the intervention.

Within the control group, learners were given opportunities to talk through their answers and thoughts, but due to the nature of the classes this speaking time was much more limited. Given less opportunity for oral language production, it is harder for a teacher to gauge errors and word omission, and therefore trickier to know when learners require extra support. Awareness of the learners' needs, through greater spoken language exposure, allows more targeted language support, and thus aided those learners in the intervention groups.

### 7.1.3 3rd Person

Issues regarding the third person forms were present throughout the pre-testing assessments for both the experimental and control classes. Most commonly, the mistakes regarded the choice of third-person pronouns, the switching between singular and plural forms, and the agreement between the subject and the verb.

Within the word structure assessment, 36 out of 73 learners had difficulty with reflexive pronouns, mistaking the word 'his-self' for 'himself'. There were also 24 out of 73 learners who made errors with possessive pronouns, incorrectly misidentifying 'yours' for 'his' and 'hers'. These errors were made across the control and experimental groups. There was no noticeable change following the intervention.

The errors were made regularly and noted within the observational diaries (lessons 4, 6, 12). Some examples include:

*'he fly'*

*'she run'*

*'The girls / boys is', 'they is'*: this was a very common error seen repeatedly throughout lessons.

Error correction for grammar rules, such as the 3<sup>rd</sup> person, were best resolved using the whiteboard. When this error occurred a few times, I chose to demonstrate the form on the board, concept check, and build the form into our role-plays and activities. I did not want the lesson to feel overly formal, so did not force the language point too firmly, but would link back to the board when the error arose. The whiteboard was used as a supportive language device, rather than the main tool of the lesson. Learners responded well to error correction and were used to being taught in this manner. A number of learners would comment that they had made the same mistake before. It was apparent

throughout the control and experimental classes that error correction and drilling was a common tool used within the classroom, and learners were happy to acknowledge their mistakes and try and avoid future mistakes.

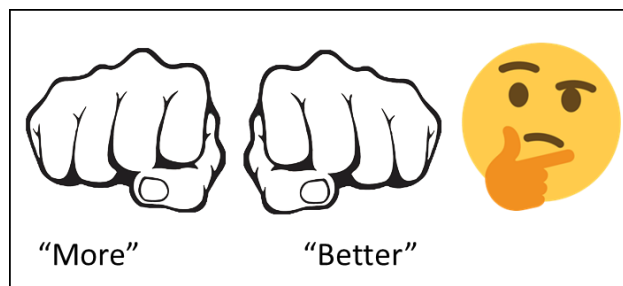
#### 7.1.4 Comparatives

A National Curriculum English language aim for this age group is the use of comparatives and superlatives. Issues regarding this language item were repeatedly observed (lessons 3, 4, 7, 13) with learners struggling with the inclusion of both 'more' and the 'er' comparative morpheme, or 'more' and the superlative form. Some examples include:

*'More better', 'More betterer', 'More best'*

*'More colder'*

I found that error correction for comparatives was best achieved through repetition and gesture/facial expressions. After first explaining that we do not require 'more' with 'er', we would drill the correct form, and when mistakes were made again, I would hold up the 'more' hand, and then the 'er' hand, and put a questioning face. The learners responded well to this and then would produce the correct form. This became a recognisable gesture within the classes, and a quick and fun way to error correct the comparative errors.



**Figure 20:** Gesture and facial expression used to correct comparative form.

In the later lessons and in post-test data, we saw a dramatic improvement in the mistakes made with comparatives. This was especially evident in question 10 and question 11 of the Formulating Sentences assessment. These questions required learners to use the words 'quickly' and 'best', respectively, in a sentence relating to an image. In the pre-testing 28 learners made an error with question 10 and 26 learners an error with question 11. These mistakes fell to 22 learners (question 10) in the post-testing, and only 14 in post-testing question 11. There was a slightly higher rate of improvement within the experimental group, but not a significant difference.

For example,

Pre Test – Amy: 'I run quick.' (Experimental)

Post Test – Amy: 'I was running for the door quickly as I can.' (Experimental)

Pre Test – Frida: 'I got best clothes.' (Control)

Post Test – Frida: 'I am dressed the best.' (Control)

#### 7.1.5 Accuracy, Marking, and Error Correction

During the activities, it became apparent that learners expected and held preconceived ideas of the teacher-learner relationship. This relationship will be examined in detail in Section 3, but the impact was also relevant for RQ1, most notably during moments of error correction.

Within the drama-based intervention classes, learners were encouraged to speak both in-role and as themselves during activities and in moments of reflection. The opportunities for language production were open with regards to linguistic form and style. The goal was to stimulate natural language production and support spontaneous communication. Within these moments, when linguistic errors occurred, I would occasionally use techniques such as repetition and elicitation as means to highlight a specific language issue, but my objective was primarily to keep the conversation moving and provide further opportunities to listen and experience the language used correctly through tasks and interactions, without explicit correction.

Within the control group classes, and also in the classes I had observed prior to the intervention, error correction and a drive towards accuracy was a strong component within the lesson. In all lessons, which were primarily undertaken at the learners' tables, activities were undertaken on paper using a pencil. During each activity, the teacher, classroom assistant, or I, would be monitoring writing tasks and would correct, in red pen, as we circulated. The errors marked in red pen would then require learners to copy the correct form.

Opportunities were given for explicit correction, metalinguistic feedback, recasting, and clarification, and on occasion, if a problem was seen repeatedly within the class, corrections would be demonstrated on the board and then concept checked. Learners had become very accustomed to this approach to error correction and were conscious that their work was being monitored, so they would expect to have each mistake noted and requiring amendment. Within control group activities it was not uncommon to witness the following exchanges:

(Lesson 2)

Learner: *Julius Caesar ride to town.*

Teacher: *When did this happen?*

Learner: *Today.*

Teacher: *Now? Or earlier? In the past?*

Learner: *Yes, before.*

Teacher: *Julius Caesar ride to town? Julius Caesar ride to town?*

Learner: *Julius Caesar rode to town.*

Teacher: *Correct.*

(Lesson 3)

Learner: *The childs are playing on the swing.*

Teacher: *The childs are playing? How many children are there?*

Learner: *There are three children.*

Teacher: *Can you see your mistake? There are three...?*

Learner: *There are three childs... children. There are three children playing on the swing.*

Teacher: *Good. One child. Two, three, four children.*

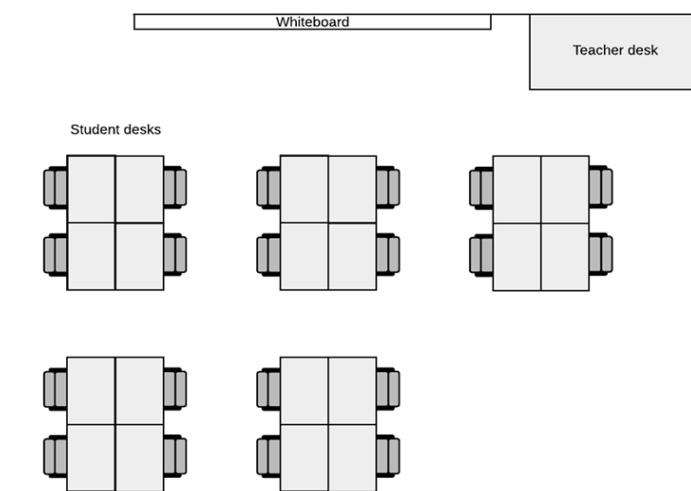
Accuracy and error correction in relation to the grammar points mentioned in this section and the different strategies used both in the drama intervention and the control group will be discussed further and analysed in situational and theoretical context in Section 8.1 of the Discussion chapter.

## 7.2 Research Question 3

Whilst the observational diaries were a useful tool in specifically targeting oral fluency considerations within the classes (RQ1), their main purpose was to focus on more social and holistic observations to be able to answer RQ3. By logging exact quotes from the learners (alongside the teachers, teaching assistants, and my observations), some key themes emerged. The key themes concerned the approach to learning (Sections 7.2.1 and 7.2.2), the learner's response (Sections 7.2.3, 7.2.4, and 7.2.5), learning and action (Sections 7.2.5 and 7.2.7), and the comparison with the control group (Sections 7.2.8 and 7.2.9).

### 7.2.1 Change from the normal

To begin, I want to document some of the comments made in the first drama-based intervention lesson, as I believe it highlights a key observation made by the learners and indicates the tonal response of the group. I was aware, from pre-intervention observations, that the normal classroom layout and use of space were kept to traditional islands of tables format (Figure 21), and that lessons were routinely organised and ran to a strict schedule.



**Figure 21:** Traditional islands of tables layout within the classroom.

In the first intervention lesson, I had reorganised the room to create a much larger space in front of the whiteboard and invited the learners to gather around, as I arrived in character (Roman town crier) to hear the news. This punctuation of 'the normal' was met with a variety of responses, including:

Pascal: *'We don't need to sit at the table? YES!'* (NL – Lithuanian)

Instantly, this change in tone and the realisation that something unusual was about to occur shifted the mood for the subsequent activities and lessons. From my first arrival in class, as I was speaking in character, it was invaluable to document the responses of the learners. I had a teaching assistant help me log learner responses in the first lesson.



Pascal: *'This guy is crazy silly.'* (NL – Lithuanian)

Listening to how the learners interacted in the response to the action was also useful, as it provided opportunities for learner-learner language exchanges, removed from the teacher-learner perspective:

JJ : *'Are you a real Roman man?'* (NL – Lithuanian)

Greg: *'Nah, he is an actor man.'* (NL-English)

JJ: *'What?'*

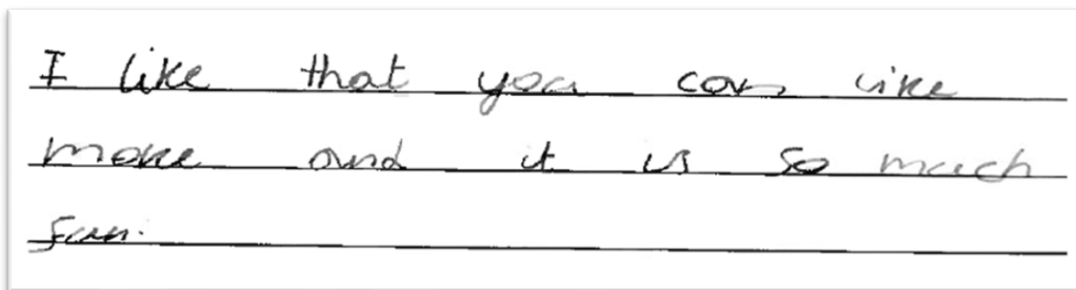
Greg: *'He's not real. He's acting.'*

The learners had all met me during the pre-testing and introduction stages prior to the lessons, and yet by arriving in character the whole situation felt elevated and a different mood had been established. During the first lesson, the tasks were created to purely invite listening, gestures, and to work with some basic words from the story. The tasks were basic but useful as a means of evaluating the group and introducing some of the drama-based skills toolkit. The reaction to simple Total Physical Response actions, and asking the learners to reflect on their feelings, senses, and thoughts (all imagined from the scenes), was very positive, as it can be seen from the comments provided in class and the written feedback:

Learner A: *'This is JUST fun.'*

Learner B: *'We get to do anything? Anything? This is crazy, they will think this is crazy! FUN!'*

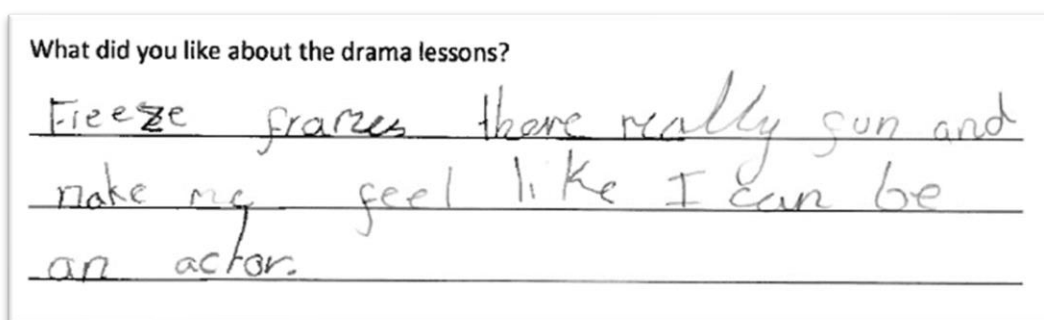
Learner C: *'Better than work.'*



I like that you can like  
move and it is so much  
fun.

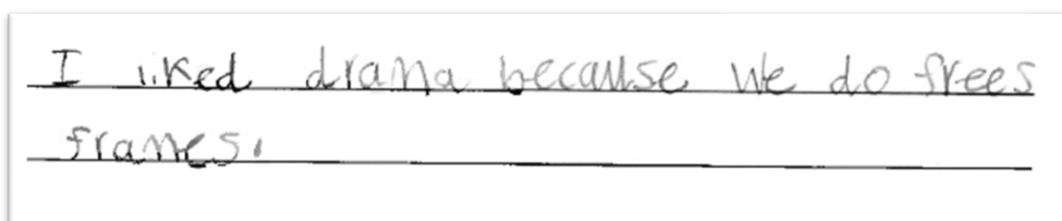
**Figure 22:** Learner feedback from Julie following the drama interventions: 'I like that you can like move and it is so much fun.' (NL-Russian)

Positive feedback was received even for simple drama-based activities. Learners especially responded well to freeze frames and the creation of tableaux:



What did you like about the drama lessons?  
Freeze frames, there really fun and  
make me feel like I can be  
an actor.

**Figure 23:** Learner feedback from Kylie following the drama interventions: 'Freeze frames, there really fun and make me feel like I can be an actor.' (NL-Lithuanian)



I liked drama because we do freeze  
frames.

**Figure 24:** Learner feedback from Gale following the drama interventions: 'I liked drama because we do freeze frames.' (NL-Bulgarian)

Further discussion regarding the change to normal classroom procedure, the use of space, and learner reactions to new pedagogical approaches are discussed in Section 8.1.2.2 in the following chapter. The Discussion will build on the topics mentioned above using concepts and frameworks

outlined by Davies (1990), Stinson and Freebody (2006), Neelands (2010), Belliveau and Kim (2013); Greenfader (2014), and others.

### 7.2.2 Topics

The response to a teacher in character, the change in the use of space, and being asked for their opinions both in and out of role, made the intervention lessons feel like a break from the normal routine of the classroom. This change was also evident in the learners' responses to the topics taught over the duration of the project. Learners appeared aware that the topics were both being used as a device for learning, but that they also had a wider connection to their lives out of the classroom, as revealed by the responses below. This was especially visible in lesson 12, which discussed climate change in relation to the set text *Noah's Ark*. During this lesson, the learners were challenged with protecting a town from the bursting banks of a river. The problem-solving task was followed by a reflective discussion about the power of water, and why they thought the river levels might be rising:

Betty: *'Climate change is real, that's why it is scary.'* (NL-French)

Kim: *'We must work together for the game and the world.'* (NL-English)

Julie: *'It's strange because it is real and not real.'* (NL-Russian)

May: *'It's so cold at home, but people say it is different and changing.'* (NL-Lithuanian)

Over the course of the project, learners would often personally relate to the activity in class, and as it was part of an English language programme, it was interesting to hear learners discuss the activities and topics in relation to their personal language learning journey. This exchange from lesson 14 highlights the combination of both topic and the attitude towards negotiating another language:

Learner A: 'I think aliens would like to meet us all.'

Learner B: 'I think they might be scared or maybe kill us.'

Learner A: 'No, they will be our friends.'

Learner B: 'Maybe they won't speak English or Lithuanian or anything.'

Learner A: 'Another language? Urgh!'

In their post-intervention feedback, learners would mention the impact that it might have on their language progression and saw drama as a positive influence on their English language proficiency:

How do you think drama can help you learn?  
~~I think~~ drama can help you with  
your language.

**Figure 25:** Learner feedback from Lucy, following the drama interventions: 'I think drama can help you with your language'. (NL-Lithuanian)

How do you think drama can help you learn?  
~~It~~ might help by speaking more English.

**Figure 26:** Learner feedback from Caroline following the drama interventions: 'It might help by speaking more English.' (NL-Lithuanian)

~~I can take a little~~ It makes learning  
fun.

**Figure 27:** Learner feedback from Lucy) following the drama interventions: 'It makes learning fun.' (NL-Lithuanian)

### 7.2.3 Taking Roles

The key observations made during the intervention period were mainly in the analysis of the learners' attitudes and approaches towards the drama-based learning strategies. The most significant areas of interest were learner's desire and ability to work and reflect in role, their change in confidence (Section 7.2.4), and their willingness and capacity to work in collaboration (Section 7.2.5).

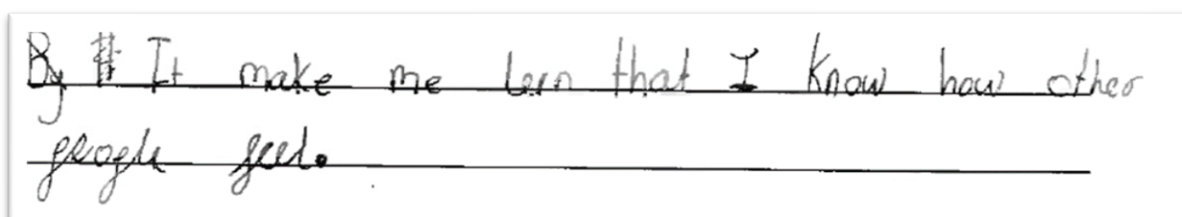
As part of the syllabus for Year 3, feelings and speaking about emotions were targets for English language and literacy. The use of drama-based activities, speaking both in and out of character, appeared to lend themselves well to this learning objective. Lesson 2 (Feelings) was precisely targeted at this language point, but all of the lessons had opportunities for emotional commentary and reflective responses from all of the learners.

By speaking in role, the learners were forthcoming about their opinions and attitudes and it was useful to note their thoughts on playing characters in scenes, and then reflecting on the process afterwards. The language produced showed a consciousness and a consideration for the characters and scenes, but also an honesty in the language used to explain their reactions:

Learner A: *'He feels like me.'*

Alicia: *'I would feel sad, so that's how he must feel.'* (NL-Polish)

Frank: *'It must feel so great for everyone to love you in the town, I am that guy- the champion!'* (NL-Lithuanian)



By # It make me learn that I know how other people feel.

**Figure 28:** Learner feedback from Marta following the drama interventions: *'It make me lern that I know how other people feel.'* (NL-Romanian)



**Figure 29:** Learner feedback from Wendy following the drama interventions: *'I like roplaying with other people, it's really fun to do it other people.'* (NL-Hungarian)

Learners were confident in explaining when an activity might have made them feel uneasy, or when it took them a little more time to gauge their personal response to the action around them. This was evident in lesson 3 (The Favourite) and lesson 2 (Feelings):

Susie: *'It's hard when you feel unfair, but then you remember it's acting.'*

Julie: *'You feel it, but it's all just a game, and then you feel good.'*

Marta: *'It's funny watching everyone acting - look at her fishing.'*

Reflective tasks and responding to being in role waere also a great way of continuing the train of thought, and building a deeper understanding of the characters and text. Often opportunities to build on an activity came from the learners themselves, and conversations were stimulated and navigated with very little assistance needed from the teacher. Learners were quick to add their imagination to tableau and feedback on created environments:

Learner A: *'Can you imagine the smell???'*

Learner B: *'I know it must have been really difficult to look after the animals.'*

Responses like the ones above were able to be discussed with the wider group and natural language production was able to be encouraged, through very little teacher talk.

