GROUP DEVESED THEATRE
FOR ‘SECOND LANGUAGE ACQUISITION’

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Abstract

This portfolio thesis makes the case that participating in group devised theatre and using voice work benefits self-efficacy in additional language acquisition for advanced adult learners. The main source of evidence is the ‘Performing Languages’ project (2015) which took place at the University of Mulhouse, France, with adult participants from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds. I also draw on my earlier practice undertaken during the development of the thesis, including an article chapter that discusses a pilot research project, ‘Experiencing the Word’ (2013). My practice-based research engaged group devised theatre and its attendant emancipatory and democratic ethos, to improve the participants' self-efficacy in using the target language, English. I argue that an egalitarian ethos engendered by group devised theatre can address relations of power and the dichotomies of student/teacher and native/non-native speakers which are counteractive to achieving strong self-efficacy for language learners. The approach of group devised theatre also encourages and accommodates the renegotiation of identity that is prevalent in language learners. The overall findings of the research show that the benefits of participation in group devised theatre include: increased self-efficacy in using the target language, English; development of communication and engagement skills; and better awareness of non-verbal communication, gesture and a developed understanding of the use of the voice. Descriptions of moments of practice (‘vignettes’) are included to illustrate particular points of the overall thesis and to provide the reader with a sense of the practice and research from a phenomenological perspective. Also examined are aspects of the creative and learning process that occurred outside of the ensemble devising process; these were not immediately apparent but, I claim, give a fuller picture of both the process of group devised theatre and additional language development that took place. Furthermore, this thesis maintains that the unfinished and messy nature of SLA should be recognised and embraced in additional language development and that group-devised theatre provides an exemplary methodology for doing so.
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For

my mother, Anne,

and

my father, Patrick.
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‘For helping me to grow,
I owe a lot I know,

To all the girls I’ve loved before’:

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To my father, Patrick, whose saying, ‘We have everything of what we’ve got’ came to capture the essence of my research.

And to my mother, Anne, who’d tell me, ‘That’s another little job done’.
And she’d be right; she’s forgotten more than I’ll ever know.
Preface

Garret Scally is a theatre practitioner-researcher who uses theatre in educational settings for additional language development. He was awarded an M.A. in Applied Theatre from the City University of New York in 2010. His M.A. thesis investigated the use of group devised theatre for additional language development. Garret is currently researching this field on the Professional Doctorate in Applied Theatre (Applied Theatre PhD) programme at the University of Manchester.
Introduction to the Portfolio Thesis

This portfolio thesis charts the course of research that took place over seven years, beginning in September 2011. The work presented here includes false dawns and discoveries and ultimately much of the in-between because this is largely an attempt to capture the process of discovery. This brief introduction is intended to guide the reader through this research project because the variety of elements that are included make this submission more eclectic than a conventional PhD. The various pieces of writing that are included are from stages in the research over the seven-year period and the style therefore might not be as homogeneous as a thesis written in a much shorter timeframe, and it has two parts. There is, however, a coherent thread to the thesis and it may help the reader to know when each element of the research took place and how the pieces relate rather than being read as discrete sections.

This thesis is based on a research enquiry into the use of group devised theatre and voicework for developing and supporting self-efficacy in additional language development. While group devised theatre is the theatrical methodology that is documented and researched in this thesis, the aim is not to investigate the process of ensemble devising, though moments of collaborative creation are detailed and analysed. Nor is this thesis meant as an exemplar of best practice, either for group devised theatre or the teaching of drama in additional language development. Accounts of the practicalities of devising theatre can be found in the writings of, for example, Tina Bicât & Chris Baldwin (2002), Alex Mermikides and Jackie Smart (2010), or Scott Graham & Steven Hoggett (2014); methods and approaches to teaching additional languages are myriad and many well documented by scholars such as Rod Ellis (1994, 1997, 2008) and Lourdes Ortega (2009, 2013).

Group devised theatre encompasses a wide variety of practices, yet, it has a distinct philosophical orientation, in contrast to the instrumentalism of, for example, the use of
dramatic role play for grammatical exercises (Richards and Rogers, 2001). And while it shares much in common pedagogically with process drama, currently the foremost approach in theatre for addition language development, the research in this thesis does not seek to speak to the burgeoning developments in that area, though a discussion of how the methodologies of group devised theatre and process drama differ can be found broadly in the ‘Literature Review’ and more specifically in the ‘Hey! Teacher! Leave those Kids Alone’ section of Chapter Five, ‘The Ignorant Facilitator’.

Following this introduction to the portfolio thesis is Part One containing three chapters. These are a literature review, a ‘journal article’ chapter accompanied by an addendum, followed by a methodology chapter. Part Two is next covering the main case study and research project, ‘Performing Languages’, comprising an introduction, conclusion and four other chapters. The concluding chapter includes a summary of the findings, an evaluation of the research and the implications and recommendations for future research.

The literature review has five main sections: ‘Second Language Acquisition’; ‘Theatre and Drama for Additional Language Learning’; ‘Group Devised Theatre’; ‘The Body’; and the theme of ‘Unfinishedness’. The section on Second Language Acquisition (SLA) outlines some of the more prevalent and pre-eminent concerns in the field which are addressed by my practice and research.

For the purposes of this review, and throughout the thesis, Second Language Acquisition (SLA) and ‘additional language learning’ are synonymous. The terms that describe the field, in fact, are continuously debated – a welcome state of affairs in my opinion – and although I am not fastidious about the terminology, words matter and currently I prefer the phrasing ‘additional language development’. This nomenclature has been advocated by Larsen-Freeman and I support her view that it reflects the dynamic and
non-teleological nature of language development (Larsen-Freeman, 2015b). However, I use the abbreviation SLA and the appellations of 'language learning' and 'language acquisition' throughout in cases where 'additional language development' might be ungainly or cause confusion.