The role of the learner and of the teacher are discussed in Sections 8.1.1 and 8.1.2 of the following chapter. The Discussion helps support the findings in relation to the sections on identity and role featured in the literature review.

#### 7.2.4 Confidence

Over the course of the project, it was always an underlying consideration whether we would witness a development in the confidence of our learners. Whilst the main focus of this study was the effect of a drama-based pedagogy on oral fluency, the impact on personal development and especially interactive social skills was one on which we hoped the qualitative data might provide information.

In the early stages of the intervention, lower-level English language learners would often repeat answers which had previously been given by their peers or alternatively answer "I don't know" to many of the stimulus questions. This was extremely notable in earlier lessons (e.g., lessons 2 and 3), in which learners were asked about their feelings, both in and out of character.

It is interesting to note that as we observe learner confidence later in the course of the intervention lessons, learners begin to offer more forthright comments of engagement, keenness, and an openness regarding overcoming language issues:

Paula: *'I am going to be super good at this, it's like YouTube.'* (lesson 9) (NL-English)

Bridget: *'I want to be an actor.'* (lesson 10) (NL-Lithuanian)

Stanley: *'When you get it right, you feel great!'* (lesson 13) (NL-Portuguese)

Frank: *'Sometimes it can take me more time, but I am listening.'* (lesson 14) (NL-Lithuanian)

This was further supported by comments made by class teachers and teaching assistants who remarked on 'great changes' in some specific members of the class (Bridget, Paula, Pascal, Frank,

Marta). With regards to Bridget, who was a new Lithuanian-speaking arrival at the school, one teaching assistant (TA) remarked:

*'Honestly, it's like a totally new girl. She wouldn't ever, ever, ever speak before. It's the team thing. She feels part of it'.*

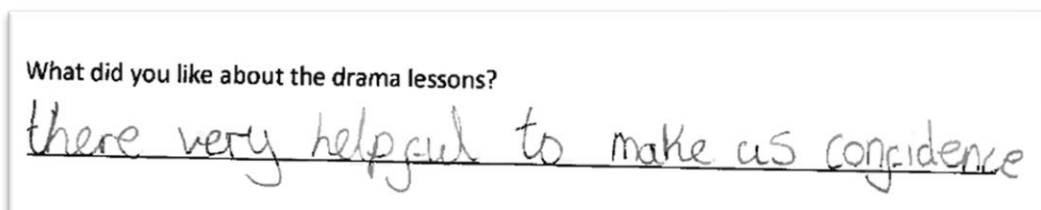
Teacher M also commented about other EAL learners like Paula and Pascal:

*'They can be a handful at times, it's knowing when to talk and when to listen. This gives them the opportunity to speak their mind, but also step back, take it in, breathe, and then go again'.*

Confidence is a broad category for analysis and covers many difference personality traits, which are not always easy to recognise within larger group activities. It was extremely valuable to receive the feedback from the learners and staff members, and many attributed the confidence development to the inclusion of team-tasks, and opportunities for collaboration:

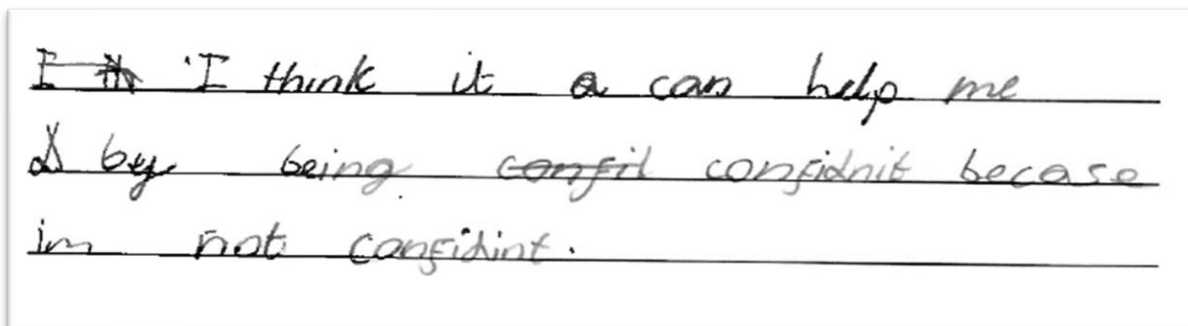
Teacher M: *'They love it. Because one is good at that, and the other at this. They come together and support one another. They see it as a collective challenge, not a 'you're right, you're wrong', that gives them a boost, I think.'*

A number of learners were keen to mention the benefits to their language and social confidence in their post-intervention feedback:



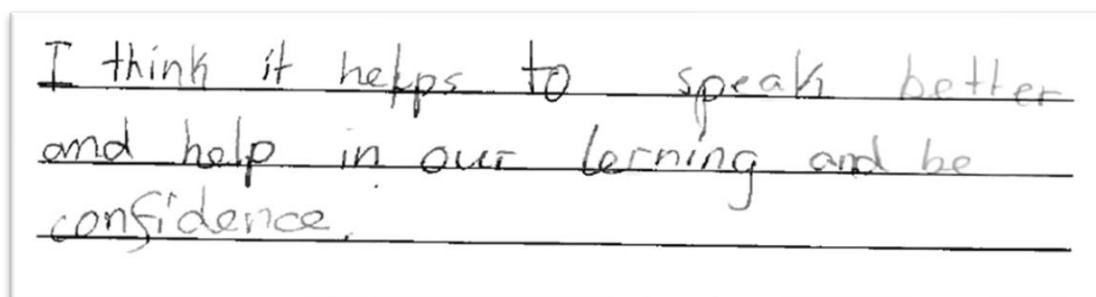
**Figure 30:** Learner feedback from Nora following the drama interventions: *'There very helpful to make us confidence.'* (NL-Bengali)





I think it can help me  
by being confident because  
I'm not confident.

**Figure 31:** Learner feedback from Julie following the drama interventions: 'I think it can be help me by being confident because I'm not confident.' (NL-Russian)



I think it helps to speak better  
and help in our learning and be  
confidence.

**Figure 32:** Learner feedback from Alicia following the drama interventions: 'I think it helps to speak better and help in our learning and be confidence.' (NL-Polish)

### 7.2.5 Teamwork and Collaboration

The noticeable rise in confidence was not solely recognised in individual learners, but more commonly in collective group activities. It was during collaborative team tasks that the majority of observational notes were collected.

The general consensus recognised during the drama-based interventions was that working together, whether that was as a pair, small group, or class, was a change from the normal structure of lessons within the school (see Section 8.1.2.2). Many learners used phrases such as 'game', 'play', and 'team', in response to the tasks that were set:

Learner A: 'If we work as a team, we will win faster and then can win everything.' (lesson 4)

Learner B: 'We must work together for the game, and the world.' (lesson 12)

Whilst the language choices appear competitive, in general, the teamwork style challenges saw learners react in a very positive and supportive manner, with learners combining their talents:

Learner A: *'What do you remember?'*

Learner B: *'Hmmm, it's hard - let's work on it together.'* (lesson 7)

Amy: *'I like thinking together.'* (lesson 8) (NL- Romanian)

Learner A: *'Is it okay if we all speak, then it's easier?'* (lesson 14)

Alicia: *'I am the speaker, they are the camera people, she is the writer - we are the best!'*  
(lesson 14) (NL- Polish)

This sharing of thoughts and skill sets were highly useful in scaffolding learning between higher and lower-level English language learners. The learners were very keen to lend a hand, and support those in their groups that might be struggling. Higher-level language learners were often confident to show their encouragement for others:

Learner A: *'She's new and doesn't really understand, I will show her.'* (lesson 1)

Learner B: *'We speak Lithuanian, so we can just tell her.'* (lesson 7)

Betty: *'I can help her with it.'* (lesson 9) (NL- French)

Learner C: *'She doesn't know the words, but we know what she means, it's like a fast train.'*  
(lesson 7)

On the other hand, lower-level language learners were proud to achieve and succeed at challenges which they would have struggled with before:

Bridget: *'I am with the best, I am the best.'* (lesson 3) (NL- Lithuanian)

Learner A: *'I didn't know what an alien was, but then I copied the others and now I know.'* (lesson 13)

Sometimes, as an observer, it was extremely encouraging to witness the language learning explicitly occurring without any teacher support:

Learner A: *'I'm hot - no, boiling!'*

Learner B: *'What's boiling?'*

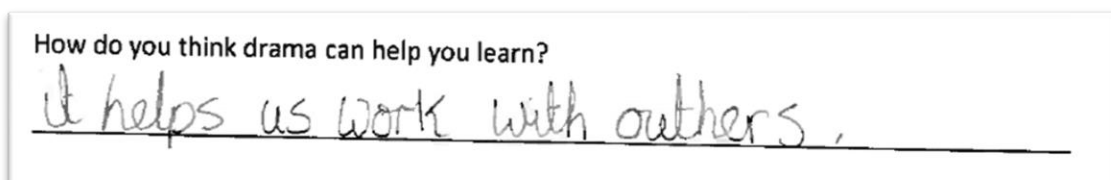
Learner A: *'Like, more than hot - super hot.'*

Learner B: *'Cool, I'm boiling too.'* (lesson 4)

This peer-to-peer support was encouraged in all of the intervention lessons and learners were often very keen to demonstrate their desire to work with others:

Dek: *'Because we have finished we can now help others.'* (lesson 13) (NL- English)

Betty: *'I've helped everyone.'* (lesson 13) (NL- French)



**Figure 33:** Learner feedback from Nora following the drama interventions: *'It helps us work with others.'* (NL – Bengali)

This did not go unnoticed by those they helped, who were grateful and often remarked on their joint successes:

Kylie: *'Oh yeah, It must be, I didn't think that before she said.'* (lesson 8) (NL – Lithuanian)

Dek: *'Mega mind!'* (lesson 7) (NL- English)

Alicia: *'We can all win.'* (lesson 13) (NL- Polish)

Pascal: *'OMG they are so fun, the story was great with them.'* (lesson 10) (NL-Lithuanian)

The balance of working together as teams, whilst not driving competition, along with the promotion of supportive scaffolding, without grandstanding, was not always the easiest task. Some learners were very keen to demonstrate their abilities and enjoyed the platform that some of the drama interventions offered them:

Kim: *'She is loud and I'm quiet, so it's difficult, but you know.'* (lesson 9) (NL- English)

However, when the balance was checked, it offered those who sometimes felt their voice was suppressed an opportunity to be heard:

May: *'He always is loud, it's annoying. But when I have to speak he HAS to listen.'* (lesson 9) (NL-Lithuanian)

The observational data collected on the subjects of confidence (Section 7.3.4) and teamwork (Section 7.3.5) provided a deep insight into the workings of the class and the potential benefits to the learner. This data is analysed in-depth within Sections 8.1.1 and 8.1.2 of the Discussion chapter. Within the chapter, the results presented will be scrutinised in relation to surrounding theoretical frameworks (Byram, 1997; Kao and O'Neill, 1998; Dodson, 2000; Morita, 2000; Even, 2011; Landy and Montgomery, 2012; Piazzoli, 2012).

## 7.2.6 Lesson Example - Problem Solving – Alien Language

As part of my experimental research, I designed and implemented a series of lessons which required problem-solving, peer-to-peer collaboration, English language, and performance skills. In a sequence of lessons, entitled *Alien Language*, I asked learners to undertake a series of tasks. In the first tasks, learners were met by me (in role) as a scientist who had recently uncovered a crashed spaceship. I showed the class images of the wreckage and then presented them with a container found on board.

Within the container was a letter written in an unknown language, made up of symbols. Following a class discussion, we recognised the need to translate the letter to uncover its meaning.

Pairs were then given a copy of the letter and a key which translated some of the symbols into English. Pairs were provided with different keys, only providing half of the alphabet. They were then tasked with decoding the message. Together some words were easier to decode, but other required extended thought as to what the words could be; for example:

Impo□ta■t = important

P●a■et = planet

A●ie■ = alien

Where possible, pairs would decipher the complete letter and, if needed, they would discuss their letter with other pairs to unravel the code.

This activity was then built upon with some boards uncovered from the wreckage. Now the alphabetical code was able to be deciphered, the exercise progressed to grammatical structures. The boards contained the following words: □□◆□ ◉ ◉ □◆◆○ ◉ □● ◉ ■ ◉ ◆◆ ◉ ●● (your, about, me, planet, tell), which the learners then needed to unjumble and make into a sentence. In groups of 4, the learners then had to decide on information they wished to present to the alien empire about their home planet containing five pieces of information. The class teacher then recorded these presentations and a capsule was made in a design lesson to hold the recording disc.

The learners were very excited by the stages of this project. They were fully engaged and worked well together to unravel the codes. By providing only limited information on the key (which could be varied dependent on level), the learners were challenged but through active discussion able to succeed. The creative elements of the task, including presentational performance, made the groups unite as a team, combining their resources and structuring answers together through extended discussion. Following this lesson, many participants requested to keep the alphabet keys and asked

to write secret messages to one another as homework. These messages were then brought to class the next lesson and were deciphered by their classmates.

This lesson was designed as a means of working with spelling and grammar structures in a contextualised environment. It required teamwork and problem solving, whilst also staying within our drama-based created world. I had used this lesson design before and had always been met with excitement and a commitment to the work. Within this study, I had to reverse-engineer the same project and consider how I could best use the lesson plan with the control group. Here, the same materials were supplied, and learners were still encouraged to work in groups with those learners on their tables. Ideas were still shared and language production was encouraged. Answers were fed back to the group, with hands raised and ideas written on the board and discussed. The task ran very smoothly, and learners again commented on their enjoyment of the exercise. Teamwork remained key to the learning objectives of this lesson and it was wonderful to see the learners engage with the text and the challenge of the task.

My takeaway observation from this exercise is that the same materials can be used across teaching styles and within different learning environments. It is interesting to note that many teachers are fearful of having to create specific drama materials for lessons or are unsure how to repurpose previous materials. I have found that quite often it is the alteration of space, and the initial approach to the tasks which can alter the energy and learner willingness to engage with a project, and not necessarily the materials themselves.

### 7.2.7 Memory and Gesture

During the interventions, it was evident from learner comments that the embodiment of language was having an effect on their retention of language items. This was most notable in exercises where learners were required to add gestures or movement to their words, as in lessons 4, 5, 8, and 11, in which students were required to use Total Physical Responses (TPR), both passively and actively.

Learners enjoyed the similarities to games, dancing, and were keen to continue the actions after the lesson was over:

Amy : *'It's fun trying to remember them all [the moves], but we got them all right!'* (lesson 5)

(NL – Romanian)

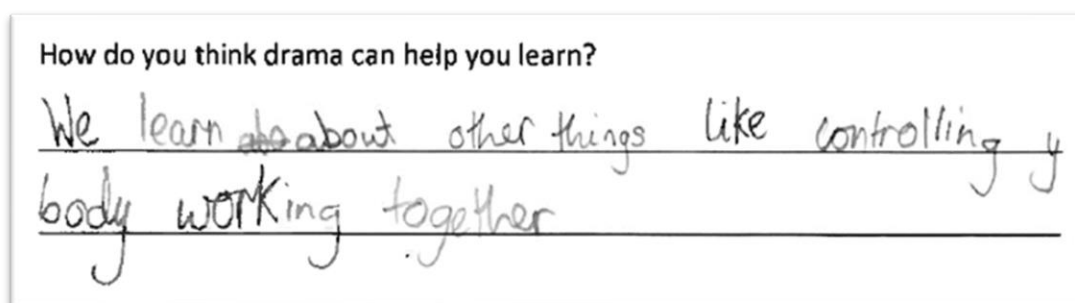
May: *'We are gonna teach our friends outside.'* (lesson 5) (NL- Lithuanian)

Gale: *'Using your words and your hands and your legs.'* (lesson 8) (NL- Bulgarian)

Amy: *'It's hands, then head, then, hands, then down - just like a dance' –'oh, I love dancing.'*

(lesson 8) (NL- Romanian)

Learners also commented on the full-body experience of learning, and working as a team, as shown below in the post-intervention commentary by Tommy:



**Figure 34:** Learner feedback from Tommy following the drama interventions: *'We learn about other things like controlling your body working together.'* (NL- Bengali)

During the *Around the World in 80 Days* intervention lessons, learners were required to retell the story in small groups, and later work with elements of a script from the text. A number of learners were apprehensive about the challenge ahead, as they were struggling both with remembering the story, but also concerned about 'learning' lines or reading aloud. It was encouraging to hear during group-work, rehearsals, and in reflection activities that the learners actually found the drama-based activities aided their ability to remember the text, and own their language production:

Stanley: *'I couldn't remember all the book, but when you act it, you do.'* (lesson 6) (NL –

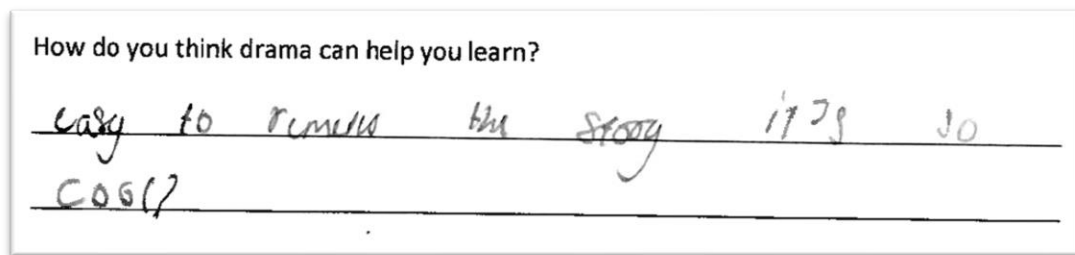
Portuguese)

Pascal: 'I don't remember all the words, so can I use my own?' (lesson 6) (NL – Lithuanian)

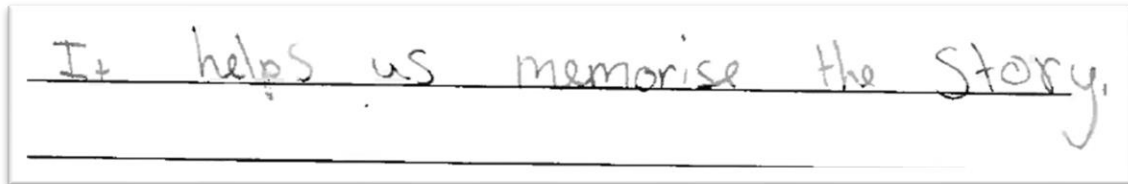
Pascal: 'It's easier to say it than read it.' (lesson 6) (NL- Lithuanian)

Susie: 'I didn't think I would remember the words, but it was quite easy actually.' (lesson 10)  
(NL- Bengali)

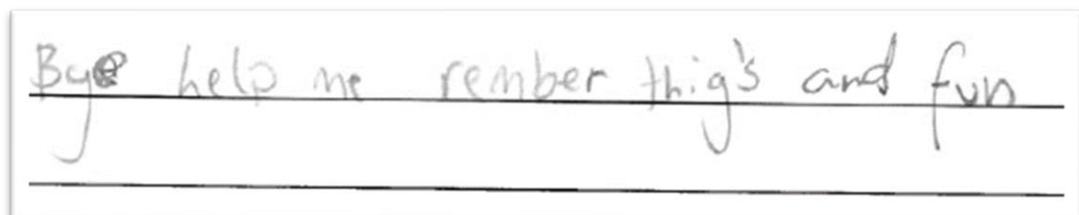
These thoughts were also echoed in some post-intervention feedback received regarding the learners' experience during the project:



**Figure 35:** Learner feedback from Olivia following the drama interventions: 'Easy to remember the story, it's so cool.' (NL – English / Yoruba)



**Figure 36:** Learner feedback from May following the drama interventions: 'It helps us memorise the story.' (NL- Lithuanian)



**Figure 37:** Learner feedback from Freddie following the drama interventions: 'By help me remember things and fun.' (NL- Lithuanian)

The role of memory and gesture will be further analysed in relation to the research questions using principles discussed by a number of key authors (Asher, 1969; Liu, 2002; Gersten & Geva, 2003;



Silverman, 2007; Peregoy and Boyle, 2008; Gullberg and McCafferty's, 2008; Rieg and Paquette, 2009) within Section 8.1.1.1 of the Discussion chapter.

### 7.2.8 Silent Classroom: '*They're Copying*'

During pre-intervention observations and continuing throughout the project, I was very aware that the school, and certain classes in particular, ran quite a strict policy against calling out answers, and restricted talking between learners. It was clear that this was to bring about a sense of order and to allow everyone to listen and be heard. This did also, however, seem to limit and deny many learners the opportunity to share their ideas (outside of whole class discussions).

The desire to create a silent learning environment, not only included vocal volume but also included limited movement. This was interesting to observe as learners were adhered (metaphorically) to their seated positions, at fixed tables, always working with and facing the same classmate throughout the day. One learner pointed out:

Harriet: '*I NEED to hand out the books.*' (NL- English)

As this was her only opportunity to move from her chair and allow for moments of interaction with her peers, it was the highlight of her day.

The silent classroom policy, as practised within standard lessons and also the control group lessons, encouraged students to raise their hands for any question to be answered, or indeed question to be posed. It also created an atmosphere of independent learning, and a strong teacher (teaching) – learner (learning) relationship, in which the roles were firmly fixed.

The independent learning, as mentioned above, was evident in a lot of the 'taught' desk-based lessons. Learners were seen to work as individuals and rarely shared work in pairs or teams. This behaviour was most apparent in the gesture and physical positioning of learners, who often curled

their arm around their work. This protective barrier was often accompanied by exclamations of 'they're copying', an expression which echoed around the room in nearly every lesson.

I have found this observation of relevant importance to this chapter as the silent classroom culture mentioned here was in huge contrast to the drama-based intervention lessons. Within the drama groups, learners were encouraged to ask questions, to share their ideas within pairs, small groups, and the class, and were overall encouraged to express themselves vocally over the course of workshops and lessons. This expressive outpouring of language production, which at times needs control and orchestration, appeared to lend itself to a much wider and confident use of language items. Within the experimental classes, learners were encouraged to work in partnership and share their ideas. Peer to peer talking was promoted and there was a shared understanding that we were learning together as equals. This was very interesting to observe in comparison to the control group, in which learners would often remark that people on their tables were talking, and that peers were 'copying' or 'cheating' when asking for support.

It is also of interest to note, that whilst the drama groups were encouraged to talk within lessons, and had more freedom for oral language production, this did not mean they were not respectful or did not listen when teachers or peers were talking to the class. Indeed, when given moments of quieter activity time, or when watching their peers perform to the group, the drama-based learners were very attentive and supportive learners. Again, in contrast, when the control group were given times to present, discuss, and answer questions, it was often the same few learners who would shout-out, interject, and dominate talking time.

When working in larger groups, which many schoolteachers are now faced with, there will always be characters who will be louder and more dominate. In each class there were a handful of learners who required some more direct teacher guidance and perhaps more attention during specific activities. However, in my observations these learners were better behaved during the drama-based

workshops as they had an outlet to perform and express themselves, compared to the more rigid format of the silent control classroom.

### 7.2.9 Fast Finishers

Another observation made during the control group lessons, which required a lot more teacher talk, demonstration, monitoring, and marking, was the variety of speeds in which learners would finish a task. As the classes were not set by attainment level, the specific learner needs and time taken were vastly wide-ranging. Whilst higher-level learners could often work through a worksheet in minutes, many others would need support and extra teacher attention, and still may not complete it. Indeed, across the lessons, often pieces of work would be left only half done.

Higher-level learners would be given opportunities to either extend their piece of work by writing a longer-form piece, asked to sit silently, or on occasion would be permitted to help their classmates.

Learner A: *'I can go and help the others.'*

Learner B: *'I always have to wait, cause I'm just done.'*

Danielle: *'I've helped everyone.'* (lesson 13)

As mentioned above, leaving one's chair or speaking with a peer was seen as a high honour within the classroom, and a rare moment of interaction, and so fast finishers were rewarded by helping their classmates. This separation between those that had finished their work, and those that were still continuing created a very visible line between the higher achievers and those who were finding tasks more complex.

Throughout my research project observations, it was evident that higher level learners would often get frustrated at activities which they did not feel were stimulating or challenging enough. Higher level learners within the control group classroom would get irritated by their peers, often reacting with disregard for the work, or words against their classmates. This was best resolved through

additional work being supplied, further teacher-time, or through helping their peers (when appropriate). In comparison, the open-ended nature of the drama activities allowed higher- and lower-level learners to work together, making work as challenging and stimulating as best suited them. Within the intervention workshops, learners had the opportunity to build upon previous knowledge, share ideas, and enhance their own learning, with very little additional help needed by the teacher. Through these expressive tasks and projects, learners felt rewarded for their commitment to the tasks and enjoyed working harder towards a shared goal.

#### 7.2.10 Interviews and Feedback

Over the course of the testing and intervention, I was in constant liaison with the teaching team and Head of Year (HoY) within the school environment. At both the pre- and post-testing phase, the data collected was shared with the head of year, and she was able to support the findings gathered. This was useful as a cross-reference for the findings and an acknowledgement that the process was gathering results which the school thought reflected the participant's linguistic abilities.

Between classes, we would use this time as a shared reflection on the nature of the classes, observations, and to field any questions that might arise. The plan had originally been to hold semi-structured interviews following the full intervention, but due to time restrictions and access to the members of staff, this became unfeasible. This was later rearranged, but due to the Covid-19 pandemic, all schools were closed, and the situation became even more complicated. I will therefore present specific notes made by members of the school staff throughout my observational diaries, which include their reflections on the process.

The overriding feedback regarding the drama-based interventions were about the learners' enjoyment. The teachers and teaching assistants would often comment about the behaviour, desire to perform, and how learners were reacting to the activities set before them:

Teacher K: *'They absolutely love it!'*

Teacher K: *'They ask about you every week. When is he coming back?'*

HoY: *'You see them light up.'*

TA: *'They love that it's a change. Something different.'*

Teacher K: *'From the start, they were so responsive, even the quieter ones, were fully involved.'*

I encouraged the staff members to tell me about specific learners who had been having issues with English language and who may have been receiving extra support from the school. Bridget, Marta, and Paula in particular had been learners who often either did not contribute in class or had been flagged as requiring extra help with English.

TA: *'I've been trying for weeks, and then it pops.'* – about Bridget

TA: *'Some of them would never speak normally, but then they just feel relaxed.'*

Teacher K: *'They aren't scared to make mistakes, I think that helps.'*

Teacher K: *'They can just play, using English.'*

Teacher M: *'They can actually tell me the story. This made the writing lesson much easier.'*

HoY: *'It has made a difference.'*

HoY: *'They are making friends too. It's so nice to see them going to the playground together.'*

Over the course of the project, I also wanted to try and understand the teacher's reactions to the approach to work, and whether they had ever considered using drama-based approaches themselves. Teacher K had taken drama at school and was an animated teacher in her general lessons. Teacher M was a stricter teacher, who was considered to be highly professional in his role and held the respect of learners and teachers alike.

Teacher M: *'The thing is, I could never do it.'*

Teacher M: *'I'm their class teacher, so it's a different kind of role.'*

Teacher K: *'It's what maybe I thought teaching would be like. Haha.'*

Teacher K: *'It's hard, because we have to get through stuff, and we don't all have the time to play. I think there is a problem that it is seen as 'playing' because you need to show the paperwork and prove what went on, and how and why. It's about that balance.'*

Following the intervention, I visited the school again to run some extra workshops with the control group. This was both to thank the school, and as a way of sharing some of the successful activities with all of the learners. My time at the school was complete when I was invited to the end of year show, and to meet up with the learners one more time to say my words of thanks and to wish them well with their future studies.

Overall, the experience was felt to be of worth to the year group, and the head of year was keen to offer her thoughts following the final day.

HoY: *"We are all so sad to see you go. We are still mopping up the tears. We will definitely be looking to include some of these ideas. Welcome back at any time."*

### 7.3 Chapter Summary

This chapter presented the qualitative data collected throughout the testing and intervention through observational diaries and unstructured interviews with learners and school staff members. The focus of this chapter concerned specific linguistic issues and observations made during the study, which are presented in relation to the first research question (i.e. *Will children who have undertaken a drama-based English programme improve their oral fluency more than those children who have not undertaken a drama-based English programme?*), and further behavioural, social, and person-centred observations which are presented in relation to the third research question, (i.e. *Will*

*children who have undertaken a drama-based English programme reveal any other benefits related to confidence, motivation, or social integration in comparison to those children who have not undertaken a drama-based English programme?).*

In Section 2, the language errors were itemised, and evidence of the mistakes presented in terms of observational examples. These language features were namely: pluralisation, prepositions and articles, third-person forms, and comparatives. The examples were presented in context and, where possible, it was shown how errors were corrected during the intervention.

In Section 3, the observational diaries are used as an essential tool in understanding the project's impact in terms of learner experience. The section uses verbatim examples from the learners as a medium to framing benefits related to confidence, motivation, and social integration. The section is broken into smaller sub-sections which present specific examples regarding the change in learning style, working in role, building confidence, working with others, and specific pedagogic devices. The examples are presented in context with supporting information regarding the learner. The results presented within this section show support for the drama-based intervention, and present specific examples of the intervention's benefit to learner experience.

Section 4 presents a selection of verbatim extracts from unstructured interviews with teachers, teaching assistants, and the head of year. These interviews were conducted between and after lessons and were a useful supporting commentary alongside the in-class observational diaries. The feedback from members of staff was encouraging and demonstrates a positive judgment on the drama-based intervention. The comments supplied also acknowledges some teacher apprehension towards the teaching style and thoughts concerning further implementation of drama-based learning.

Overall, the feedback, interviews, and observational diaries reveal the intervention project to have been a success, and one which was supported by both the school staff and students. The views of the learners are presented through verbatim extracts and show an overwhelming excitement and

enjoyment for the teaching approach. The results presented within this chapter are very encouraging, especially when considered in combination with the quantitative results presented in the previous chapter.

The qualitative results and analysis support the hypothesis that drama techniques and pedagogical approaches can help improve the development of English language oral fluency in KS2 primary school EAL learners, and furthermore, reveal benefits in terms of confidence, motivation, and social interaction. The following chapter will explain these results further and discuss the potential reasons and implications of these findings.



# CHAPTER EIGHT

## 8 DISCUSSION

This chapter will discuss both the quantitative and qualitative findings presented in the previous results chapters. It will consider the results in terms of cause and implication. The chapter is split into sections relating to the research questions posed, pedagogic strategies and outcomes relating to these questions, and the extent to which the outcomes align with previous research in this field. Each section will discuss the findings in terms of both quantitative and qualitative results, as the research questions are best answered in terms of a combination of statistical data and observational documentation. Therefore, the chapter will move through each research question whilst thematically discussing possible reasons for these outcomes.

This thesis considered KS2 EAL learners' oral fluency improvement through drama-based pedagogical approaches. Three main research questions outlined areas for attention within the study, they were:

*RQ1. Will children who have undertaken a drama-based English programme improve their oral fluency more than those children who have not undertaken a drama-based English programme?*

*RQ2. Will children who have undertaken a drama-based English programme perform better in their National Curriculum Grammar examination than those children who have not undertaken a drama-based English programme?*

*RQ3. Will children who have undertaken a drama-based English programme reveal any other benefits related to confidence, motivation, or social integration in comparison to those children who have not undertaken a drama-based English programme?*

Over the course of one academic year, 2 terms were allocated to English teaching interventions and the remaining time to pre and post testing. Overall, when data from post-testing was measured

against that of the pre-testing, we can conclude that, whilst there were oral fluency improvements across both groups (experimental and control), the experimental group revealed a significant improvement in comparison with the control group in the areas of Expressive Vocabulary, Formulating Sentences, and Word Structure (for one of the experimental groups). Therefore, in answer to RQ1, it was shown that learners who have undertaken a drama-based English programme do improve their oral fluency more than those children who have not undertaken a drama-based English programme.

In reference to RQ2, the National Curriculum Grammar test results did not reveal any significant difference between the experimental or control groups. Both groups presented an expected academic improvement trajectory with no significant differences between them.

Whilst RQ1 and RQ2 are based primarily on the statistical data gathered through formal assessment, RQ3 is supported by observational documentation and interviews. The qualitative data collected demonstrates a positive support for the development of confidence, motivation, and social interaction in those children undertaking the drama-based English programme. Through observational diary analysis, it appears that the drama-based English programme had the most significant impact on the learners in terms of teamwork (collaboration and scaffolding), memory, and shift in learning style. The qualitative data collected can help with the understanding and discussion of all three research questions. Within this chapter, the social and behavioural impact, as questioned in RQ3, will be discussed alongside the other two research questions, as their effects are seen as directly contributing to the other outcomes.

As we work through this chapter, it is important to recognise that none of the improvements or outcomes can be attributed to one specific characteristic or pedagogical approach. The results are based on carefully combined techniques within drama environments created to allow the learner to construct knowledge both individually and in collaboration with others. The sections of this chapter should be considered cumulative and not in isolation. The results, skills, and areas of interest have

been collected and assessed as part of a holistic endeavour to support and develop oral fluency skills in English language, and the wider social and communicative impacts associated with language education.

## 8.1 Oral Fluency

The first research question related to oral fluency sought to assess the learner's improvement across three main assessments: Expressive Vocabulary, Formulating Sentences, and Word Structure. A combination of quantitative assessment data alongside qualitative observations yielded a number of interesting results warranting further discussion.

### 8.1.1 Expressive Vocabulary

The data reveals that the use of drama techniques had a significant effect on KS2 primary school EAL learner's improvement in Expressive Vocabulary. The analysis of the 54 questions posed to the learners show a mean improvement of 11.4 within the experimental group and of 5.1 within the control group.

The experimental drama-based workshops and the control group classes all had identical language and lesson objectives for each lesson. The same vocabulary and structure were targeted, and the pre- and post-tests assessed the same language, so the only difference was the method employed; whilst worksheets and tasks within the control group lessons may have had more explicit target language at times, drama lessons had a more free-form nature. For example, the control group may be searching for specific animal words within a wordsearch or text, whilst the experimental group would be eliciting their own animal words through improvisation.

Overall, the greater improvement of expressive vocabulary within the drama-based experimental group can be attributed to higher exposure to and more frequent use of language items through oral

production. However, based upon the research gathered for the literature review, combined with the observational data gathered during the experiment.

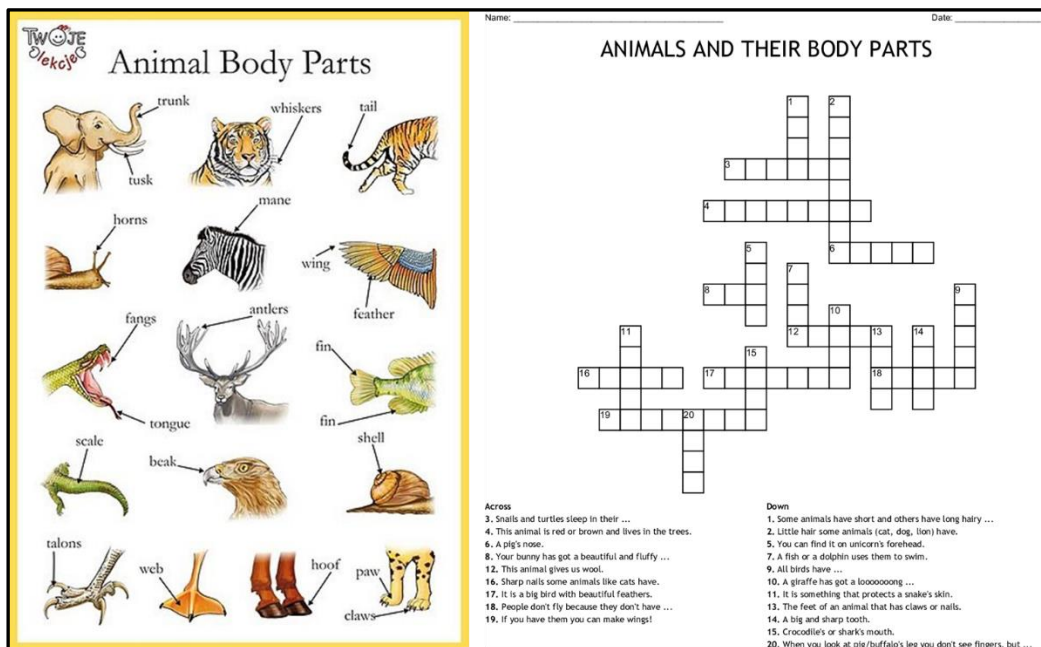
#### 8.1.1.1 Gesture

Reasons for the increased expressive vocabulary within the experimental group, with higher improvement scores than the control group could, in part, be linked to the emphasis on gesture and non-verbal language learning. During the drama-based workshops, gesture was used as a teaching technique (demonstration), enforcement (repetition), comprehension checking and presentation (expressive). Learners would regularly see and hear vocabulary items presented in tandem with a gesture or physical representation and these items would be drilled regularly across lessons. Language items would become embodied and twinned with the gesture until the item was fully memorised and free for use in fluent natural speech.

As indicated in the literature review, “gesture, especially when working with younger participants, benefits both language comprehension and memory in language learners” (Gersten & Geva, 2003; Peregoy & Boyle, 2008; Rieg & Paquette, 2009; Silverman, 2007). Learners were able to consider new vocabulary in an illustrative / three-dimensional / live format, creating fully rounded comprehension of concept and use. As McMaster (1998: 578) states, learners “have concrete examples in multiple modalities to complete their understanding of the lexical item”. This collective multimodal learning of vocabulary solidifies lexical items in context, and allows for experimentation and deeper understanding of that vocabulary.