The 'Theatre and Drama for Additional Language Learning’ section covers various practices, including process drama which is the pre-eminent approach that has been researched and written about in the last decade. The notion of ‘unfinishedness’ in the literature review is an initial outline of my thinking at the beginning of this research project and represents the possibilities of its application to additional language acquisition through applied theatre. An overview of group devised theatre includes its appropriateness for my practice research for additional language development. This is later expanded on in the introduction to Part Two where I define my working practice. The section on the body is not extensively developed in the second part of the thesis as other facets of the research became more prominent during the 'Performing Languages' research project, the case study which I draw on exclusively. While the research and practice involving the body is not a direct part of the research inquiry in Part Two of the thesis, it does inform the ‘journal article’ chapter that also forms part of the portfolio, and discussion of the body emerges intermittently and flavours and informs the research, practice and methodology of the case study in Part Two.

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1 Larsen-Freeman explains the choice of ‘development’ as an alternative to ‘acquisition’ as ‘resting on a view of language from a complex systems perspective. Such a perspective rejects the commodification of language implied by the term ‘acquisition’, instead imbuing language with a more dynamic quality, implied by the term ‘development’, because it sees language as an ever-developing resource. It also acknowledges the mutable and interdependent norms of bilinguals and multilinguals. In addition, this perspective respects the fact that from a target-language vantage point, regress in learner performance is as characteristic of development as progress. Finally, [...] because it recognizes that there is no common endpoint at which all learners arrive’ (Larsen-Freeman, 2015b: 491).
Following the literature review is a chapter written as a journal article entitled ‘Let Me Hear Your Body Talk: ‘Experiencing the Word’ for Additional Language Acquisition’, which discusses a pilot study I made and marked out potential leads for my research at the time. This is followed by an addendum to the article that describes why, although these leads were followed up in my practice, they were not, ultimately, included in the ‘Performing Languages’ case study. The addendum serves to demonstrate how the practice led the research, but it also reflects how responsibility to participants’ interests and preferences must be given precedence to research concerns (no matter how rich the potential might be). Also demonstrated is how my practice and research evolved over several years, informed by theory and the practice itself. Given this, it is important to note that the literature review chapter and the publishable article chapter were written five to six years ago. While there have been additions and alterations they have stayed largely as they were. This is because they stand to document the process of discovery and capture particular moments in the development of my practice and thinking on the subject. While the literature review has been updated in a couple of instances, I have also chosen to embed further literature within the deeper research and theory in the second part of the thesis.

The third chapter in Part One, the ‘Methodology’ chapter, contains an account of the methodological choices that were made and the choice of a case study approach. This includes consideration of ethical issues, a discussion of the research design including the instrumentation and procedure for data acquisition, processing and analysis. There is also an outline of setting and participants in the main research project, ‘Performing Languages’. All of this is supported by a set of appendices.

Part Two is divided into four chapters plus an introduction and conclusion. It draws on a case study of a group devised theatre project process and performance, which took place from January to May 2015 in Mulhouse, France. The chapter titles are: ‘The Ignorant
Group Devised Theatre for ‘Second Language Acquisition’

Facilitator’; ‘The Individual in the Collective’; ‘Voicing Identity’; and ‘Messing It Up As We Go Along’. In these chapters, the breadth of second language acquisition section of the literature review narrows to what have been termed ‘alternative approaches’ to language acquisition (Atkinson, 2011b).

Throughout Part Two, I describe how they informed my applied theatre practice and in turn how my practice and research may duly inform those alternative approaches and theories. I also use the theories and proposals of Jacques Rancière from *The Ignorant Schoolmaster* throughout, especially in the first two chapters, ‘The Ignorant Facilitator’ and ‘The Individual in the Collective’. This accordingly informs the analysis of my role as teacher-facilitator-researcher in the first of these chapters and, in the second chapter, of the individual learning within the context of collective creation. ‘Voicing Identity’ discusses how the collective creation process combines with Bonny Norton’s work on the Identity Approach to second language acquisition analysing three different elements of the project in consideration of this theoretical and practical foregrounding. The understanding of the notion of unfinishedness from the literature review underwent a transformation in my thinking both during and after the main research project, which is addressed in the Part Two of the thesis. The eventual formation of this is fully discussed in the chapter ‘Messing It Up As We Go Along’ with an exploration of the application and usefulness of the notion of ‘mess’ to language learning through group devised theatre.

The conclusion addresses the crux of the research which is an investigation of ensemble devising as a vehicle and methodology for additional language development, specifically how it influences self-efficacy and confidence in adult language learners. There, I provide a summary of the findings, an evaluation of the research and its implications along with suggestions for future research.
PART I
Chapter One

Literature Review

As explained in the introduction, this literature review was a piece of research done at the beginning of the research project seven years ago and surveyed the state of the field at that time. While the bulk of the review reflects this, there have been updates and the chapter has been adapted for relevance to the rest of the thesis. The five main sections are: ‘Second Language Acquisition’; ‘Theatre and Drama for Additional Language Learning’; ‘Group Devised Theatre’; ‘The Body’; and ‘Unfinishedness’.