As Giebert (2014) argues, gestures not only makes lexical items more memorable, but can also help learners to internalise the correct rhythm and intonation. Therefore, the use of gesture here is not simply a tool for language acquisition but also important in oral language production as means of cadence and pronunciation, and thus communicative comprehensibility.

Within the experimental language learning activities, the process of acquiring new vocabulary through the gestural and non-verbal cues enhanced communication and fostered comprehension. One case in point are the lexical items relating to animals (Noah’s Ark). When we compare the different activities, the control group were provided with examples within the story, presentational tools (both on the whiteboard and on the table), and worksheets involving matching activities and crosswords (see Figure 38). The experimental group, while being exposed to the same target language and some of the same materials, embodied and enacted animal parts and showed higher retention of these lexical items.



**Figure 38:** Example of control group worksheets (supplied by the school) regarding animal body parts.



**Figure 39:** Example of experimental group gestures regarding animal body parts. (iStock image)

Learners commented that, through the drama activities, they were able to remember more of the story narratives and explicit literacy focus points (as we saw in Figures 35, 36, and 37 in the Qualitative Data chapter). Apart from explicit learning, there is also evidence that vocabulary learning was implicitly acquired too; although not necessarily aware to the learners at the time. Indeed, learners noted that when interacting with their peers, that they were able to use gestures in place of vocabulary with which they were unfamiliar. Through this process, they were able to acquire new lexical items. Gesture, therefore, was a great tool in communicating with others, and a means to acquire and share knowledge. This builds on Vygotsky's notion of ZPD and scaffolding in which, even within 'make-believe', a child will instinctively create a shared vocabulary, one which can be understood and adhered to by their playmates.

This combination of verbal and non-verbal expression allowed for learners of all levels to use new lexical items or explore known items in varied and imaginative ways.

#### 8.1.1.2 Language in Context

The cumulative nature of process drama and its emphasis on the development of imagined worlds encourages the participants to take ownership of their work. Over time, participants create

identities within these worlds and have freedom to explore actions, language, and their outcomes in specific contexts. It is within these contexts that learners are able to own their language production and feel confident in using new and unfamiliar vocabulary. It is argued that, in contrast to the static nature of traditional classroom environments, these 'performance worlds' or contexts result in both increased and improved oral language production.

As explored within the literature review, placing language in context builds confidence for 'real-world' application (Davies 1990; Belliveau & Kim, 2013). The use of drama-based approaches aids this 'real-world' language production by placing the learner at the centre of their own active language journey. Learner-centred active learning also occurs and occurred within the traditional teaching approach used with the control group, through role-plays and dialogues, but far less frequently than the experimental drama-based lessons.

The experimental group learners found that taking on roles, embodying language, and reflecting on their experiences, they were able to express themselves using new language items and were willing to communicate using language they may have been less confident with outside of the dramatic context. This was especially evident in tasks where learners would need to interact and describe an imagined world. Learners would regularly bring in new lexis and felt reassured that there were no 'wrong answers'. The creativity and spontaneity of a drama-based workshop inspired learners to try new language items and felt free to share words which they may not have been confident about in a traditional class context.

It could be argued that the promotion and encouragement of expressive vocabulary within a drama-based workshop also engaged learners with their emotional memory, and so, as language was weighted through experience and feelings, their recall of language items was more confident and longer lasting. As Del Fattore-Olson (2010) explains, in a performance framework, the learning and the use of grammar and vocabulary is linked to the inner motivations of the characters in the play and thus, the language will be more easily understood, retained, and remembered when necessary.

Learners responded well to entering into role and becoming someone else in imagined environments. The success of these tasks could be attributed to the opportunity to be freed from the self, allowing for new expressions to be played with and in turn new language items to be used. Interestingly, the learner in role may be able to lose some of their previously held inhibitions and take more linguistic risks in character, which might have a knock-on effect of building self-confidence for the learner themselves. It could be argued based upon observation that the learner benefits from the protection of the characterisation and allows for language production without fear of making mistakes. As Giebert (2014: 141) observes, “the role of a fictional persona is often felt by learners to be a kind of protection and they seem to experience less embarrassment about making mistakes”.

The creation of linguistically-rich contexts, in which learners could use language items in an imagined environment stimulated far more varied oral language production, leading to the higher scores achieved within the experimental group. This can also be seen as fundamentally linked to the creation of safe spaces and the opportunity and willingness to take educated risks.

### 8.1.1.3 Safe Space / Making Mistakes / Risk Taking

As mentioned above, the security of performing in role allowed the learners to explore new language items in safe learning contexts. As previously reviewed, Finch (2001), Piazzoli (2011), To el al. (2011) and Gill (2013) have all supported this theory and promote ‘safe spaces’ as a means of reducing anxiety and promoting self-esteem within language learning.

As stated in my methodology I wanted to create a ‘safe space’ for each activity to occur within, and for all the learners to feel confidence and freedom to share and develop through the experience. I felt the best way to encourage a shared understanding of the tasks was to lead through example, and so began activities as ‘teacher-in-role’. Throughout the intervention it was clear that learners



greatly responded to the friendly and inclusive atmosphere created. Within both the drama-based and traditional English classes, language production was promoted without any fear of grammatical or vocabulary issues, allowing for expressive and confident learner interaction and dialogue. However, learners were more apprehensive of making mistakes in the traditional classroom, less confident with self-expression, and more rigid in their approaches to class discussion and interactions.

The control group classes were designed to be fun, engaging, and have the same linguistic items at their core as the drama-based workshops. However, even with the same lesson objectives, it was interesting to see how the space itself (formation of tables and chairs etc.) restricted learner willingness to take opportunities and fully engage with the materials. As discussed in the literature review, many drama practitioners and theorists argue that drama is unmatched in its ability to provide a safe space for expression and an environment that encourages confident risk-taking (Finch (2001); Piazzoli, 2011; To et al. 2011; Gill, 2013). Both the control and experimental groups had specific target language items built into the lessons, however the continuous use of the language in context being used in the drama classes led learners to use the lexical items themselves with much more confidence and appropriacy. The experimental group took many more opportunities to explore the target language and relied far less on the teacher for acknowledgement. Indeed, as Pietro (1987) asserts, students who are naturally less talkative are often more inclined to join in the debate / dialogue when they do not feel dominated by a teacher figure. The drama-based workshops, whilst often having a teacher-in-role guide the structure of the lesson, are far more learner-centred and give ownership of language production over to the active learner. This in turn allows for the learners to both take responsibility for their language production, but also learn far more from interchanges with their 'teaching' peers.

The traditional classroom setting, as prescribed by the school and experienced by many of us in the communicative language teaching world, relied on error correction as part of the learning process.

Learners were encouraged to finish written exercises and then present their answers to a partner, group, and then teacher. Errors through oral language production were also corrected through repetition, recasting, and elicitation and then drilled as a class (when required). Interestingly, whilst error correction was not explicitly part of the drama-based workshops, over time it was noticeable that learners would often self-correct or correct their peers. This was often done in a supportive and encouraging manner and seen as beneficial to the entire group. There was a sense of linguistic camaraderie when everyone learned together as a group rather than simply being a group of individual learners.

Through the pre-testing, it became clear that the learners were all at a very similar level going into the intervention. Through the intervention process and in analysis of the post-test data, the improvement was categorical that the drama-based workshops had significantly improved the expressive vocabulary of the learners. This is more evident in the willingness of the learners to guess and attempt an answer rather than staying silent or saying, "I don't know". Learners from the experimental group were not always correct in their guesses, indeed sometimes making rather odd mistakes, but overall, their attempts reaped rewards and their guesses saw them achieve the correct or at least comprehensible answers.

The willingness to make educated guesses and the acknowledgement that the attempt to answer a question holds value is a key factor in the improvement of Expressive Vocabulary and Formulating Sentences tasks within the testing. It could be interpreted through the data analysis that learners responded exceedingly well to the drama-based workshops and that feeling comfortable and confident within their surroundings aids oral fluency.

Language learning, whether it is one's mother tongue or an additional language, is facilitated by comfort, confidence, self-esteem, motivation, and perceived competence. Similarly, un-willingness to communicate and apprehension or fear of language learning are directly associated with the opposite: anxiety, low-self-esteem, and perceived incompetence (McCroskey, 1984). As soon as a

learner feels comfortable communicating in the target language, much of the other factors connected with positive and successful language acquisition come into play. Situations in which learners feel confident to take risks and secure to explore language with their peers can demonstrate higher levels of linguistic success. For example, in one lesson in which we mimed vocabulary explored within a set text, one learner commented:

‘Sir, I didn’t know what ‘alien’ was but I copied other people and now I know. It is like a monster from another planet. Is that right? I know what it is in Lithuanian. Is that right?’

Even in an activity where language was not explored vocally, learners were able to take risks based upon physical actions, which in turn informed their learning. After this activity, learners were able to add new vocabulary to their word-bank dictionaries, and in later lessons the target language would be explored through different tasks.

Comfort and confidence within a learning environment is, in part, due to the tasks, organisation, and the specific teacher leading the sessions, but it is also of paramount importance that learners are encouraged to work together. Throughout the project and review, it became apparent that peer to peer collaborative learning had an impact on learner’s oral fluency.

#### 8.1.1.4 Confidence and Collaboration

As the literature review demonstrated, interaction, collaboration, and cooperation have all been shown to support language learning, especially in areas such as vocabulary development, reading and comprehension. All three concepts maximise peer to peer learning, which in turn fully support Vygotsky’s ideas of social constructivism and the benefits of learning within a sharing inclusive community. Peer to peer language learning promotes the taking of intelligent risks, with supportive error correction being provided by other learners, as well as teaching staff. For example, within one scripted dialogue activity, a student commented:

“She is new here, she doesn’t know how to read. I can help her and I then I can be the teacher. She can help me with something else. She’s funny. I like working with her.”

Collaborative learning creates natural interactive environments in which peers collectively share their opinions, desires, and knowledge to form shared decisions. Linguistically, this collective use of expressive language promotes a communal vocabulary which is owned by the class, and encourages learners to contribute further and celebrate their evolving vocabulary. Learners are able to scaffold one another's language learning, allowing for the exploration of more complex concepts and within a supportive learning environment.

The qualitative data gathered from the learner comments and observations showed that there was evidenced joy and passion for working in collaboration. Whether as pairs, groups, or as a whole class, learners expressed enjoyment for the dynamic, meaningful, educational, and team-building nature of interactive working approaches. Building on the socio-cultural theories of Vygotsky (as previously discussed), learner interaction promotes language acquisition through the interplay and exchange of ideas and the sharing of knowledge. It is undeniable that this collaborative approach to learning was at the core of the drama-based workshops, and in turn influenced the oral fluency improvement of the learners.

Whilst the control group classes included elements of pair and group checking, with ideas being discussed as a class and reflective opinions shared, the interactivity was used far more as a concept-checking tool and a means to move between activities. In comparison, the drama-based tasks promoted learning as a social activity with active collaboration and agency. The drama workshops saw learners design and build their own frameworks for learning, thereby becoming active agents in their interactions.

The role of the 'teacher' or 'facilitator' within the drama-based intervention was far more that of a guide who had specific targets and learning objectives, but, at the same time allowed the learners to navigate their own journey to reach these points. For example, within lesson 8 – The Ritual – I was aware we would discuss morning rituals and what we do when we wake up. We would relate this to our knowledge of other rituals and cultures around the world (as part of the main curriculum) and

then the learners would, in groups, design their own morning ritual and teach it to the group. As a facilitator, I had three main activities planned. The decision to let the learners decide how to get there resulted in far more expansive and creative language production than if the teacher had demonstrated and ‘taught’ the entire lesson.

Learners reacted well to working in pairs and small groups, taking roles, and negotiating concepts with one another. All of the learners were willing to take part and, with very little teacher talk required, everyone was supportive and felt included in creative contribution and decision-making. In comparison, the control group (working with the same language items and lesson objective) used the target vocabulary to share their morning rituals, discuss their thoughts on other rituals around the world, and then wrote original morning routines in pairs. Whilst the target language was still achieved, it was evident in later lessons that it had neither been explored or retained to the same extent than in the drama-based groups.

Throughout all the drama activities, learners were encouraged to respond and work in collaboration with their classmates and also to reflect on the process of working together. The atmosphere created within all of the classes was one of learning, sharing, and reflection, with all activities utilising genuine English language input and output. Learners responded well to using language in-role, within pair and group interactions, and in reflection. Qualitative observation and comments supported the use of collaborative learning approaches, with learners commenting on learning new words and phrases from their peers and remarking on the opportunity to improving their speaking skills through interaction with classmates:

Amy: *‘I like thinking together.’* (lesson 8)

Learner A: *‘Is it okay if we all speak, then it’s easier?’* (lesson 14)

Learner B: *‘She’s new and doesn’t really understand, I will show her.’* (lesson 1)

Learner C: *'She doesn't know the words, but we know what she means, it's like a fast train.'*

(lesson 7)

The collaborative peer-to-peer learning occurring in the drama-based workshops had a noticeable impact on the development of expressive vocabulary within the experimental groups. This was evident in the quantitative data outcomes and classroom observations. The target vocabulary was consistently seen in use throughout numerous lessons in exchanges between learners, and learners and staff. The target language was also present within the control groups but at a far lower frequency and with less oral language production.

The use of collaborative learning develops an inherent sense of communicative competence; in as much as, through interaction, those taking part are having to listen and understand what their peer is saying and interpret the ideas which are being expressed. This deciphering and comprehension, followed by reaction and interaction, led to higher levels of oral fluency, as we were hoping to achieve through this study. It can be argued that, whilst accuracy was not the main target of the activities, as learners were using language in partnerships and groups, they were using language items to be understood, and so they were making educated choices within their language selection. This peer-to-peer language building could also therefore be seen to help build grammar structures and improve pronunciation, as the learner wishes to be understood by their peers.

Across all of the classes, but most visibly within the drama-based workshops, the learners were collaborating and interacting with their peers, teachers, and teaching assistants. Language production occurred throughout the full class, and related to set texts, language in role, reactions, and reflections. The classes relied on language items being used for instruction, problem-solving, framing opinions, and 'real-world' dialogues and discussions. This wide-ranging vocabulary was used regularly and oral language production was promoted as much as possible. It is clear that through

increased oral language production, as present in the drama workshops, the learners reacted well to increased opportunities for peer-to-peer talk, creative language production, and a sharing of language items and ideas. This enjoyment of activity, embodiment of language, and opportunities for collaborative learning all led to a retention of new vocabulary and confidence with new language items, promoting a greater improvement within the Expressive Vocabulary assessment.

#### 8.1.1.5 Lesson Example: Upscaling Language

As a key curriculum idea, I was informed of the classes' need to upscale their language and to become used to using synonyms and the thesaurus as a tool. Learners began by improvising a dialogue between Noah and his wife, explaining why he needed to build an ark. Some pairs were then selected to present in front of the class. Based on these improvisations, I created a short script for the following lesson. The script was basic in its vocabulary choice, but had scope for movement, and gaps which needed filling. In pairs and small groups, provided with thesauruses, learners were then asked to upscale the script and to add their own flourishes and personality. The learners were familiar with upscaling from their normal English classes but had not applied it to scripted dialogue before.

As the learners worked on their scripts, class teachers, teaching assistants, and I offered support. The learners worked on their written scripts and later performed in front of their classmates. The learners took the creative opportunity to collaborate, working to each other's strengths and follow a project through from conception to production.

During this task, collaboration is essential; learners are having to put forward their ideas, ask questions, provide synonyms, and rehearse their short scene. There is a common goal shared by the pairing, to academically achieve and to entertain. In restructuring dialogic exchanges, learners are replicating real conversational language, which includes many permeations of simple and complex vocabulary (Madinabeitia, 2007). The exercise also required a relationship between the performer and spectator; as Pica outlines the performed interaction needs to achieve its intended 'message

comprehensibility, by drawing students' attention to relationships of [language] form, meaning, and function' (2002: 5). So, whilst the language is upscaled and new words are added, the scene must still make sense and be followed by the audience.

During this activity, it was interesting to witness the collaborative language choices made to upscaling the scenes. One benefit of the tasks was to see the selected new vocabulary used in subsequent lessons and gradually built into the learner's future written work and conversation. Learners responded well to these tasks as the linguistic decisions were being made by themselves, and they were being rewarded for creative language decision-making in context.

### 8.1.2 Formulating Sentences

The quantitative data collected proves that the use of drama-based pedagogical techniques results in significant improvement on KS2 primary school EAL learner's Formulating Sentences. Across the 48 questions, there was a mean improvement of 9.8 within the experimental group and of 5.7 within the control group. Across the groups we saw a huge variety of answers given, as the assessment task itself is reasonably open-ended. The assessment task challenges the learner to think creatively and spontaneously within the parameters of a given stimuli image and target word.

Improvement between pre-testing and post-testing answers given during the assessment of Formulating Sentences can be seen in the following examples. Issues faced by the learners varied between incorrect use of the target word, non-use of the target word, and no answer given:

Incorrect use of target word

Interlocutor: 'Using the word 'finally, describe this picture.'

Pre-test Alicia: 'She is finally homework.'

Post-test Alicia: 'Finally, I have done my work.'



Non-use of target word

Interlocutor: *'Using the word 'running' describe this picture.'*

Pre-test Lucy: *'I am on a race and you have to run.'*

Post-test Lucy: *'We are running a race. I will win!'*

No answer given

Interlocutor: *'Using the word 'third' describe this picture.'*

Pre-test Pascal: (no answer given)

Post-test Pascal: *'I am third to have some water.'*

The higher rate of improvement shown by the experimental groups could be associated with a number of key pedagogical factors. Building on the qualities discussed earlier in this chapter, the creative and spontaneous language production needed within this assessment could be linked to self-confidence, a change to the normal lesson, and problem solving. These concepts will now be discussed in relation to the assessment outcomes and their impact considered.

#### 8.1.2.1 Self-Confidence

As discussed at length within the literature review, and extensively observed within the qualitative results, confidence has played a significant role within previous research in this field of study, and within the field observations made during this project. It has been widely acknowledged that drama-based activities have a direct impact on motivation, self-esteem, and ultimately confidence.

The nature of the drama-based tasks designed were geared to create meaningful contexts for learning and self-expression. Through lesson design and encouragement, learners were able to shed

their inhibitions and use the target language to convey meaning, opinion, and ideas with confidence. It is through this confidence that learners are able to take risks, as previously discussed, and use new language items to build and explore their own personalities and thoughts.

Kao and O'Neill (1998) claim that this increased confidence with language is due to students speaking time being situated in context, whereby they are free to spontaneously express their ideas without the pressure of accuracy. Working with language in context, as described earlier, is key to learners making spontaneous language decisions and feeling that their chosen words are made comprehensible due to their situation and interactions. These spontaneous language decisions are the main skills tested within the Formulating Sentences assessment. Within the task, learners are challenged to react to a pictorial stimulus (context) and form a reactive (spontaneous) sentence based on their interpretation (role). The characteristics required in this assessment all benefit from a speaker who is relaxed and confident.