Second Language Acquisition (SLA)

Peter Ives has stated that ‘some of the most influential social and political theorists of the twentieth century have been concerned with language: Ludwig Wittgenstein, Ferdinand de Saussure, Martin Heidegger, Jacques Derrida, Michel Foucault, Jürgen Habermas and Noam Chomsky’ (2004: 1). We could easily add to that list current academically popular writers and thinkers such as Mikhail Bakhtin, Pierre Bourdieu, Antonio Gramsci, Theodor Adorno, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Jean-Luc Nancy, or Henri Lefebvre. In fact, the concept and exploration of language has been a fundamental element of the work in many fields with applied linguist Christopher Brumfit claiming a constant scholarly interest from not only linguists and educationalists but also from ‘[l]iterary theorists and literary critics, philosophers, psychologists, sociologists and anthropologists’ (2001: 8). It is, of course, also a fundamental part of human existence for, as Richard Schechner points out, ‘there is no human society without language’ (2003: xii). Indeed, the renowned linguist David Crystal sees language as the very thing ‘which makes us feel human’ (2010: 15). Given this, a complete study of language clearly falls outside the remit for
this literature review. Furthermore, the challenge in working in the field of language is exemplified by Valentin Vološinov in his question: ‘What is language, and what is word?’ (Bakhtin, 1994: 26). Even so, narrowing the scope to the sub-field of second language acquisition may not be enough and requires broad brush strokes to cover the topic.

Brumfit views the subject of language (along with that of education) as disadvantaged due to them being areas of study ‘both too familiar’ (2001: 4). Everyone uses language and has been educated in some form and, he argues, this generates forceful opinions, creating circumstances where ‘[e]xpertise confronts experience’ (Brumfit, 2001: 4). As adults, when we refer to learning languages, we are referring to languages other than the ones we learn as a native speaker. The area that directly addresses this is SLA and it has a relatively brief history. Rod Ellis, a long-standing and widely published documenter of the field, states that SLA began to be established as a field of enquiry at the end of the 1960s, which would make it now approximately 50 years old (1994). Despite its brevity as an area of study, there is a considerable amount of literature on the subject and a ‘plethora of models and theories’ (Ellis, 1994: 409) which, Ellis points out, had even led to calls for theory ‘culling’ in the early 1990s (Long, 1990). Even so, Ellis claims that ‘L2 [Second Language] acquisition is an enormously complex phenomenon and will benefit from multiplicity of perspectives, theories, and research methodologies’ (2008: xxii). This openness is reflected in the interdisciplinary nature of the field.

Along with Ellis (Ellis, 1994, 1997, 2008, 2015), Patsy Lightbown and Nina Spada (2006) have mapped out the development of linguistic theory and its influence on SLA stating that there are ‘three main theoretical positions’ (Lightbown and Spada, 2006: 10).

There is considerable debate as to whether the works of Vološinov (and Pavel Medvedev) were written by Mikhail Bakhtin. For an overview of this debate, see Pam Morris’ introduction to The Bakhtin Reader: Selected Writings of Bakhtin, Medvedev, and Voloshinov (Bakhtin, 1994).

The study of learning additional languages, of course, existed before this period but Ellis thinks that the impact of the methodological approaches and lines of inquiry from first language acquisition on SLA serves to mark ‘a start of a kind’ (2008: xxvi).
They first outline Behaviourism, advanced by Burrhus F. Skinner (1957), as based in ‘imitation, practice reinforcement [...] and habit formation’ combined with the importance of environment as the foundation of all language learning (Lightbown and Spada, 2006: 34). Secondly, they examine Noam Chomsky’s theory of an innate human grammar (Universal Grammar or UG), initially theorised in a review of Skinner’s book (Chomsky, 1959), which gave the Innatist perspective, positing that humans are born with mental structures for language akin to the ‘natural’ ability to walk. The third position Lightbown and Spada look at is the ‘interactionist/developmental perspectives’ (2006: 19) which establishes a balance between the nature-culture debate. Here the learning process is very much linked to the environment, learning from experience, and cognitive development, with proponents still recognising the important role of the actual brain (Lightbown and Spada, 2006: 19).

While Skinner’s theories have received wide criticism from several perspectives, including Chomsky, universal grammar has been a predominant reference point in the field of Linguistics along with later claims from Steven Pinker for language’s cognitively neutral system (linguistic nativism) (2007). These theories have lately been strongly challenged by Guy Deutscher (2006, 2011), Geoffrey Sampson (2009) and Paul Ibbotson and Michael Tomasello (2016). Deutscher along with Ibbotson and Tomasello question the concept of the mind being ‘pre-wired’, while Sampson attacks the ‘language instinct’ as academia’s version of ‘the emperor’s new clothes’ (2009: 189), citing an array of reasons for universal grammar theory’s dominance (2009). Although both Chomsky and Pinker refute these arguments (most importantly, the one of dominance), within the field of linguistics, Chomsky’s theories have had, albeit inadvertently and erroneously, significant impact.\footnote{Chomsky has also revised his theory substantially (Hauser et al., 2002).} It is understandable that as the depth of writing about linguistics, and even SLA on its own, is
broad, complex and contradictory, there are many issues which are vigorously debated – the battle between innatists, behaviourists and interactionists being a case in point.\(^5\)

In terms of influence, Ellis observes that the major theoretical development in SLA since 1994 is the emergence of 'sociocultural SLA' from the work of Leo Vygotsky and Aleksei Leontiev (Ellis, 2008: xxi). This move from the previously psycholinguistically-dominated approach to SLA looks more at the sociological and cultural elements of language learning, and the influence on it of theories of identity and culture and vice versa. The first main proponent of Identity Theory in additional language learning was Bonny Norton (Norton Peirce, 1995; Norton, 1997, 2000) and her influence over the past two decades has led to a huge amount of research exploring the relationship between identity and language learning and teaching, incorporating the themes of, for example, race, gender, class (Blackledge and Pavlenko, 2003; Block, 2007). Norton was influenced by the poststructuralist work of both Pierre Bourdieu (Bourdieu, 1986, 1991, 2015) and Christine Weedon (1997).\(^6\) From their work, Norton has cultivated the concept of ‘investment’ in relation to additional language learning which interconnects with theories around ‘motivation’, principally researched by Zoltán Dörnyei (Dörnyei, 1998; Dörnyei and Csizér, 2002; Csizér and Dörnyei, 2005a, 2005b; Dörnyei and Ushioda, 2009, 2013).

Along with how language is learned, a principal area of contention in the study of languages is the growing dominance of certain idioms and the rapid disappearance of minority languages, including claims of ‘linguistic genocide’ (Pennycook, 1994).\(^7\) With this in mind, a new formulation to the question posed above by Vološinov is ‘what can language do?’. Bourdieu’s work might give a response to this question in his challenge to the

\(^5\) Interactionism means using a communicative or a ‘usage-based approach’ (Ibbotson and Tomasello, 2016: 74)

\(^6\) Weedon tends to use the word ‘subjectivities’ rather than ‘identities’ as noted by Block (Block 2007: 17).

\(^7\) Pennycook attributes the phrase ‘linguistic genocide’ to Richard R. Day and first appears in The Ultimate Inequality: Linguistic genocide (Day, 1985)
dominance of one language or way of speaking in his theories on ‘cultural’ and ‘linguistic’ capital, which I return to in the sections below in this chapter and also the journal article chapter (Bourdieu, 1986, 1991, 2015). In response to the growing influence of English as an international, and intranational, *lingua franca*, John Naysmith (1986) proposes a different thesis to the idea that teaching English positively influences ‘international peace and understanding’ (1986: 3). He believes that ‘E.L.T. [English Language Teaching] has become part of the process whereby one part of the world has become politically, economically and culturally dominated by another’ (Naysmith, 1986: 3). He earlier equates the English language teacher as ‘an agent’ in the maintenance of international patterns of domination and subordination announcing that ‘[t]he core of this process is the central place the English language has taken as the language of international capitalism’ (Naysmith, 1986: 1). This position echoes Adorno’s theory that ‘the jargon’ of language is controlled and manipulated to maintain and promote capitalism while also demonstrating the connection between ideology and language (1973).

The proceeding ‘linguistic imperialism’ debate has been identified by linguists Guy Cook and Sarah North (2010) as being led by Alastair Pennycook (2001), Henry Widdowson (1994) who emphasises questions of ownership, and David Crystal who, while being concerned about the threat to the diversity of languages, also sees many positives. Crystal’s fellow linguist, David Graddol, similarly views English as a world language. However, he sees potential benefits such as English being as a means to escape from traditional values and expected relationships, mainly in Asia (Graddol, 1997, 2006) relating back to the exploration of identity through language and the possibility of social change through SLA. This in turn brings into question ideas around ownership, ‘normative’ perceptions of language, and what is the goal of language teaching. Graddol addresses this subject

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8 James Thompson points out the inadvertent collusion of the agents of applied theatre in *Performance Affects* as part of ‘the complex web in which [...] all applied theatre initiatives are caught’ (2011: 16).
identifying the traditional English as a Foreign Language (E.F.L.) model with the native speaker as the ideal standard as a model for failure and the current move from English as a second language to the concept of ‘New Englishes’ (see also Cook, 2003; Crystal, 2003; Graddol, 2006: 82–86). Ellen Bialystok and Kenji Hakuta have also challenged the standard set of norms questioning the mind-set in which the ‘learner is striving toward some stateable goal, a standard and perfect version of the language that is embodied in the mind of every native speaker’ (1999: 165). Furthermore, any long-term stability around which to base language learning is problematised by its protean nature. Language systems are constantly in flux, which is true of the ‘native speaker’ as much as for additional language learners. Therefore, competence should not be gauged against a notional, fixed idea of a native speaker as standard. So, what should the aim of the language learner be if not to emulate a notional native speaker? This inquiry returns us to the notion of identity.

Forty-five years ago, Guiora, Beit-Hallahmi, and Brannon claimed that ‘to learn a second language is to take on a new identity’ (cited in Block, 2007: 61). This idea has permeated much of the theory in Second Language Acquisition, led by Norton whose work has shaped much of the current writing as it has expanded in breadth. For instance, David Block discusses the ‘self-conscious and ongoing narratives’ (2007: 32) of language learners making ‘a new life mediated by a new culture and language’ (2007: 5). He refers to Judith Butler’s assertion that in performative theory gender is not ‘a stable identity’, but a ‘stylized repetition of acts’ (cited in Block, 2007: 16–17, Butler’s emphasis). Block applies Butler’s theories to second language acquisition and claims we can ‘see identities and subject positions as performances’ (2007: 20). While the notion of ‘performance’ that Block uses
here is distinct from that of theatre performance the understanding of instability and uncertainty is well understood in the theory and pedagogy of Applied Theatre.⁹

Helen Nicholson recognises the ‘idea that identity is a continual process of becoming, rather than a pre-given expression of being’ (2005: 65), a notion that relates to the concept of unfinishedness, explored in more depth below in this chapter, and she argues that ‘drama is a good vehicle through which participants might experiment with different identities and test out new ways of being’ (2005: 83). Separately, Nicholson has claimed that ‘a new language can also serve as a vehicle to escape constraints of native language and inherent expected demeanours’ (2011: 167), which supports Aneta Pavlenko’s idea that people have access to ‘imaginary worlds of other languages where gender and sexuality may be constructed and performed differently than in their own culture’ (2004: 55). Referring to Pavlenko’s research, Ellis tells us that this allows learners to ‘reconstruct their gender through the learning of a second language’ (2008: 315), later noting that, similarly, ‘ethnic identity is both a social and individual construct’ and ‘acquiring a second language involves change or addition to learner’s sense of identity’ (2008: 318–319). The extent to which this is true for individual language learners may be moot; yet, clearly, there are some forms of affect and certainly one of vulnerability, which becomes apparent in the Spanish language, for example, in how the standard of a second language is measured, reflected in the phrasing, ‘puedo defenderme’ (‘I can defend myself”).