Drama-based activities and the creation of imaginary worlds and contexts focus on the fluency and comprehensibility of communication far more than accuracy and correction. This is also true within communicative language teaching classes, but less so within the standardised language and literacy programme promoted in the primary state school system. As Stern (1980) discussed, the key to long-term improvement, greater speech production, and reduced anxiety, is through the removal of shackles, the opportunity for self-initiated communicative learning and, ultimately, when learning becomes enjoyable. It is through this enjoyment and free opportunities for language production that learners become more confident and with confidence comes greater fluency.

Within the Formulating Sentences assessment, learners were challenged to express ideas and react to specific stimuli. This challenge required a creative production of specific lexis and also a correct grammatical form. Grammar had not been the explicit focus of any of the lessons (experimental or control), it had been demonstrated and corrected when appropriate. The control group had seen correct grammatical forms demonstrated in texts, on the whiteboard, spoken, and corrected in their

written work, whilst the experimental group were more subtly corrected through demonstration, spoken correction, and gestures. Given the modest approach to grammar teaching, it was interesting to see the higher rate of improvement within the experimental groups' assessment scores compared to the control group. One major factor within this was the confident use of language within context and the situation of 'self' within the set context.

Evident in the examples, it is interesting to note the participants' self-inclusion into the scene ('I have', 'We are', 'I am'). This was a result far more prevalent within the drama-based intervention groups than with the control group learners. Experimental group learners would insert themselves into the situation when formulating their post-test sentences. This placement could be attributed to the use of language in role, and language use in context which had been used more often during their workshops. As widely observed within the literature review (Wagner, 1998; Stinson & Freebody, 2009; Gill, 2013; Stinson & Piazzoli, 2013) and in the early section of this chapter, increased language fluency occurs when learners are able to confidently situate themselves in role, in a scene, and in a safe environment.

This approach to the confident use of language in context and the notion of the 'self' within a communicative interaction was especially evident in those learners who were initially quieter and generally considered, by the school and through observation, to be more shy. A number of learners who had previously struggled or felt cautious about speaking out loud reacted well, over time, to the drama-based workshops and commented that through being in role they built confidence with English language production. It appeared that through the mask of acting in role, they were able to shed the fear of making mistakes and could use the momentum of the character to increase language production. Reduction in anxiety, coupled with heightened self-confidence and motivation, is inherently linked to feeling comfortable to experiment and less afraid of making mistakes. Whilst the goal is to be understood in the target language (Davies, 1990), this is often kerbed by a preoccupation with accuracy. The literature previously reviewed supports this view demonstrating a

breakdown in inhibitions and a development in confidence, especially in shy learners simply because they have plenty of opportunity for speaking and interacting in a meaningful context without accuracy-driven anxiety (Miccoli, 2003, 2006; Wager et al., 2009).

Interestingly, the benefits of working in role and in context were not limited to quieter and shyer learners. It was noticed that throughout the drama-based workshops, the 'louder' more 'outgoing', and often considered 'trouble-making' learners were interacting better with their peers and were listening more in class. The teachers and teaching assistants commented regularly on the teamwork and supportive aspects of the workshops and how the increased speaking opportunities actually created a more democratic classroom environment. This was especially remarkable in comparison to the control group in which a number of learners, often considered louder or brighter, would try to dominate discussions and speak over their classmates, which often led to more timid learners losing confidence and retracting further.

There was a consensus amongst learners and staff that those lower-level learners and quieter learners built higher levels of confidence, both linguistically and socially, during the drama-based workshops. It was noticeable that friendships were being formed through the interactive drama activities, often spilling into the playground and further bonds being made outside of a formal classroom structure.

Overall, across all of the assessments it was clear that language use in context, language use in role, and promotion of comprehensive fluency over accuracy, had a significant impact on the confidence of the learners. This increased confidence in turn had a direct effect on linguistic risk-taking, self-expressive language production, and natural speech production, all of which impacted upon the increased improvement in the formulation of sentences assessment results.

### 8.1.2.2 Change from the Normal

As demonstrated within the qualitative results chapter, the learners' responses towards new approaches to learning had a direct impact on their enjoyment, motivation, and willingness to learn. Learners, especially of this age group, were highly appreciative of the time being given to their learning and that a teacher was providing different approaches to their learning structure.

Obviously, it is difficult to assess the impact of drama-based pedagogies in relation to more traditional desk-based learning without commenting on the novelty of the approaches being used. It was important within this study that I was to teach all of the lessons, experimental and control, as to not impact on the results through variance of teacher. It was also important that I put the same amount of planning and energy into the control group classes as I would the drama-based experimental lessons. Having been a practising English language teacher (mainly using a CLT model of lesson delivery) and also a drama teacher, I was confident that I could deliver strong lessons across all of the samples. I made sure that I built up strong relationships with all my classes and was sensitive to the needs of all my learners and the lesson objectives.

The control group's reaction to a new teacher coming into their class was supportive and professional. The learners had been introduced to me on earlier occasions and were aware that I would be working with them on their language and literacy programme. My teaching style is slightly more relaxed and informal than the average class teachers, this was met with warmth and we were quick to create a friendly, productive learning environment. Learners were supportive of one another and would share ideas in pairs and with peers at their table. Within discussion activities learners were engaged and would contribute, often using accurate target language. Within the control group, there were definitely some more dominant figures who would finish work early and try to steer conversations, but they were encouraged to support their peers and to use the opportunity to listen and undertake wider reading and fast-finishing exercises. The control group's learners responded well to the course of lessons and the feedback received was all positive.

Within the experimental group, many learners were unfamiliar or had very little experience with drama, especially within a learning context. My arrival in class, following my initial meetings and pre-testing, was in character. Learners responded very well to this process drama teacher-in-role entrance and instantly recognised that lessons would be slightly different to normal. The energy level of this lesson was immediately elevated and each week I was met with enthusiasm and a great willingness to join in. Over the course of the lessons, learners were surprised and excited for opportunities to work with partners and in groups. Learners were passionate to share their work and to demonstrate their collaborative efforts with the class. Learners would share stories, bring props, and generally contribute to the class in a myriad of creative and inclusive ways. Their language production was varied, expressive, and fundamentally fluid. The energy in the class felt playful and each lesson's reflective conversation revealed that the learners had understood the learning objectives of the class and could share what they had learnt.

One major difference between the experimental and control group was the instant reaction and enthusiasm of the experimental group to engage in role-plays. Role-plays were able to be realised in pairs, small groups, or as a whole class (often including the teacher). Within these dynamic language activities, learners enacted imagined situations as they unfolded over time. As Neelands (1997) explains, role-play builds on 'early experiences of imaginative play' (1997: 26) and unites a class in collective imaginings, observing behaviours and reactions to different situations. Within lessons, role-play activities allowed for everyone to be involved, without having to become the centre of attention. As everyone is in role, behaviours become symbolic rather than associated with the performer (learner). As with simulation, the freedom to make mistakes is paramount, moreover, the mask of a character affords role-plays learners a protective shield while taking risk within the scene.

Working with classes of thirty 7 and 8-year-old learners, we often used role-play as a technique for exploring our emotions and how we might interact in various contexts. Within an early lesson on the literacy subject of Julius Caesar, we created a marketplace where different people would go about

their daily routine. Some learners were market-stall holders, whilst others shopped, looked after animals or children, ate and drank, and essentially all learners interacted. This activity worked well as a means of setting up the scene within the story, but its main success was felt in the reflection process, as learners recalled interactions they had, and shared their experiences with the wider group.

The prescribed social setting within a role-play allows learners the freedom to govern their language output without direct analysis or observation.

Across both control and experimental groups, learners remained excited each week and maintained an enthusiasm for our classes. There is a novelty to a new teacher arriving in class, as it breaks up the repetition and formulaic nature of standardised education. It must therefore be acknowledged that the successes of the study are due to the variety of learning style in-built within the project.

### 8.1.2.3 Problem Solving

Within the literature review, it became inherently clear that as part of the collaborative social act that language learning is, problem-solving can be an useful tool and pedagogical strategy for stimulating language production. In a well-planned lesson, learners can be challenged to work with their peers to solve issues (logical, social, emotional) using their shared tools of verbal and non-verbal language and interaction.

As my literature review discussed, researchers (Nyikos & Hashimoto, 1997; Tudge, 1992a) have emphasised how Vygotsky's theory of intersubjectivity and joint problem solving lend themselves perfectly to language learning development:

Individuals come to a task, problem, or conversation with their own subjective ways of making sense of it. If they then discuss their differing viewpoints, shared understanding may be attained

[...] In the course of communication, participants may arrive at some mutually agreed-upon, or intersubjective, understanding (Tudge, 1992a: 1365).

Through collaboration within each person's zone of potential understanding, the knower and the learner may reach intersubjectivity or a shared understanding. Two processes – cognitive apprenticeship and critical thinking – help intersubjectivity to flourish' (Nyikos & Hashimoto, 1997: 508).

When faced with a situation or stimuli, learners were able to engage in meaningful interactions, whether with peers, teachers, or examiners, to construct and convey their thoughts and ideas. Challenging learning activities, whether in a real or fictional context, create social discussions and fundamentally rely on linguistic negotiation and sharing, promoting motivation as they allow learners to work towards a shared goal.

The potential of language learning through problem-solving was also apparent through the simulation activities run within the drama-based lessons. Simulations are a classic form of drama activity which have been included in the educational establishment for many years. The basic form sees life events simulated in such a way that a cast, class or group must make decisions, problem-solve, and demonstrate management of the situation, often within a limited time frame (promoting a sense of tension). Within a simulation it is important to outline rules and materials from the onset and to have complete comprehension of a given task before embarking on it.

Within my own research simulations were used regularly as a means to stimulate complex interactions and promote decision-making within the limits of class time. For example, faced with only thirty minutes, groups must decide on characters (from a given selection), animals, tools, and luxuries that they will take with them onto a new planet. This activity was based on the primary set text Noah's Ark, and built on the concept of climate change which had been running throughout the term. Groups had to work in unison, discuss principal ideas, explore options, and unanimously decide their outcome which would then be presented to the class.



Beneficial to the use of simulations within a language learning environment are their relative safety (Oxford 1997) and freedom to make mistakes without real-world consequences. The simulation outcomes had no 'right' or 'wrong' answers, but the journey through decision making stimulated exciting debate, written language output, presentation skills, as well as independent and collective listening.

Consistent with previous studies (Jarfàs, 2008; Miccoli, 2003; Nyikos & Hashimoto, 1997), the findings of this study revealed that learners were highly encouraged by working together as 'teams' or within pairs or groups. Learners regularly commented on the shared ownership of their learning and how they wanted to try harder to achieve more when working in collaboration with others. This was never more evident than in tasks which with complex yet achievable outcomes. The benefits of problem-solving tasks were also felt across learners of varied levels. Lower-level learners felt supported and encouraged to work as a team, and higher-level learners enjoyed sharing their knowledge and supporting their peers. As Jarfàs (2008: 50) indicates 'when cooperative learning occurs, students get just the input they need from their peers, which truly helps them to achieve, which gives them safety and confidence and a sense of motivation'.

Within the drama-based lessons, learners were challenged to share and composite their knowledge, linguistic and other, to best achieve or solve the problems faced in context. These tasks successfully stimulated new vocabulary, promoted extended speaking activities, and also built confidence in contributing ideas. It is interesting to draw parallel with the control group's achievement on the same or similar tasks taught through different approaches. For example, within lesson 7 (Compare and Contrast – Around the World in 80 Days), learners were challenged to look through images and relate them to parts of the story they had been reading in previous lessons. The images themselves in both experimental and control groups were identical. However, within the control group learners had to match the story to the images and then pair check their results. This was achieved reasonably quickly and without much passion for the matching activity. Within the drama group, learners were

enacting the story, talking in role, explaining what happened, and were able to recall the story sequentially and explain why they enjoyed the scenes. This explosion of energy for a simple warmer task involved considerably more language production but also an on-going interest and desire to explore the text and narrative further.

Problem solving activities were central to the promotion of and desire to use language as a means of conveying and sharing ideas. New lexis was acquired and the learners felt motivated to share their ideas. It was through pedagogical approaches such as this that we witness improvement in the creative and spontaneous language production linked to Formulating Sentences and the wider lexis demonstrated in Expressive Vocabulary assessments.

### 8.1.3 Word Structure / National Curriculum Grammar

The quantitative assessments described above focused primarily on oral expression and creative language production. These two elements of oral fluency are governed far more by organic and instinctual linguistic practices than the following two assessments. Word Structure, as assessed through the CELF-4 battery of tests, and the National Curriculum Grammar assessment, as set by the school, are fundamentally linked to the accurate and learnt language structures of grammar formation and use.

The data collected through these assessments would provide us with information as to whether drama-based teaching approaches or traditional language and literacy teaching would garner higher levels of improvement in these grammar focused tests. Considering the fact that grammar was not an explicit focus of any of the lessons I was teaching, I was intrigued to see whether the promotion of oral language production over mixed production (speaking and writing) would have an impact on the learners' grammar attainment.

The results collected showed no significant difference for the NC Grammar assessment. However, for the Word Structure test, whilst no significant difference was revealed between the control group

and experimental groups as a whole, it is important to acknowledge that when those groups are broken down into their three original groups (Control Group, Experimental Group K, and Experimental Group M), a significant difference was shown for the Experimental Group K, whose mean score rose from 17.6 to 27.2 (out of 32). However, within this assessment, it is also important to note that all groups ended with reasonably high scores for their assessment, and so room for further improvement was unattainable.

The results for the Word Structure assessment alongside the National Curriculum tests are interesting as the majority of the learners all made identical errors. These errors manifested themselves in language use associated with an East-London dialect rather than any overt grammatical errors, for example, 'his-self' rather than 'himself'; 'they gone home' rather than 'they went home' or 'they have gone home'.

As grammar had not been made a focus of this project, I was pleased to see all of the learners, across teaching styles, had made improvements. Also, the reduced exposure to reading and writing within the drama-based activity did not negatively affect these learner's assessment outcomes. I must also acknowledge that the lessons taught as part of this project were only a part of the learners' full curriculum and so the findings may be only partly due to the work associated with this project.

## 8.2 Chapter Summary

This chapter summarised the findings which emerged from the quantitative data collected in combination with the qualitative discoveries. These findings were discussed in relation to previous research in the field and personal observations made throughout the study.

The chapter is broken down into sections considering each of the specific language assessments: Expressive Vocabulary, Formulating Sentences, Word Structure, and National Curriculum Grammar

are used as markers for wider exploratory discussion. Each assessment is reviewed in combination with specific pedagogical references and potential reasons for their outcomes. When appropriate, specific examples of activities or outcomes have been provided to further explain and clarify elements of the discussion.

The Discussion chapter sought to interpret the findings gathered and presented in the previous chapter and relate quantitative and qualitative results to each other. The study demonstrates an improvement in oral language fluency in areas of expressive vocabulary and the formulation of sentences in KS2 pupils receiving drama-based English lessons. Within this chapter, I have drawn links between specific pedagogical methodologies and their subsequent language learning impact and outcomes. These links are based upon research previously undertaken by the literature as well as observations and reflections made during the intervention process.

The chapter, and overall reflection on the study, supports the importance of collaborative learning and the promotion of confidence which was encouraged throughout the drama-based language learning intervention classes. The improvement in assessment scores and the feedback provided following the intervention supports the use of drama within the English language learning classroom. This matches with the results of previous research in this field and shows a continuing support for the ideas put forward by Vygotsky in his social-constructivist model for child development and learning.

Whilst no significant difference was apparent in the grammar-based assessments, this result has not been regarded as a cause for concern. All participants improved in their grammar awareness and demonstrated a learning curve as to be expected at this specific age. Within the Word Structure assessment, one experimental group saw a higher improvement rating above the other groups and so this result was also encouraging for the drama-based intervention, although the scores themselves could not be attributed to any specific pedagogical approach used within the study.

Overall, the discussion chapter continues to highlight the importance in social approaches to language learning. It has used the collected data (quantitative and qualitative), alongside previous literature, to further develop our awareness of how drama-based activities can be used to improve English oral fluency. The discussion focuses primarily on how, through specific teaching practices, we can encourage learners to work together in collaboration, to share their knowledge and skills, and how through embodied and contextualised learning opportunities, confidence can be built, and language proficiency increased.

In the following chapter, I will draw conclusions from this study. I will provide a summary of the study and the results gathered. I will then identify both the strengths and limitations of the research. Subsequently, the chapter will consider the implications of the study in relation to the field in which it is situated and go on to suggest considerations for further research.

## CHAPTER NINE

### 9 CONCLUSIONS

This thesis aimed to explore the extent to which drama-based pedagogies had an impact on Key Stage 2 English as Additional Language learner's oral fluency, as part of an in-school English language and literacy programme of lessons. The experimental study, taking place over the course of one academic year, assessed specific oral language production skills, considered formal school assessment criteria, and also analysed the wider social, behavioural, and personal effects of this learning approach.

The research presented in this thesis hopes to shed light on the burgeoning areas of drama pedagogies in the language learning environment. Process drama, with its collaborative learning through problem-solving and play, has not been widely explored within the EAL or primary school arena. As the literature review shows, there are a number of practitioners working in similar fields, and many are reporting very positive outcomes (Araki-Metcalf, 2001, 2007; Bournot-Trites et al., 2007; Dicks & Blank, 2009; DOL 2006, 2008; Early & Young, 2009; Even, 2008; Giaitzis, 2008; Kao, Hsu, & Carkin, 2001; Kao & O'Neill, 1998; Lauer, 2008; Matthias, 2007; Miccoli, 2003; Ntelioglou, 2011; Piazzoli, 2010, 2011; Ronke, 2005; Rothwell, 2011; Stinson, 2008; Stinson & Freebody, 2006; Stinson & Piazzoli, 2013; To et al., 2011). I hope this study helps contribute to the exciting new approaches in language learning and shows that further research is possible to extend our knowledge.

This chapter presents conclusions drawn from the specific research questions and their implications within the wider English language learning and teaching field. The research question conclusions are followed by a reflective consideration of the limitations of the project and the contribution this research can offer the subject of drama in language learning. The chapter concludes by offering recommendations for future work that might continue this research.

## 9.1 Research Question Conclusions

*RQ1. Will children who have undertaken a drama-based English programme improve their oral fluency more than those children who have not undertaken a drama-based English programme?*

The first question sought to quantify the extent to which those learners undertaking a drama-based English language course of lessons improved in specific oral fluency assessments compared to their traditional English language and literacy programme. The assessments used included Expressive Vocabulary, Formulating Sentences, and Word Structure (all parts of the CELF-4 battery of oral fluency assessments for this age group). The three assessments were delivered as pre and post-tests and garnered useful data regarding the success of the interventions.

The collected data showed us that there was a significant difference in oral fluency improvement through drama-based learning over the control group in three assessments, Expressive Vocabulary and Formulating Sentences, within the Word Structure assessment, there was no significant difference seen between the experimental and control groups, when both experimental groups were analysed together, but there was a significant difference apparent between one of the experimental groups and the other two groups.

Overall, it was clear that the overall oral fluency improvement scores for those learners working with a drama-based approach to English language were significantly higher than those working within a traditional English language programme. The participants in the experimental group demonstrated a wider and more expressive active vocabulary. Their recall for new lexis and their willingness to provide answers to vocabulary-based stimuli was stronger than those in the control group. Within the assessment for spontaneous and creative sentence formation, again reacting to pictorial and

instructive stimuli, the experimental group participants achieved higher rates of improvement than their control group peers.