In Emotions and Multilingualism (2006), Pavlenko explains the intrinsic emotional nature of language learning. Also evident is the state of vulnerability – a common sensation for language learners – which can inhibit the learner from taking the inevitable risks that must be taken in engaging with a new form of speaking or communicating. Regarding this vulnerability, Nicholson posits that creative spaces give people safety while taking these

⁹ For distinctions, debate and musings on the matter of performance and performativity see: Butler 1997; Schechner 2003; Carlson 2004.
risks and ‘allow themselves and others to experience vulnerability’ (2005: 129). In the Applied Theatre field, the tendency is to work with populations that are vulnerable and marginalised.10 There is however a larger, ‘mainstream’ vulnerable population: the additional language learner.

How many times has the language learner felt acutely ashamed of their inability to articulate what they would like to say? Piazzoli (2018) presents various instances of her own experience in this regard when having to speak in an additional language (English). One of these experiences was when, as an experienced practitioner, researcher and writer in drama for language acquisition and highly proficient in English, Piazzoli found herself floundering to explain at a conference to a room of teachers the merits and benefits of using drama for SLA.11 Instead of enthusiasm for the possibilities of a new approach, Piazzoli noted to herself the responses from the teachers, making her confidence drain away: ‘No smiles’ (2018: 184).

If, as Prentki asserts, ‘Applied Theatre is [...] based upon the idea of a deficit model’ and ‘[p]articipants in applied or community theatre processes are lacking something that ‘normal’ people do not’ (2012: 2), then perhaps the field would do well to rethink its definitions of ‘vulnerability’, moving away from the margins and addressing the needs of the ‘mainstream’ population. While the marginalised may remain, understandably and legitimately, the primary concern of Applied Theatre work as many practitioners, researchers and writers in the field have identified, it is necessary to remain aware and challenge the role of our practice in a wider context.

However, if the main ‘calling’ of Applied Theatre practice is to work with people on the margins or extremes of mainstream society it is worth noting that many times it is with

10 ‘Vulnerable populations include the economically disadvantaged, racial and ethnic minorities, low-income children, the elderly, the homeless, those with human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), and those with other chronic health conditions, including severe mental illness’ (Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, 2006: n.p.)
11 This is similar to an experience Yaman Ntelioglou had, discussed below.
participants who, if not always unwilling, are often initially unwitting. This has led many (for example, Ackroyd, 2000; and Balfour, 2009) to debate the ethics of intervention and raise questions of intentionality which Prentki provocatively states is indicative of the field being ‘predicated upon a colonial model where the centre prescribes what is good for the periphery’ (2012: 2). Also, James Thompson has pointed out in Performance Affects that the practice of Applied Theatre needs to be seen in a larger context, asking: ‘which show are we part of?’ (2011: 30). Furthermore, the implications for ethical responsibilities, echo concerns raised by the ‘linguistic imperialism’ debate.

Conversely, there is also an emphasis on moving away from previous ideas of implementing ‘big’ changes and the ‘one-size-fits-all’ application of strategies towards smaller (or micro) changes, less accountable to social or political policies (Thompson, 2005, 2011; Balfour, 2010). The concerns, challenges and new directions, mentioned here briefly, have implications for Applied Theatre, some of which are shared, some unrecognized, and some to which the field has started to turn its hand. For example, while the adult additional language learner does not readily fit into a set pre-requisite of vulnerability or marginality, there are aspects and concerns that Applied Theatre pedagogies can address.

For an understanding of additional language development, I align myself with the general position of the ‘alternative approaches’ to SLA (Atkinson, 2011b). These Sociocultural, Identity, and Complexity Theory approaches have differing emphases, but all seek to locate the individual learner more effectively and deliberately in the larger social world and involve the (re-)negotiating of the relations of power within the learning environment. The approaches view SLA as a sociocultural practice that take place in specific contexts; a relational activity where behaviour is formed by motivating factors, investment in a purpose, and the sociocultural context (Norton and McKinney, 2011: 79). These defining factors determine the performance of communicative activities. Fundamentally, they all
take the stance of language development being an open-ended process and, also, product. These approaches are further explored in Part Two of this thesis.

Theatre and Drama for Additional Language Learning

During the last half a century, publications by educators and researchers have supported using theatre and drama exercises and activities for additional language acquisition (Maley and Duff, 1978; Schewe and Shaw, 1993; Kao and O’Neill, 1998; Wagner, 1998; Bräuer, 2002a; Stinson and Winston, 2011; Schewe, 2013; Piazzoli, 2018). An extensive, if not exhaustive, synthesis of the literature on drama in SLA can be found in the writing of Gary Carkin (2007), George Belliveau & Won Kim (2013) and Kathleen Rose McGovern (2017). Manfred Schewe informs us that his research has ‘outlined how language pedagogy can benefit considerably from practice in drama in education, theater in education, and professional theater’ and that ‘the process of making theater [...] is immediately related to our concerns as language teachers, because the ability to interact and to communicate in efficient ways is, after all, at the heart of language teaching/learning’ (2002: 73). An important approach to doing this for SLA is the one of process drama first advocated by Kao and O’Neill in Words Into Worlds: Learning a Second Language through Process Drama (1998) where they explain that process drama:

[...] refers to drama activities that aim to go beyond short-term, teacher-dominated exercises. Instead, the drama is extended over time and is built up from the ideas, negotiations, and responses of all participants in order to foster social, intellectual, and linguistic development. (1998: x)

Gary Carkin refers to O’Neill and her enormous influence in both SLA and process drama in ‘Teaching English Through Drama: The State of the Art’ in which lays out the historical background that informs the use of drama in language acquisition, beginning in the work of Dorothy Heathcote (Carkin, 2007). There has been little written about devising as a method
for drama-based language pedagogy, though full length plays have been advocated by Douglas Moody (2002) discussing his own work and citing others, proposing that ‘language learning can be enhanced through creative group activities that utilize drama through both the process and production of dramatic activities’ (2002: 163), while Peter Lutzker has documented a full-length production he researched in great detail (2007).

I now look at the most recent publication (at the time the literature review was written) on the area of second language learning through drama, the RiDE Special Edition: Drama education and second language learning: a growing field of practice and research (2011). This publication promised to be a rich source of emergent theory, methodologies and approaches in what is a growing field of practice and research. The seven articles demonstrated a range of approaches and perspectives, explaining the theoretical frameworks both from linguistic and dramatic perspective balanced with descriptions of the work. Here, in more detail, I review the individual articles regarding the current use of drama in the second language learning field.

In many of the articles in this collection the emphasis is on an approach and method presented as pedagogy, namely, that of process drama. It is understandable, following Kao and O’Neill’s seminal text, mentioned above, that there are so many adherents to the use of process drama in additional language learning; indeed, there are interesting studies of this provided by Erika Piazzoli, Julia Rothwell, Julie Dunn & Madonna Stinson, and Shin-Mei Kao, Gary Carkin, & Liang-Fong Hsu, in four of the seven articles (2011). Piazzoli (2011) convincingly argues the case for drama’s ability to reduce language anxiety in the analysis of one student’s breakthrough concerning lathophobic aphasia (anxiety or stress when trying to speak, especially an additional language). There is, however, a problematic element that appears in the article, and the others in this addition. In her study with Italian as the target language, Piazzoli expresses her desire for ‘authentic contexts for communication’ (2011:
and believes that it would be beneficial for her students to inhabit the culture of the target language as much as possible, which, for Naysmith, ‘help(s) to consolidate a system whereby the flow of knowledge continues to be dominated by the values of the centre’ (1986: 3). The study seems to imply that the goal of the students is, as closely as possible, to approximate the standard of an Italian native speaker. This notion of native speaker as the goal for the additional language learner with a ‘perfect version of the language’ has been strongly challenged by Bialystok and Hakuta (1999: 165). Also, if there were to be a perfect version of a native speaker, then which Italian native would this be?

This notion of the native speaker as the ideal as the goal for a language learner becomes more problematic when applied to English, which has become the preeminent present-day international lingua franca. Changing ideas about the centrality of the native speaker to norms of usage have come to the fore in additional language learning theory, challenging the traditional, outmoded English as a Foreign Language (EFL) model. This is seen as designed to produce failure, as the linguist David Graddol states in English Next, his analysis of the position of English worldwide (2006). He claims this notion fails, pedagogically, in its unrealistic aims of native-like pronunciation and grammatical accuracy, serving socially and politically as a ‘gatekeeping device which will help the formation of elites’ (Graddol, 2006: 84). This is remarked upon by Astrid Yi-Mei Cheng and Joe Winston in ‘Shakespeare as a Second Language’ (2011) wherein this aim and apparent prerequisite is evidenced by the need of the students involved in their study to gain access to cultural capital – in the shape of a knowledge of Shakespeare – in order to avoid being left ‘culturally and linguistically deficient’ (2011: 544). Although Cheng and Winston are ensuring that the interests of students are cared for, the underlying factor of the non-native being somehow inferior to the native speaker is one that pervades the language learning...

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[2] That said, Italy does have its own imperial and colonial history and still has influence, for example, in Ethiopia and Eritrea.
classroom. While the notion of the inherent benefit of the use of Shakespeare in the piece is debatable, there are some intriguing possibilities suggested using physicality, participation and playfulness. As complimentary activities to formal textbooks, the study suggests that the students became more enthusiastic in their attitude towards English as well as having a deeper understanding of the language they used.

Julia Rothwell in 'Bodies and Language' (2011) also examines the possibilities of the use of the physicality allowing the learner to become more aware of the role of the body in intercultural communication and aiding them to ‘wear different identities’ (2011: 579). She acknowledges that in such a short study a comprehensive examination of kinaesthetic elements of process drama are limited, though this outing suggests that further research could open a valuable vein for investigation. Rothwell also puts process drama forward as a vehicle for a ‘multi-modality’ of learning (2011: 577).

Yaman Ntelioglou also looks at this type of learning alongside a ‘multiliteracies pedagogy’ (2011: 596) and the use of drama for this purpose is analysed in Ntelioglou's examination of two factors of this approach (2011). The first is ‘multimodality’, the use of textual, aural, linguistic, spatial, and visual resources to communicate meaning and the second is ‘situated practice which involves the provision of innovative learning environments that create opportunities for students to engage in meaningful experience, making use of their own life’ (Ntelioglou, 2011: 596–7). In Ntelioglou’s study, immigrant participants from various parts of the globe make use of their own life experiences to create ‘identity texts’. These appear, perhaps, more useful in a world where language exchanges involving English predominantly take place between ‘non-natives’ than in a more culturally anchored and specific notion as the use of Shakespeare, forwarded by Cheng and Winston. Ntelioglou also points out that there is resistance to the protracted use of drama, for example, the use of devising and improvisation, as it is seen as time consuming when
considering the demands of the curriculum’s emphasis on exams and evaluation, and, perhaps more tellingly, from the adult students themselves who want what they regard as ‘hard skills’. This type of request or desire came to the fore in the case study that is presented in the following chapter in this thesis, ‘Let Me Hear Your Body Talk’.

We return to process drama in Dunn and Stinson’s paean for teacher artistry, ‘Not Without the Art!!’ (2011). They find, like Ntelioglou, that there is a challenge to convince educators of the pedagogical benefits of drama in language learning. This is evident in one of the groups of language teachers involved in the study that the researchers instructed in drama techniques, specifically in the use of process drama. During the study, these teachers were found to neglect the holistic use of drama and revert to more formulaic and ‘trusted’ methods after superficial attempts to use the new methods. Given that the authors acknowledge that ‘in any process drama context the facilitator must think in a quadripartite manner, making decisions as actor, director, playwright and teacher simultaneously, undeniably a complex and skilful undertaking’ (Dunn and Stinson, 2011: 618), the study that the article draws on was unhelpful in demonstrating that drama is also a valuable tool. Perhaps too much was asked of these inexperienced teachers (in terms of drama) by having them try to incorporate a method as complex as process drama into their teaching.

Considering the demands already placed on classroom teaching, the suggestion that a different level of training is necessary could seem burdensome. That said, currently there is much discussion on the notion, and promotion, of performative language teaching and the artistry of the language teacher, originating from Manfred Schewe (2013) and elucidated by recent publications from John Crutchfield, Piazzoli, and Schewe (Crutchfield and Schewe, 2017; Schewe, 2017; Piazzoli, 2018). Lai-wa Dora To, Yuk-lan Phoebe Chan, Yin Krissy Lam and Shuk-kuen Yvonne Tsang also seek to introduce drama pedagogy to language teachers through a mentoring approach. They found that, although there was
initial reluctance, the teachers had ‘[t]heir hearts […] ‘melted’ as they noticed their [the students] positive responses - from passive to motivated, from silent to lively, from bored to interested, and from regarding learning as impossible to possible’ (Dora To et al., 2011: 522), and ‘[s]tudents were no longer seen as pieces of homework or test/exam papers but as human beings with feelings’ (Dora To et al., 2011: 535). The reader can be excused in being surprised at such contrasting findings in Dunn and Stinson’s express warning of the need for teacher artistry in contrast to To, Chan, Lam & Tsang’s enthusiastic reading of results.

The most prescient concern for additional language development through drama is pointed out by Madonna Stinson and Joe Winston in the editorial to this edition of RiDE when they state:

> At present there is a notable lack of long-term or longitudinal research that interrogates teaching-learning processes, contextual factors and the complexities that are embedded within local contexts, or the long-term impact of drama pedagogy on second language learners. (2011: 485–6)

This shows that research in drama for language learning is still finding its feet; not only in its place within the Applied Theatre field, but within that of language learning. Overall, this is a useful edition which captures the shape of the field presently and indicates the need for much more future research. As noted above, the main development in drama and language learning, since this literature review was initially written, has been the concept of ‘performative language teaching’ put forward by Schewe (2013), along with other contributions to the SCENARIO journal that has a focus on theatre and drama in the learning and teaching of additional languages and is an important resource in a growing

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13 This RiDE special issue has subsequently led to a practical handbook and is published as a book (Winston, 2012; Winston and Stinson, 2014).
Notably, though, there have been no major developments in terms of the use of group devised theatre for additional language development.

**Group Devised Theatre**

As an approach to making performance, devising is now widely used: from schools and universities to professional ‘mainstream’ companies (Heddon and Milling, 2006: 1) and in the field of participatory theatre (Punchdrunk, Frantic Assembly, DV8). That said, there has been a striking paucity of critical and theoretical literature published on the subject, especially in connection with Applied Theatre.15 Alison Oddey (1994), Deidre Heddon and Jane Milling (2006), and Emma Govan, Helen Nicholson and Katie Normington (2007) are the main authors to address the field, with the journal *Theatre Topics* publishing a special issue on devising in 2005 (‘Special Issue: Devising,’ 2005). The recent arrival of the latter two works has led to hopes that further writing on the subject will be stimulated, though it previously failed to materialise in response to Oddey’s call in 1994 for further research in the field (1994: xii).

There is literature on the practical aspects of devised work: from how to devise or collaborate creatively (Kerrigan, 2001; Greig, 2008; Swale, 2012); case studies on the creation of devised shows (Mermikides and Smart, 2010); and the significance of physical theatre in the development of devising (Callery, 2001), the latter of which Govan, Nicholson and Normington see as fundamental to discussions on devising (2007). Regarding the physical and the practical, many of the activities or games that are now used by Applied Theatre practitioners are found collected together in Augusto Boal’s *Games for Actors and Non-

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14 The SCENARIO journal is based at the Department of German & Department of Theatre at University College Cork with Manfred Schewe and Susanne Even serving as editors since its establishment in 2007.

15 A significant contribution has been made by Kathryn Syssoyeva and Scott Proudfit (2013a, 2013b) in two volumes since this literature review was written and I have updated the review in this regard.
Actors (2002). They appear under the nomenclature of ‘The Arsenal of the Oppressed’ and they are commonly used to ‘prepare’ participants for theatre rather than explicitly for making a performance, with perhaps the exception of Forum Theatre pieces.