Given the data, it can be argued that the use of drama skills, activities, tasks, and the promotion of spoken language production, gesture, and working in role, all contributed to this higher achievement level. The extensive use of working in character, the creation of worlds, the collaborative aspects of problem solving and negotiation, and the emphasis given to reflection (all major aspects of process drama) seemingly aided the learners' ability to experiment with language, develop language confidence, and ultimately build their oral language proficiency. This is supported by many of the studies mentioned within the Literature Review and continues to demonstrate the incredible potential drama has in the language learning arena.

The drama-based activities used within this intervention were focused on specific language and learning objectives as agreed within the language and literacy syllabus (this was also true for the control group). As all of the lessons were taught by myself, it can be agreed that it was the approach, and not the content, which contributed to the significant difference in oral language achievement.

Very few quantitative experiments have been used within the field of drama in language learning, and this study is the first to be done within the UK EAL context. The data collected is extremely valuable as it offers a launchpad for future research and a guide for further assessment design and implementation. The statistical data which helps us answer RQ1 demonstrates the specific areas of oral fluency where drama-based learning can help, namely vocabulary and spontaneous communicative language production. It also indicates that whilst it may not have a specific improvement effect on word structure (grammar), it is not detrimental and still supports a natural learning progression.

*RQ2. Will children who have undertaken a drama-based English programme perform better in their National Curriculum Grammar examination than those children who have not undertaken a drama-based English programme?*



The second research question was valuable to test the formal learning objectives governed by the state school system. RQ1 used a battery of clinical tests designed for purely English language oral fluency assessment. It is interesting to note that the UK school system does not test pupils on their English oral fluency, but solely on their writing (spelling and grammar) and reading. Therefore, as a means of gauging the intervention's impact on traditional English language assessment, we elected to include data from the learners' formal school examinations.

The data collected across the drama-based and control group's National Curriculum Grammar written examination did not present any significant differences. All groups (experimental and control) demonstrated similar improvement level, which was as expected for learners of this age.

The results for RQ2 allow us to conclude that there was no intrinsic benefit or disadvantage to those learners undertaking a drama-based or traditional English language and literacy programme.

However, it must be acknowledged that within the one-hour per week sessions run as part of this study, writing was never made a priority, and grammar was rarely the main learning objective.

Writing and grammar were still part of the pupils' normal school routine and taught by their class teachers.

In conclusion to RQ1 and RQ2, we are able to statistically support the significant improvement in EAL learners' oral fluency in two main areas of English language production (Expressive Vocabulary and Formulating Sentences) and are able to show an equal improvement in both orally produced and written grammatical attainment.

*RQ3. Will children who have undertaken a drama-based English programme reveal any other benefits related to confidence, motivation, or social integration in comparison to those children who have not undertaken a drama-based English programme?*

The data extracted for Research questions 2 and 3 provide the firm statistical data which allows us to visibly acknowledge specific areas of improvement within our sample. This data is incredibly valuable as it allows us to shape our understanding of drama's use in assessed English language production. Over the course of this study, it became increasingly apparent that this quantitative data was going to be best supported and understood in concordance with the continual collection of observational and qualitative material.

Throughout the study, diaries, feedback, and notes were gathered as a cumulative source of information. From initial insights into the general teaching style of the school, across interactions with staff members and pupils, through to a much deeper awareness of and rapport with all of the participants and the materials, this data became a major resource in the analysis of this experimental study.

The statistical data shed light on what improvement in oral fluency was made through drama intervention, but the data collected for RQ3 provided us with the potential whys behind this improvement.

As the Qualitative Results and Discussion chapters show, there is a myriad of reasons that could be seen to contribute to the significant levels of improvement through the drama intervention.

However, my personal experience working on this project and my interactions with the participants and staff, led me to conclude that the key elements of RQ3 (confidence, motivation, and social interaction) are the true reasons why the study and the oral fluency outcomes were successful.

Within this conclusion, I would like to mention a few aspects of the study and its findings and consider the attached implications.

The assessment required learners to use their varying language abilities to best communicate ideas to an examiner. For 7- and 8-year-old EAL learners, this type of task can be nerve-wracking and

unsettling. The data demonstrate that learners within the drama-based groups were more confident in their answering of questions, and through this confidence were more willing to answer or try answering. It has been proven across studies (Bournot-Trites et al. 2007; Horwitz, 2001; Kao & O'Neill, 1998; Liu, 2002; Miccoli, 2003; Piazzoli, 2011 and 2013; Stinson & Piazzoli, 2013) that confidence building and the lowering of anxiety, play a key role in the development of oral fluency proficiency and thus promote higher levels of comprehension and expression. The qualitative data collected support these findings with participants and staff commenting on the increased confidence felt by learners across the drama-based intervention and their increased self-belief in their English language abilities.

I believe this increased confidence within the experimental group can be attributed to a number of reasons, namely, risk-taking within a safe space, peer-to-peer collaboration, and an overall sense of enjoyment through shared participation.

Through my initial research, as demonstrated within the literature review, it became increasingly clear that the use of process drama required, at its core, the creation of a safe space. This safe space allowed learners to feel comfortable in their surroundings, free to enact and embody new characters, and to express themselves with confidence. This was noticed to be true across drama activities and especially within the language learning environment (Finch, 2001; Gill, 2013; Lundy et al., 2011; Piazzoli, 2011; Stinson & Freebody, 2006; To el al., 2011). As we observed throughout this study, as learners became more comfortable with me as a facilitator and teacher, more comfortable with their peers, and more comfortable with tasks they were taking part in, they became more confident in themselves and so in turn more confident in their language production. Over the weeks, it was remarkable to witness the change in learners' attitudes toward the language learning and their willingness to take risks with new lexis and more complex language items. Learners became used to my presence as not only teacher, but also in-role, and as a fellow participant. This aided a

freedom toward openly asking questions and to playing along within a make-believe situation. This was most certainly in part down to the creation of a safe environment and its associated effects.

Within the safe space, the increasingly confident learners were encouraged to work more within pairs, teams, and groups. This collaborative learning style directly stimulated language production, as learners were required to interact, decision-make, and ultimately communicate with one another using the target language. Here we see, as discussed within the Literature Review, the embodied Vygotskian approach to learning. Harnessing the shared knowledge within Zones of Proximal Development, we learn from one another, absorbing signals emitted and spontaneously reacting (Byram, 1997; Dodson, 2000; Even, 2011; Morita, 2000). Within this study, the principles of socially constructed learning through shared discoveries and peer-to-peer interaction became evident and manifested themselves in the language production of our learners. The study demonstrates that much of the language learning in the KS2 EAL classroom took place between peers, rather between teacher and learner. Through the creation of safe environments and the design of stimulating and engaging tasks, learners were inspired to develop, own, and explore new language and to take pride in their increased language ability.

Across the study, the feedback gathered was a valuable asset in the analysis and evaluation of the intervention. Both the experimental and control group expressed great delight in the lessons. The reflective diaries and personal stories collected detail a language learning experience of excitement to learn and to share thoughts and ideas. Across all the groups, learners commented on the new approaches to school and how 'doing something different' always made them enjoy their lessons. Ultimately, I consider it imperative to take into account the learners' experience of their learning environment (whether drama-based or more traditional), to encourage their desire to learn and to afford them opportunities to express themselves within that world. This study has shown that the language classroom can benefit from the inclusion of drama-based activities, from the vocabulary acquired, the confidence built, and the sharing of knowledge.

## 9.2 Limitations

With all projects of this nature, hindsight is a fine thing. The limitations of this study were at times unforeseen, some out of our control, and others lessons to be learnt.

Initially, issues concerning the quantitative data collection were mainly centred around the sample size, variety of students, and data regarding the specific language backgrounds of the participants.

As the study took place in only one school, any data collected during this study can therefore only be indicative rather than conclusive. The information gathered can signpost areas of interest that would potentially warrant a further, wider-reaching investigation.

Although a sample size of 73 participants (Experimental= 49, Control =24) is reasonable for a study of this kind, the study would have benefitted from collecting data from a larger group across a wider range of institutions. Being based on one institution means that the data could be skewed by language outcomes unique or characteristic of this school, or schools only in this one area. This is also true of the age group selected for the study. The project set out to focus on KS2 pupils, however, due to logistical requirements, only one year group within this cohort was selected. Future research would benefit from expanding the sample across the whole of KS2 and therefore see if there were varying degrees of efficacy across different ages.

Secondly, numerous presentations at conferences and multiple opportunities to discuss my work with fellow researchers have made me aware of the fact that I should have been more rigorous in my methodological design and approach to my teaching and assessment. As the study related to oral language production and fluency, I should have tried to make sure there was an equal amount of speaking occurring in both the control group and the drama-based intervention. As it could be argued, the increased improvement in oral language production within the drama-based groups can simply be due to the learners having more opportunity to produce spoken English. As indicated in my discussion and qualitative data collected, I do not personally consider this to be the sole reason

for the improved results, , but this could have been an additional factor which required further scrutiny.

In addition to this methodological consideration, I also feel that the study might have benefited from being more intensive. I think that by running the sessions more frequently within each week, or for a shorter period of time but for longer hours, we may have been able to gather a deeper understanding, which could be more directly attributed to the intervention.

Thirdly, a potential limitation within this study is the designer, facilitator, and teacher; me. It could be argued that the results gathered from the study could have been influenced by my rapport with the participants, as over the course of the academic year, those learners were used to my presence, more confident around me, and therefore more willing to speak freely and to use more expressive language. I would argue that if this is a factor within this research, the same is true for the control group and so should not have necessarily skewed the data by a significant amount. It might be interesting moving forward for a separate examiner to gather the pre- and post-data rather than as the same person teaching.

The consideration of myself as a limitation also extends to the concept of researcher bias, as I was both collecting and analysing the data, alongside running the experimental intervention. As much as humanly possible, I remained objective throughout the project. I made sure that I documented all results strictly and carefully, with backup audio recordings, and detailed written accompaniments. The data was also second-checked by a third party, especially in cases of ambiguous answers given. I also made sure I gave the same amount of energy and attention to learners across the three test groups and that I did not present any favouritism towards learners or pedagogical approach. However, as the study concerned the extent to which drama-based pedagogies might improve English language learning, a subject I am passionate about, there is always the possibility of subconsciously favouring my preferred teaching style.

Fourthly, working within the UK school system, I was faced with a sample group of 17 native languages spoken. This was remarkably rich and rewarding with regards to working with young learners and sharing in diverse cultures and personalities. However, this sample group did mean I was unable to analyse the results in terms of specific L1 language learner needs and draw correlations between specific L1s and the impact of drama-based language learning. However, I do consider the study was representative of the UK school system and the challenges faced by EAL teachers in the UK, and so this limitation could also be seen as a strength of this study.

This limitation also extends to the issue we encountered regarding background information, as we were unable to collect detailed data regarding participants' exposure to English outside of the classroom. In future research, I think we should add this to our primary priorities and try to acquire as much information as possible to help contextually ground our study.

Finally, a number of lessons have been learned through the experience of writing this thesis. In preparation with the school, I should have been more forthright in the lesson plan design and precise in my approach to target language items. Over the course of the project, the school made requests for me to teach specific literacy texts, and to focus on some key syllabus aspects. I understand the needs of the school, and the pressure they are under to deliver on areas of their curriculum; however, this did mean I lost out on some directly EAL targeted lessons, for example, some specific vocabulary and grammar elements, which potentially could have produced even further significant data.

### 9.3 Contribution to the Field

Writing this thesis, working within schools, and the feedback gathered across conferences, have made me very confident in this study's original and valuable contribution to the field of drama pedagogies in language education, and especially the EAL landscape within the UK. This study

presents a strong case for the use of drama in the English as an additional language learner classroom and is able to provide both quantitative and qualitative data to support its argument.

In terms of answering the research questions outlined, the study has shown that through drama-based interventions, EAL learners can see a significant improvement within two aspects of their English oral fluency. Drama pedagogies have been shown to increase expressive vocabulary, including recall and new lexis knowledge, which can be attributed to the use of gesture, language use in context, and confidence-building. It also details a significant development in the oral production and formulation of sentences. This important communicative skill demonstrates the learner's ability to think and speak creatively and spontaneously. The increased ability to summon correct grammar structures, accurate lexis, and to think and speak with fluidity and ease shows confidence with language thanks to the skills explored within drama pedagogies.

The study has also contributed to the field in several social and more experiential ways. Firstly, by being the first study of this kind to be undertaken in the UK, it can hopefully open the gates for more research in this area. I hope that the clarity of the data and the supporting considerations will inspire more progressive and creative learning approaches in EAL teaching within our school systems, especially within the primary sector. Secondly, I have liaised with the school featured in this thesis and have it on good authority that drama will be made a stronger fixture within their teaching practices. As more projects like this are implemented in schools, so then can we begin to change educational policy. Thirdly, my experience of working on this project has allowed me to work with some outstanding practitioners, academics, researchers, and learners, and I believe that as we collectively share our knowledge we can begin to embark on new and exciting projects together which will build on the research presented here and lead on to further advances in the field.

At many drama in language education conferences, we discuss the successes (and sometimes failures) of our approaches to language teaching and learning. I am confident that we are driving a



new wave of performative pedagogy in this field and that the more research we can undertake, the greater our power for change.

#### 9.4 Recommendations for Future Research

The work presented in the study represents a number of years' work on a project about which I am deeply passionate. The landscape in which I started this project is now very different due to Brexit and subsequently the Covid-19 pandemic. When I began this project, I had been working as an English language teacher across Asia and Europe, I returned to the UK with my knowledge as a drama practitioner and English language teacher and sought to combine my interest areas as a means to improve English language fluency for those young EAL learners in UK primary schools. Throughout this project, I have become increasingly interested in the ability of drama pedagogies to make dramatic changes within our school systems and the power that the associated communicative and confidence building skills can provide.

I hope to continue my research, working with similar participants and building on the results presented within this study. I have personally found the correlation between confidence, collaborative learning, and increased language ability to be fascinating. I think that further research should focus on the use of drama pedagogies and language learning, with direct analysis of correlating confidence. I hope to develop new assessment criteria in which confidence can be measured alongside English language proficiency.

People working in this field should focus on more projects being supported within our schools. I believe we need to blur the edges between formal language education and the arts, promoting interdisciplinary approaches to learning. This study hopefully highlights the transformative nature of drama as a device for learning and will encourage more language teachers to use the tools of drama within their lessons.

As more research is undertaken on the subject of drama in language education, we have the opportunity to impact on language teacher training and to promote drama-based pedagogies as a primary strategy for lesson delivery. The language learning landscape is changing; through passion, dynamism, and determination, progress is being made and pedagogies transformed.

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## APPENDICES

APPENDIX A  
ENGLISH LANGUAGE  
EXPOSURE QUESTIONNAIRE

### Questionnaire

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Class \_\_\_\_\_

1. What language do you speak at home? \_\_\_\_\_
2. Do you speak any other languages? \_\_\_\_\_
3. Do your family speak English? \_\_\_\_\_

At home how often do you...?

(Tick the box)

|                                     | Everyday | Often | Sometimes | Rarely | Never |
|-------------------------------------|----------|-------|-----------|--------|-------|
| Watch TV in English                 |          |       |           |        |       |
| Watch TV in another language        |          |       |           |        |       |
| Read books in English               |          |       |           |        |       |
| Read books in another language      |          |       |           |        |       |
| Listen to music in English          |          |       |           |        |       |
| Listen to music in another language |          |       |           |        |       |

Where do you speak to people in English?

(Tick the box)

| School | Home | Shops | Friend's House |
|--------|------|-------|----------------|
|        |      |       |                |

**APPENDIX B**  
**LESSON PLANS**

## Drama Lesson Plan Outline

### General Information

|                    |   |
|--------------------|---|
| Title:             | Julius Caesar – Introduction to Character                         |
| Leader:            | Luke Alder  |
| Date:              |   |
| Participants:      | 30 (approx.) Year 3 Pupils  |
| Location:          | North Beckton Primary School                                      |
| Length of session: | 1 Hour  |
| Materials:         | Paper, pens, pencils, slides, portfolios & toga (teacher-in-role) |
| Preparation:       | Prepare space for movement activity. Access to the board.         |

### Aims and Objectives:

This is the first drama lesson and an introduction to the set text. This lesson will primarily be used to create a shared tone, vocabulary and understanding of the methods at play and to create a base for future lessons.

- Create dramatic environment, encourage interaction, listening and speaking.
- Confidence in working together and sharing ideas.
- Stimulate vocabulary and dialogue around subject of character.  
Including: adjectives of feeling and personality, pronouns, relationships, and time.
- Encourage participants to talk about themselves in role. To discuss their feelings when in character and to consider their relationships within a 'make-believe' environment.

### Background:

A class of 30 mixed-ability 7- and 8-year-olds in an inner-city primary school in London. This class have no previous experience with process drama. The drama takes place within the classroom, on rotation between each class within the year. Each session lasts one-hour and is timetabled as part of the English curriculum.

### Reasons for selecting theme:

As part of the English literacy curriculum, Julius Caesar had been selected as the set text to be explored. The school felt that process drama could fit well with the structure, themes, and performative targets set within the National Curriculum. The main themes being explored across this work are that of friendship, jealousy and pride. The school also hoped to develop pupil's collaboration skills and confidence.

During these sessions we were also asked to introduce the play structure to the class.

### **Structure:**

(Each lesson will begin with a short warm-up activity, breathing and locomotive exercises; other games may be used to punctuate activities)

**Pretext:** Present the poster scroll detailing Julius Caesar's return to Rome.

Teacher in role – As the town crier (teacher-in-role) alert the participants to Caesar's return. Describe his triumphs and elicit the adoration felt by the people of Rome.

- Where are we?
- Who is coming to Rome?
- How do you feel? Why?

**Gesture:** In a circle demonstrate a simple 'word and gesture' action. This action is sent around the circle with everyone copying. Key actions will include 'Caesar', 'Soldier', 'Horse', 'Townsperson', 'Strong' and 'Old Person' (Taken from the set text).

Then moving round the space, the facilitator will call a word and the participants must react with the gesture. This can change in pace and rhythm.

**Gesture 2:** Students are asked what they imagine a Roman market to look, smell, sound like. They are asked what type of jobs might people be undertaking? After introducing the task students are asked to meander through the space miming their job. The facilitator counts down until 0 when everyone must freeze. Some participants are kept frozen whilst others are selected to guess the jobs they are doing. The activity is then repeated and the other participants swap and guess the job roles.

### **Reflection**

On the board the facilitator will demonstrate a character profile. The participants will write a few lines describing any aspect of a character (lesson 1 – Julius Caesar). They will write in full sentences and can write about their role, their character, or what they (the participant) thinks about them. These profiles will then be placed inside their portfolios.

### **Target Language**

Reflexive Pronouns

Adjectives of feeling and personality

Describing jobs and relationships



## Drama Lesson Plan Outline

### General Information

|                    |  |
|--------------------|--|
| Title:             | Julius Caesar - Feelings   |
| Leader:            | Luke Alder   |
| Date:              |  |
| Participants:      | 30 (approx.) Year 3 Pupils                                       |
| Location:          | North Beckton Primary School                                     |
| Length of session: | 1 Hour   |
| Materials:         | Paper, pens, pencils, slides, portfolios & hat (teacher-in-role) |
| Preparation:       | Prepare space for movement activity. Access to the board.        |

### Aims and Objectives:

The second lesson will build on the story and characters introduced in the first lesson. During this second lesson students will be encouraged to perform in role, create tableaux and discuss their feelings in character.

This lesson will ask students to work together in collected actions and to respond to each other in character. The work will also culminate in a discussion exercise focusing on speech and thought bubbles.

- Revise characters and situation of story.
- Confidence in working together and sharing ideas.
- Stimulate vocabulary and dialogue around subject of feeling.  
Including: adjectives of feeling and reasons why we feel the way we do. Especially focusing on syllabus concepts of jealous, envy, greed, pride, and power.
- Encourage participants to talk about themselves in role. To discuss their feelings when in character and to consider their relationships within a 'make-believe' environment.
- Encourage students to discuss their assumptions about story and character, leading to discussion.

### Structure:

(Each lesson will begin with a short warm-up activity, breathing and locomotive exercises; other games may be used to punctuate activities)

**Pretext:** Marcus returns on the day of Julius Caesar's return to Rome. Explaining the town's decoration and how we must get ready for his party. How can we prepare. Party hats are distributed ready for the main event.

**Tableau:** The class is split into groups of 5 participants. Each group will be asked to create a still image presenting Caesar's arrival into town. Ask the groups to consider their roles. Who are they? What are they doing when he arrives? What are they thinking / feeling? (5-10 mins)

3 tableaux are created by each group. The first is them in their normal daily roles, the second is anticipating Caesar's arrival, and the third is his arrival.

The tableaux are presented to the whole class with the facilitator entering the picture to elicit ideas from the spectators and to ask the participants for their thoughts behind their tableau.

**Discussion:** Using slides and images of the other key characters in the set text and the participants who they think these people may be? Are they friends of Caesar? Are they good or bad characters? Why do they think this?

(T-I-R) Marcus returns to describe the beginning of the story in brief. They introduce the characters and their relationship to Caesar and their roles at the beginning of the story.

- Were the ideas correct?
- Reflect on the characters and their roles.
- What do you think will happen next?

### **Reflection**

Students are given paper speech and thought bubbles to hold above their heads, in character. Other students are selected to offer ideas of what might be being thought or said. The performing student then selects their own and answer, and why they might think this.

### **Target Language**

Language of celebration.

Expressive language regarding appearance and assumption.

Adjectives of feeling and thoughts.

Writing from the perspective of a character.

## Drama Lesson Plan Outline

### General Information

|                    |  |
|--------------------|--|
| Title:             | Julius Caesar – <i>The Favourites</i>                            |
| Leader:            | Luke Alder   |
| Date:              |  |
| Participants:      | 30 (approx.) Year 3 Pupils                                       |
| Location:          | North Beckton Primary School                                     |
| Length of session: | 1 Hour   |
| Materials:         | Paper, pens, pencils, slides, portfolios & hat (teacher-in-role) |
| Preparation:       | Prepare space for movement activity. Access to the board.        |

### Aims and Objectives:

The third lesson focus primarily on the themes explored within Julius Caesar. Students will discuss and enact ideas of fairness, power, and jealousy. The students will use their own experiences to reflect on the themes of the text and comment on their personal feelings.

Students will comment individually, work in pairs and discuss the themes as a whole group.

Students will be asked embody characters and react in role to other performers, this will also include facial, gestural and total physical responses (TPR).

Students will emotional engage with the story and write about how they imagine characters might feel (LO).

- Revise characters and situation of story.
- Confidence in working together and sharing ideas.
- Stimulate vocabulary and dialogue around subject of feeling.  
Including: adjectives of feeling and reasons why we feel the way we do. Especially focusing on syllabus concepts of jealous, envy, greed, pride, and power.
- Encourage participants to perform in role, reacting to their peers. To discuss their feelings when in character and to consider their relationships within a 'make-believe' environment.
- Encourage students to discuss their assumptions about story and character, leading to discussion.

### Structure:

(Each lesson will begin with a short warm-up activity, breathing and locomotive exercises; other games may be used to punctuate activities)

**Pretext:** Asking all but five participants to sit down an announcement is made.

'These 5 pupils have been selected as 'The Favourites'. The Favourites are to be given extra long breaktimes, sweets, money, and will be given the top grades'. (wait for reactions from the class).

**Discussion:** Elicit from the group how this makes them feel. How does it make The Favourites feel? Ask the participants to comment on why they feel this way, and what they should do about the situation.

(Depending on time) Announce you have made a mistake and it is actually a different five students who are The Favourites, as for how they now feel changing role.

**Experiential Phase:** Organise the group into pairs. A-Bs. The As are to be the bosses. They have all the money, all the power and can tell the Bs (The Servants) what they want them to do.

After distributing the titles ask the students to embody their character, create a full body persona for each.

Now ask the bosses to demand things from their servants (teacher monitoring continuously throughout activity).

Freeze frame. Ask individual bosses what they had requested from their servants.

Freeze Frame. Ask individual servants how they felt about the requests.

Repeat the activity swapping the As (Bosses) and Bs (Servants)

Repeat Freeze Frames and questioning.

**Discussion:** Bring everyone into a circle on the floor. Ask the participants how they feel this activity relates to the story of Julius Caesar. Elicit ideas regarding Brutus and Cassius' feelings towards Julius Caesar, why do they think he should not have the power.

What should they do? Why?

**Reflection:** As part of the required learning objectives (LO) students will write a few lines explaining how they think the characters feel and why. They will then write a few lines explaining what they think Brutus and Cassius should do about the situation.

Teacher monitors ideas and gives support where needed.

### **Target Language**

Expressive language regarding feelings and fairness.

Instructional Language (see syllabus)

Adjectives of feeling and thoughts.

Writing from the perspective of a character and offering advice.

## Process Drama Lesson Plan Outline

### General Information

|                    |   |
|--------------------|---|
| Title:             | Rocks and Fossils Dig                                     |
| Leader:            | Luke Allder   |
| Date:              |   |
| Participants:      | 30 (approx.) Year 3 Pupils                                |
| Location:          | North Beckton Primary School                              |
| Length of session: | 1 Hour  |
| Materials:         | Paper, pens, pencils, map, photos, newspaper & portfolios |
| Preparation:       | Prepare space for movement activity. Access to the board. |

### Aims and Objectives:

- Create dramatic environment, encourage interaction, listening and speaking.
- Confidence in working together and sharing ideas.
- Stimulate vocabulary and dialogue around subject of fossils and archaeology.
- Reflection – writing diary, including archaeology vocabulary.
- 

### Structure:

(Each lesson will begin with a short warm-up activity, breathing and locomotive exercises; other games may be used to punctuate activities)

**Pretext:** Teacher in role – Archaeologist invites all our new archaeologists to the dig site. (Present the area using map)

- It is very hot; how can we stay cool? What do we need to wear?
- Where will we dig our holes?
- How will we dig them?
- What do we need?
- What do we hope to find?

All actions occur through demonstration and repetition. Following linguistic key words.

- Mime dig. What did we find? Show our partners, show the group.
- Who lived here? How long ago? What can we learn?

### Tableau

- Dig together as one big group.
- What do we find? A fossil? Shock!
- Dig, dig dig! Shock! (Rhythm work, chant in a round)
- In smaller groups. I want to see a frozen image of your discovery!
- What did you find? Can we guess?
- Questions from the group

**Discussion questions in small groups (Questions presented on the board and read aloud)**

- Where did it come from?
- Why is it here?
- Is it important?
- Where shall we take it? Home? To the museum? ...

**Improvisation and pair work.**

Teacher in Role.

“Hello, I work here at the British Museum, it is so nice to meet all of you. Are you archaeologists? I have been told you have been digging? Where have you been? Will you come and show me what you have found? I need some new fossils for my collection.”

- What did you find? Where did you find it?
- Do you like it?
- Do you think it should go in the museum? Why?

**Reflection**

Write diary in portfolios about the discovery. Draw pictures.

Digging, finding, fossil, past, dinosaur, animals, emotions, museum, exhibition.

What? When? Where? Who? Why? How?

**Target Language**

Action words (digging, finding, searching, looking, taking, lifting, holding, bringing)

Comparatives (hotter, harder, stronger, bigger, better, smaller, older)

Adjectives describing place and found objects (desert, sand, Egypt, forest, museum, pyramids, land, ground, underground, site)

## Drama Lesson Plan Outline

### General Information

|                    |  |
|--------------------|--|
| Title:             | Instructional Language – <i>The Wizard</i>                       |
| Leader:            | Luke Allder  |
| Date:              |  |
| Participants:      | 30 (approx.) Year 3 Pupils                                       |
| Location:          | North Beckton Primary School                                     |
| Length of session: | 1 Hour   |
| Materials:         | Paper, pens, pencils, slides, portfolios & hat (teacher-in-role) |
| Preparation:       | Prepare space for movement activity. Access to the board.        |

### Aims and Objectives:

The fifth lesson moves from the subject of Julius Caesar and Fossils to Instructional Language (based on the set English syllabus).

Students will work with movement and language to give and follow instructions.

Students will work creatively in groups to embody characters, design spells and create gestures in role.

Students will use TPR to remember key verbs and to remember actions and words in set sequences.

Students will consider the order of actions and how instructional language is formed.

- Stimulate vocabulary and dialogue around subject of magic and spells.
- Within a make-believe environment, students will create characters and embody them throughout physical and verbal tasks.
- Encourage students to think creatively and stimulate their imaginations.

### Structure:

(Each lesson will begin with a short warm-up activity, breathing and locomotive exercises; other games may be used to punctuate activities)

**Pretext:** Marcus the Magnificent (Teacher-in-Role – Wizard) arrives in the class and informs the participants that they are in his laboratory. Walking around the space describe some of the sights, sounds and smells. Then into a circle ask if any of the junior wizards and witches spotted anything else within the laboratory. (no wrong answers – stimulate as much vocab as possible).



**Experiential Phase (Games):** Based on Neelands' WW1 game 'Lifeboats/Captain's Coming'.

The group participate in training by following instructions where they have to respond instantly to various commands:

- 'Bubble Bubble' - Stir the cauldron
- 'Abracadabra' – wave you wand
- 'Prepare' – chop the ingredients
- 'Find them' – hunt for the ingredients
- 'The library' – read
- 'Cackle' – wizards and witches laugh

The game reveals the importance of listening and remembering the cue lines. The game can repeat and promote a playful rhythmic environment.

**Initiation Phase:** T-i-R calls all his junior witches and wizards into a circle. Organise the group into smaller groups of threes. 'You must look around the laboratory for some ingredients for me. We are going to make a spell which will turn your teacher into a toad, but I have forgotten what we need. I have my cauldron here and I have some eyeballs, and elephants' ears, and snowflakes, but I need some more items. You must look together to find them and in 2 minutes bring them back to me. Work together to see what you can find'.

**Groups (3s) Experiential Phase:** Students explore the space in character, talking with their peers. Begin a countdown after 1 min, 30 seconds, 10 seconds.

Back to the circle as the groups what they have brought to the cauldron.

Share in responses to the objects found.

Now ask the groups to think of a gesture (as we had before) for when you place the objects in the cauldron. They have 2 minutes.

Again, around the space elicit the objects with the movement. Everyone must copy around the circle.

Circle drill again to double check comprehension.

**Group (whole) Experiential Phase:** Now as we work our magic, we must get the order correct. Call out the object names and everyone copies the movement.

The order was incorrect as their teacher is not yet a toad.

Again, changing the order. Repeat.

**Writing / Reflection:** Writing the objects on the board, we will go through the pre-prepared instruction sheet provided. This is the recipe for *Turn your Teacher into a Toad*. Students will add the ingredients to the recipe and add instructions and draw diagrams to support their ideas. (LO) I can follow a recipe and put instructional language in the correct order.

#### **Target Language**

Instructional Language (see syllabus)

Verbs of movement.

Describing what you can see, hear, smell, touch.

Imaginative and magical language.

## Drama Lesson Plan Outline

### General Information

|                    |   |
|--------------------|---|
| Title:             | Around the World in 80 Days                               |
| Leader:            | Luke Allder   |
| Date:              |   |
| Participants:      | 30 (approx.) Year 3 Pupils                                |
| Location:          | North Beckton Primary School                              |
| Length of session: | 1 Hour  |
| Materials:         | Text (Around the World in 80 Days)                        |
| Preparation:       | Prepare space for movement activity. Access to the board. |

**Aims and Objectives:** Students have been working on the text with their class teacher. This is the first drama lesson back after the term break.

- Students will be encouraged to re-tell the story they have been reading.
- Working in groups, students will be required to put the story in their own words and reflect on the narrative.
- The story will be re-told in the simple past tense.
- Students will work in small groups to negotiate and agree on the order of events and how best to tell their story, selecting key moments and characters.
- Students will be encouraged to speak in role as characters from the story, and also to reflect as themselves on the action.

### Structure:

(Each lesson will begin with a short warm-up activity, breathing and locomotive exercises; other games may be used to punctuate activities)

### Pretext:

After introductions I shall inquire as to what new story the students are reading. Their thoughts and feelings. After briefly discussing the book (which they have all read in previous lessons this week), I will present five images accompanied by a couple of lines of text from the story.

**Action:**

The participants will be split into groups (approx. 5 people in each), and asked to discuss the image and where it occurs in the story. Questions for the groups:

- What is happening?
- When does it happen? What happens before? What happens after?
- Who is there? How do they feel?
- Why does it happen?

Facilitator and teachers monitor groups and assist in answering the set questions.

As a combined group we then feedback the stories from the pictures and answer the questions.

Discussion of the narrative, feelings and thoughts associated with the images.

We then need to put the pictures in the correct order.

As a physicalising of this task we run through the images and the members of each group must get up and re-enact the picture.

**Reflection:**

Students will be asked to recall the story throughout the lesson and asked to reflect on the reading they had previously done.

As part of the continuous reflection throughout the lesson, students will be asked to comment on how easy / difficult it was to remember the story, and why?

**Target Language**

Past tense grammar structures.

Events in order.

Character and action descriptions.

## Drama Lesson Plan Outline

### General Information

|                    |   |
|--------------------|---|
| Title:             | Compare and Contrast                                      |
| Leader:            | Luke Alder  |
| Date:              |   |
| Participants:      | 30 (approx.) Year 3 Pupils                                |
| Location:          | North Beckton Primary School                              |
| Length of session: | 1 Hour  |
| Materials:         | Text (Around the World in 80 Days)                        |
| Preparation:       | Prepare space for movement activity. Access to the board. |

**Aims and Objectives:** This lesson will focus on the target language of comparison and contrast. Based upon the set text of *Around the World in 80 days* (as previously read, studied, and discussed), students will be encouraged to hypothesise ideas based on visual clues, enact ideas, share thoughts and feelings, and reflect upon their findings.

Working in groups, students will:

- React to stimuli, and negotiate ideas.
- Discuss, using target vocabulary, the differences between two images.
- Embody and talk about images based on their personal reactions.

### Structure:

(Each lesson will begin with a short warm-up activity, breathing and locomotive exercises; other games may be used to punctuate activities)

**Pretext:** Students will be asked to recall the places Phileas Fogg visits within the story of *AtWi80D*; (UK, France, India, Singapore, China, Japan, USA).

### Action:

Images of each country will be presented on the whiteboard. Students will be asked within their groups to match the country to the image. They will need to negotiate and explain their answers to their classmates.

Each group will then be presented with two images from the countries. They will have to compare and contrast the countries and decide which country they would prefer to live in and why (Monitoring and questioning to occur throughout the activity).

After groups have selected their country they will be asked to present a freeze frame image of that country. They can represent people, place, objects, customs, food, activities. This fits within the National Curriculum syllabus for countries, weather, foods and celebrations around the world.

Students in other groups will then be asked to guess which country they think it is, and support their guess with a reason. Performing groups will then reveal their choice and explain why they chose it, using comparative language.

### **Reflection:**

Reflection will occur throughout the tasks and also summarised at the end of the activity. All students must be given opportunities to speak within groups, one to one, and to the whole class; this will be monitored by the facilitator throughout.

### **Target Language**

- Language of comparison
- Physical attributes of locations
- Guessing
- Feelings and attitudes
- Vocab: Countries, weather, foods and celebrations around the world.

## Drama Lesson Plan Outline

### General Information

|                    |   |
|--------------------|---|
| Title:             | The Ritual  |
| Leader:            | Luke Allder   |
| Date:              |   |
| Participants:      | 30 (approx.) Year 3 Pupils                                |
| Location:          | North Beckton Primary School                              |
| Length of session: | 2 Hour (Two lessons)                                      |
| Materials:         | Text (Around the World in 80 Days), Jigsaws               |
| Preparation:       | Prepare space for movement activity. Access to the board. |

**Aims and Objectives:** This creativity-centred lesson will focus on the visual stimuli of countries as we had previously used in the 'Compare and Contrast' lesson. Within this lesson students will be required to discuss their personal morning routines (get out of bed, brush your teeth, eat breakfast, get dressed) and the morning routines they think might occur in other cultures / countries (prayer, feeding animals, collecting water). They will then design, in groups, a new morning ritual which will include 3 actions (gestures); these actions will then be taught to their classmates.

Working in groups, students will:

- Discuss and negotiates through peer to peer exchange (in task and reflection)
- Share ideas
- Creatively design, enact, demonstrate, and teach their ritual
- Develop their communal decision making skills
- Develop their presentation skills

### Structure:

(Each lesson will begin with a short warm-up activity, breathing and locomotive exercises; other games may be used to punctuate activities)

**Pretext:** Images of someone waking up in the morning, getting dressed, brushing, their teeth, having a shower, and eating breakfast were presented to the class. Students are asked to discuss what was happening in each picture, and what time of the day they related to.

**Action:**

Each group will then be given a jigsaw (24 pieces) presenting the image of a new country (Egypt, Australia, Kenya, China, and Russia).

In small groups, students have to piece together their jigsaws, recognise the location (discuss) and share ideas on what morning rituals in these countries might be like, and why. Are they different? Why might they be / not be?

Students are encouraged to share their own morning experiences, and any awareness of rituals in other cultures.

Over the course of two lessons, the students then have to discuss, design, and rehearse their own new morning ritual. The morning ritual will comprise of three actions / gestures. (The jigsaw countries are not essentially linked to their morning ritual, but they are a useful stimuli if required).

Whilst groups are deciding, the facilitator will circulate and monitor, fielding any questions and inspiring thoughts where required.

These rituals are then demonstrated and taught to the rest of the class. This was achieved through total physical response (TPR), and drilling. The whole class then drills the rituals, and then (if time permits) a game of remembering the rituals can follow.

**Reflection:**

Students are given a number of moments to reflect on the previous lesson, their own personal morning rituals, their consideration for other cultures, and their response to the creativity task.

Following the main task, students will be asked for their thoughts and feelings as to which rituals they liked / didn't like, and why, which were difficult, which were silly etc.

**Target Language**

- Routines (order of events, activities in past, continuous and future forms)
- Language of comparison
- Modals (we should, we could, we can...)

## Drama Lesson Plan Outline

### General Information

|                    |   |
|--------------------|---|
| Title:             | The Play  |
| Leader:            | Luke Allder   |
| Date:              |   |
| Participants:      | 30 (approx.) Year 3 Pupils                                |
| Location:          | North Beckton Primary School                              |
| Length of session: | 1 Hour  |
| Materials:         | Text (Around the World in 80 Days)                        |
| Preparation:       | Prepare space for movement activity. Access to the board. |

### Aims and Objectives:

The school asked if we could work on a script based lesson.

This lesson focuses on reading silently, aloud, and together in pairs and small groups.

Students will focus on short extracts of dialogue, highlighting difficult words and phrases, and then speak their lines in short scenes. These scenes will first be as rehearsal and later presented to the group.

The main objectives of this lesson are reading and speaking aloud; and teamwork.

Students will also be required to comment on their experience and discuss their classmates' performances.

### Structure:

(Each lesson will begin with a short warm-up activity, breathing and locomotive exercises; other games may be used to punctuate activities)

### Pretext:

Students had been made aware of scripts and the form they take in a previous lesson with their class teacher.

Students were also very comfortable with the plot and characters within the story of Around the World in 80 Days, as they had been studying the text for 5 weeks.



**Action:**

Groups were pre-designed by myself and the class teacher.

Each group was provided with a short script telling a key scene from the story.

Roles were to be allocated by the teacher, as a means of speeding up the action process, and to avoid arguments or confusion. Each piece had a narrator (or two), who would be generally have more complex language, and would be able to read their parts.

The two scenes selected were The Arrest and The Final Scene.

Students were informed they should first read their parts and ask any questions regarding difficult words and phrases. Teacher, teaching assistants, and facilitators would circulate offering support.

After 15 minutes students would be encouraged to find a space and rehearse their scenes. We encouraged speaking clearly, and to work together as team mates.

Students were asked to use props and furniture where necessary.

The scenes were then acting out in front of the class. After each performance there were opportunities for questions and answers, and comments on how it felt to perform.

**Reflection:**

Students were asked to comment on their process, their feelings towards the rehearsal and acting activity, and their peers work.

**Target Language:**

- Reading (silently and aloud).
- Language items were all selected from the set text.
- Language items were to be delivered in character and context.
- Working with dialogue.
- Reflective language of experience.

## Drama Lesson Plan Outline

### General Information

|                    |   |
|--------------------|---|
| Title:             | High Alert  |
| Leader:            | Luke Allder   |
| Date:              |   |
| Participants:      | 30 (approx.) Year 3 Pupils                                |
| Location:          | North Beckton Primary School                              |
| Length of session: | 1 Hour  |
| Materials:         | Text (Noah's Ark)   |
| Preparation:       | Prepare space for movement activity. Access to the board. |

### Aims and Objectives:

Plural forms (regular and irregular)

Based on observations made during the pre-testing process, and from information provided by the class teachers, we have made plural forms the main focus for this lesson.

Learners will practise using the correct plural forms. Learners will select correct forms from written and spoken cues. Learners will use the correct plural forms in relation to the set text.

Learners will act out the 'two by two' scene from the set text, and discuss their characters within group discussion.

### Structure:

(Each lesson will begin with a short warm-up activity, breathing and locomotive exercises; other games may be used to punctuate activities)

### Pretext:

Teacher will demonstrate freeze frame of an animal on the *ding* of a bell.

3 examples given. Learners will pair check and guess the animal demonstrated. Lion, elephant, snake.

Learners will move around the space and then freeze as their animal on the *ding* of the bell.

Classmates are challenged to recognise the animals selected.

If / when two or more learners choose the same animal they are grouped together. Indicate the plural of the animal. 'We have 2/3/4/ (insert animal name).' Indicate that we call this a plural.

Discuss plurals in terms of the set text.

**Action:**

The class is placed into pairs (Lower level language learners with higher level, where possible).

I will present two animals on the board, with two different spellings (one correct and one incorrect form). In pairs discuss the form and choose to go to the left side of the classroom or the right, based upon the correct spelling.

| e.g. | LEFT         | RIGHT      |
|------|--------------|------------|
| 2    | Cats         | Cat        |
| 2    | Sheep        | Sheeps     |
| 2    | Mouses       | Mice       |
| 2    | Crocodileses | Crocodiles |

This action can be repeated if needed. Answer checking with groups. Explain the irregular and regular form. Error correcting elicited from the class.

Teacher then in role as Noah (hat).

"I have been told the rain is coming and there will be a mighty flood, I must build an ark and take two of every animal on board."

With their partners each pair must decide which animals they wish to be and to come aboard the ark. A corridor is made for the animals to enter down. All of the classmates will champion their peers and guess the animals, using the correct plural form.

"We can only have two of each animal, so you must all think of different ones"

**Reflection:**

Group circle discussion about the funny animals we have seen (making sure to plural check each response). Then a little discussion about how we regular plural, and which plurals are irregular.

**Target Language:**

Plural forms (regular and plural)

Reflective language responding to the activities and the set text.

Animals and movement

## Drama Lesson Plan Outline

### General Information

|                    |   |
|--------------------|---|
| Title:             | Power of Water  |
| Leader:            | Luke Allder   |
| Date:              |   |
| Participants:      | 30 (approx.) Year 3 Pupils                                |
| Location:          | North Beckton Primary School                              |
| Length of session: | 1 Hour  |
| Materials:         | Text (Noah's Ark)   |
| Preparation:       | Prepare space for movement activity. Access to the board. |

### Aims and Objectives:

Learners will work in groups to problem solve a climate change issue.

Learners will discuss and prioritise ideas.

Learners will use instructional language to inform and present to the townspeople.

### Structure:

(Each lesson will begin with a short warm-up activity, breathing and locomotive exercises; other games may be used to punctuate activities)

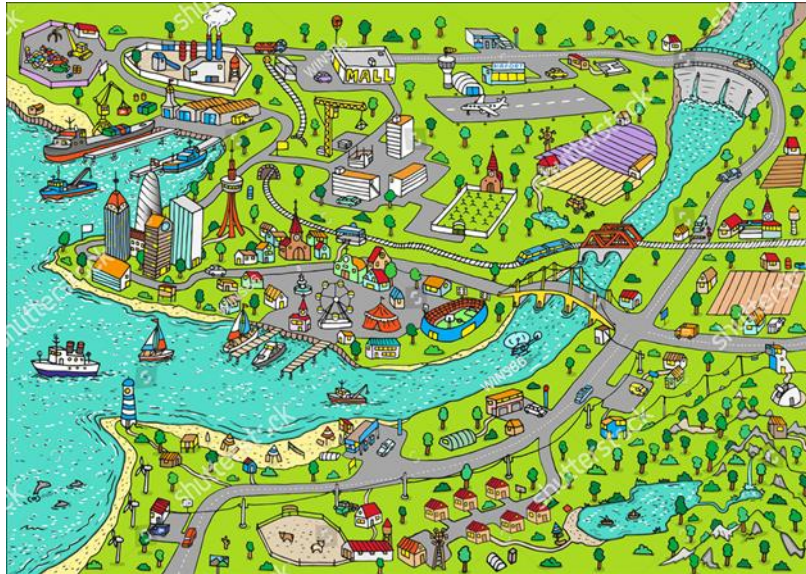
### Pretext:

Teacher in Role (News reporter) "Ladies and gentlemen. I bring news that following the heavy rain, caused by climate change, the river is getting fuller and fuller. So the riverbanks will explode and the town will be flooded. We need your help to plan how to save our town. You will work together in groups of five to decide what action we must take. You must try to save all the people, animals, shops, and houses"

Learners are placed in their preselected mixed ability groups of five.

"On your tables you will find a map of the town, and paper, pens, and whiteboards. You must work together to plan how to save the town."

### Action:



“Citizens, you will see a clock on the board. This will count down your time to make your plan. You have 15 minutes to work together. You will then present your ideas to the rest of the townspeople”

Teachers and TAs will monitor, concept check, liaise, support and encourage groups.

Where possible learners will make a list of ideas. Teachers and TAs will encourage groups to make sure everyone speaks and has a role within the groups.

Each group will present for 5 minutes, fielding questions and describing their ideas. Notes will be made on the whiteboard.

**Reflection:**

In full class discussion, learners will be encouraged to talk about how they made their decisions, which ideas they liked most and why, how it was working in their groups.

They will also be asked to reflect on the action in relationship to their class work on the subject of climate change.

**Target Language:**

Climate change vocabulary

Town (people and places) vocabulary

Language of order and priority

## Drama Lesson Plan Outline

### General Information

|                    |   |
|--------------------|---|
| Title:             | Alien Speak 1   |
| Leader:            | Luke Allder   |
| Date:              |   |
| Participants:      | 30 (approx.) Year 3 Pupils                                |
| Location:          | North Beckton Primary School                              |
| Length of session: | 1 Hour  |
| Materials:         | Text (Noah's Ark)   |
| Preparation:       | Prepare space for movement activity. Access to the board. |

### Aims and Objectives:

#### Alien Speak 1

Learners will decode a sentence using an alphabet key.

Learners will reorder words in a sentence to make them grammatically correct.

Learners will reflect on translating language.

### Structure:

(Each lesson will begin with a short warm-up activity, breathing and locomotive exercises; other games may be used to punctuate activities)

### Pretext:

Teacher in role (Scientist).

"Scientists, I need your help. We have just seen a strange object moving in the sky. The ship was flying above us and then dropped something down to earth. We have discovered this giant stone which has some very interesting symbols on it. We need your help to try and discover what the stone says."



“So far we have been able to only solve a little bit of the puzzle. See if you can help us finish it”

**Action:**

The learners are put into mixed ability groups of 3 and presented with the half-finished language key.

Learners have 5 minutes to decode the language. Group feedback.

“Thank you so much! Brilliant job! We found some other parts of the writing, but these stones were all broken up. Can you help us to put them in the right order?”

Learners are presented with more words to decode, but now they will need to be rearranged to make a sentence. Sentence reads: “Pease send us a message from your planet.”

Learner share their answers with the group and discuss what they think they will need to do next.

Learners will be presented with the next task which will run over the course of the next lesson.

Learners (in their groups of three) must create a message to send to the alien spaceship. In their message they must welcome the aliens to Earth, say something about the planet and the people. All learners must speak. Next lesson they will write their message and record the messages to send.

Learners as a full class will discuss who they think the aliens might be, what they might be like, look like, where they are from.

**Reflection:**

Learners will discuss the translation task and discuss how they might approach the second part of the activity.

**Target Language:**

Sentence formation. Word order. Translation. Future tense (for future activity)

## Drama Lesson Plan Outline

### General Information

|                    |   |
|--------------------|---|
| Title:             | Alien Speak 2   |
| Leader:            | Luke Allder   |
| Date:              |   |
| Participants:      | 30 (approx.) Year 3 Pupils                                |
| Location:          | North Beckton Primary School                              |
| Length of session: | 1 Hour  |
| Materials:         | Text (Noah's Ark)   |
| Preparation:       | Prepare space for movement activity. Access to the board. |

### Aims and Objectives:

Learners will group discuss a message to send to the aliens.

Learners will write their Earth description and their welcome message.

Learners will allocate roles, rehearse, and speak in front of their classmates.

### Structure:

(Each lesson will begin with a short warm-up activity, breathing and locomotive exercises; other games may be used to punctuate activities)

### Pretext:

Teacher in Role (News reporter). "Welcome back! Today is the day that we will be sending our messages from Earth into outer space! Remember, we need to work together in our groups of three to welcome the Aliens, tell them about our planet and our people."

The instructions will be written on the board, and teachers and TAs will concept check as they monitor.

### Action:

Learners will work in their groups of three to create their short messages for the aliens. (Teachers and TAs will check the work as they go around).

Learners will then allocate lines of text and rehearse.



T-i-R (News reporter) “Ladies and gentlemen, gather round. Each group will now come up to record their messages to the aliens”.

Each group will stand in front of the class and present their message. Each group will be given a round of applause.

The messages will be recorded by the class teacher.

### **Reflection**

Learners will be encouraged in a class discussion to say which messages they liked and why. What information was selected to tell the aliens, and why is this a good message to send out.

Learners will be encouraged to say how they think the aliens will react and why.

### **Target Language:**

Welcome / greetings

Descriptive language (Earth and people)

Speaking aloud

**APPENDIX C**  
**COLLATED OBSERVATIONAL NOTES**

| Lesson | Text          | Lesson Title  | Language expressed in the class  | Language issues  | General Observations  |
|--------|---------------|---------------|--|--|---|
| 1      | Julius Caesar | Introductions | "We don't need to sit at the table? YES!" (AU); "This guy is crazy silly" (AU) ; "Are you a real Roman?"(AI and AV) - "Nah, he is an actor man" - "What?"; "She's new and doesn't really understand, I will show her".   | prepositions - "it is [for] them" (AG), "they go [in]" (AG),   | Demonstration needed. Slow instructions and concept checking. Some ps dominate activities.  |
| 2      | Julius Caesar | Feelings      | "He feels like me"; "I would feel sad, so that's how he must feel" (AQ); "It must feel so great for everyone to love you in the town, I am that guy- the champion" (BG); "It's funny watching everyone acting - look at her fishing"(BN)   | I feel "scare"; I feel "not happy"; "I feel like excited man" (BH) (no articles); "I work bread shop" (BN). "The childs"; "A children"             | repeating other answers given; "don't know"; general partners working well. TPR   |
| 3      | Julius Caesar | The Favourite | "It's hard when you feel unfair, but then you remember its acting" (AC); "You feel it, but its all just a game, and then you feel good" (BI); "I am with the best (low level learner)" (AD)  | Vocabulary - 'not good', 'not happy', 'not fair', 'not best', 'not winning' - (negative words forms).  | Ps did not like being treated unfairly, and needed to have it explained that it was just a game. Resolved quickly. Strong reactions. Lower level ps have been contributing much more. |
| 4      | N/A           | Fossils       | "I'm hot - no, boiling!" - "whats boiling?" - "like, more than hot - super hot" - "cool, I'm boiling too"; "Shall we go to the museum?" - "no, sell it" - "why? It's better to share" - "nah, get the money"; "if we work as a team, we will win faster and then can win everything" | comparatives and superlatives missing. Basic words chosen often. Needs pushing. "they is"; Issues with third person singlar (he fly, she run etc.) | Lots of collaborative learning. Scaffolding. EV and FS  |

|   |         |                      |   |   |   |
|---|---------|----------------------|---|---|---|
| 5 | N/A     | The Wizard           | "This is JUST fun."; "It's fun trying to remember them all (the moves), but we got them all right!"(AP); "We are gonna teach our friends outside"(BB); "We get to do anything? Anything? This is crazy, they will think this is crazy! FUN!"  | Toad / spell - needed explanation from classmates. Issues still with plurals "A children, Girls / boys is"  | Cooperative. Teamwork. TPR, EV, demomstrations useful             |
| 6 | AtWi80D | AtWi80D              | "I couldn't remember all the book, but when you act it, you do" (BW); "I don't remember all the words, so can I use my own?"(AU); "It's easier to say it than read it" (AU)   | "then the man, then the woman, then the man, then the.. Then then... then the..."; "he gone..."; "the girls is / the boys is"; "bookes and clotheses" | FS, Confidence, Cooperation                                       |
| 7 | AtWi80D | Compare and Contrast | "Mega mind!"(BM); "What do you remember?, "Hmmm, it's hard - let's work on it together"; "We speak Lithuanian, so we can just tell her"; "There are so many things to talk about"; "She doesn't know the words, but we know what she means, it's like a fast train"                 | "More better" ; "more best" ; "more colder"; "not best"; Comparatives generally used well, and repeated.  | Problem Soliving, FS, Target language hit regualrly and repeated. |
| 8 | AtWi80D | The Ritual           | "I like thinking together" (AP); "Oh yeah, It must be, I didnt think that before she said"(CA); "Using you words and your hands and legs" (BZ); "It hands, then head, then, hands, then down - just like a dance" - "oh, I love dancing"(AP);                                       | target vocab hit well; issues with continuous forms   | TPR, Cooperation.   |
| 9 | AtWi80D | Rehearsal            | "Its nice to work with friends"; "she is loud and I'm quiet, so its difficult, but you know" (AR); "He always is loud, it's annoying. But when I have to speak he HAS to listen" (BB); "I am going to be super good at this, it's like youtube" (AJ); "I can help her with it" (AY) |   | EV and FS, Cooperation  |

|    |            |                |   |  |  |
|----|------------|----------------|---|--|--|
| 10 | AtWi80D    | Play           | "Better than work"; "I want to be an actor" (AD); "I didn't think I would remember the words, but it was quite easy actually" (AC); "OMG they are so fun, the story was great with them"(AU); "How do I remember? I don't know, but I do"; "its difficult to remember, but we can together, she can tell me"  |  | Interaction, Confidence, Recall, amazing teamwork. Amazing to see the lower learners especially perform in front of supportive classmates.           |
| 11 | Noah's Ark | High Alert     | "So it's not mouses! WOW, why? That's funny!" (AQ); "I know it, mice mice mice" (AC); "It's silly, but I learnt" (AY); "Can you imagine the smell??"; "I know it must have been really difficult to look after the animals."; "be on my team - we can do them all"  | mouses. drilling words was great. Horsies. Sheep (s). Man(s)/Woman(s). | TPR, WS, Scaffolding   |
| 12 | Noah's Ark | Power of Water | "Climate change is real" (AY); "We must work together for the game, and the world" (AR); "It's strange because it is real and not real" (BI); "It's so cold at home, but people say it is different and changing" (BB)  | "they is"  | Problem Soliving, FS, lower level learners were following instructions and advice from their teammates (a lot of passive activity)                   |
| 13 | Noah's Ark | Alien Speak 1  | "I didn't know what an alien was, but then I copied the others and now I know."; "We can all win"(AQ); "I've helped everyone"(AY); "Because we have finished we can now help othes"(BM); "When you get it right, you feel great!" (BW);   | pronunciation of letters between ps. Comparatives and superlatives     | WS, FS, Problem Solving; some issues with dominant ps, but scaffolding was occuring. Took time, but they all got there with little help from adults. |
| 14 | Noah's Ark | Alien Speak 2  | "I am the speaker, they are the camera people, she is the writer - we are the best!" (AQ); "Sometimes it can take me more time, but I am listening" (BG); "Is it okay if we all speak, then it's easier?"; "I think aliens would like to meet us all" - "I think they might be scared or maybe kill us" - "No, they will be our friends"; "Maybe they wont speak English or Lithuanian or anything" "Another language. URGH!" |  | FS, Confidence, Cooperation  |

\*\* Expansive vocabulary is low with lower level learners throughout. Trying to encourage as much as possible.

\*\* Where you have collaborative and cooperative learning, there is obviously bad examples of this happening too. Generally due to a select few members of the class, but it can be resolved reasonably easily and quickly.