Oddey, Heddon and Milling, and Govan, Nicholson and Normington variously see devised work as a reaction and a challenge to orthodoxy; not only within the field of theatre, but, at times, of society, emphasising the need for collective and collaborative movements in contrast to hierarchical systems that pervade contemporary society through ‘questioning orthodoxies’ (Govan et al., 2007: 3). Devised work is here very much viewed as a process, that can find its stimulus or beginning in anything – moving away from conventional notions of a pre-existing script. Additionally, pliability and openness are considered appealing to practitioners who wish to work as far removed as possible from pre-conceived notions of creativity or performance, especially with participants who are unfamiliar with working with drama.

Like process drama, a variety of drama techniques and conventions can be used for devising purposes such as improvisation (Johnstone, 1979; Boal, 2002) or tableaux (Boal, 2002), although it would be amiss to limit devising’s resources to the field of theatre as Alex Mermikides and Jackie Smart point out ‘what makes devising so popular to begin with: its adaptability to different contexts and group compositions; and its potential for constant innovation in terms of process as well as product’ (2010: 28). It is this wide range of techniques and adaptability that make devising useful in engaging in additional language learning. Furthermore, this there is a pervading ideal within collective creation or devising of a democratic ethos and this forms the grounding for my approach using theatre for second language development, which I expand on throughout the main case study in Part Two, as well as later in this section.
Before that, if we return to the theme of identity mentioned above in the SLA section, we might see that Pavlenko’s ‘imaginary worlds’ and the sense of dynamism regarding identity and a broader understanding of incompleteness finds an accommodating home in devising. For example, Heddon and Milling situate many devising groups as operating within a postmodern paradigm with a ‘deliberate resistance to completion’ (2006: 224), recalling that Alexander Kelly of Third Angel described devising as being a ‘responsive way of working’, which also ‘embraces serendipity: accident, chance, the unexpected and unpredictable’ (Kelly cited in Heddon and Milling, 2006: 197).

It is this openness to possibility, directed by the members of the group themselves along with space for individuality that could prove an interesting direction for language acquisition through devising. Weedon suggests, ‘[l]anguage is the place where actual and possible forms of social organization and their likely social and political consequences are defined and contested. Yet it is also the place where our sense of ourselves, our subjectivity, is constructed’ (1997: 21). But to follow Weedon’s logic, we might do well to investigate devising as a complimentary process. As Richard Bauman posits, ‘it is the multiply reflexive nature of performance that renders it an especially privileged site for the investigation of the communicative constitution of social life, including the construction and negotiation of identity’ (2000: 4). This is significant for my research considering Ntelioglou’s identification of the usefulness of ‘multimodality’ and Norton’s focus on the role of identity in SLA.

The following part of the devising section covers the most recent and extensive discussion of collective creation and devising which is found in Kathryn Syssoyeva and Scott Proudfit’s twin-volume, A History of Collective Creation and Collective Creation in Contemporary Performance (Syssoyeva and Proudfit, 2013a, 2013b). Proudfit and Syssoyeva describe collective creation as ‘at once an artistic form and a social practice’ (2013a: 26), which is a fitting start for an exploration of the suitability of this form of theatre as a
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conduit for additional language development. This aptness is further supported by Syssoyeva and Proudfoot’s claim that collective creation’s structure and process focuses on ‘the complexities of give and take that lie at the core of all human interaction’ (2013a: 26). These ‘complexities of give and take’ are found nowhere more deeply than in the process and purpose of language which allows humans to interact.

Taking Victor Turner’s thoughts on the correlation of performativity and social structure, Syssoyeva offers us the perspective of collective creation as working in the liminal area between ‘performativity of social life and performance’ (2013a: 6). This proposes that there is reciprocity between the creativity found in social and ethical organisation and that of the making of a performance. To this I would add that a democratic ethos engendered by people working together provides an ideological approach to support language development.6 However, it should be noted that Syssoyeva sees any potential political stance being ‘subsumed into a spectrum of socioethical impulses and outcomes’ and holding no particular ideological perspective which, in turn, throws into question the customary idea of collective creation having essentially radical, countercultural and innovative egalitarian methodologies (2013a: 6).

In fact, amid the array of influences that has informed collective creation, its approach as institutionally egalitarian is harder to evidence. Intriguingly, as Syssoyeva points out, as authoritarianism can be disguised by ‘egalitarian rhetoric’, the inverse can also be true with ‘directive dominance’ present behind many instances of collective devising (2013a: 7). Mermikides contributes to this debate in noting that just having a director in place does not necessarily mean that collective creation cannot occur, going on to suggest that a leadership role in facilitating is vital to the ongoing success of the endeavour (2013: 57). This, on face-value, seems to revisit the route that ‘someone has to be

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6 ‘Working together’ is the modern English term for the Latin-based ‘collaborate’: collabōrāre (< col-together + labōrāre to work) (Oxford English Dictionary, n.d.).
in charge’, yet, as in the ‘give and take’ mentioned above, leadership becomes much more nuanced in this regard and an egalitarian ideal might be viewed more as a guide than as a radical starting point. As such, there may be currency in aiming to revise and reform group structures to act as models for future language learning environments while grappling with the practical ramifications of the theoretical politics of egalitarianism for additional language development.

To do this involves a methodological nod to the collective creation movement of the 1960s and their self-examination as collectives. These groups or ensembles began to form a model structured around their politics, producing work which strived to enact how they saw that wider society should be designed (Di Cenzo, 1996: 31). Their long-term vision of building an egalitarian society was practised and represented in the very way the group interacted economically, politically or even on a person to person basis (Proudfit and Syssoyeva, 2013b: 124). Although Mark Weinberg asserted a quarter of a century ago that ‘simply organising and operating as a collective is a political action’ (1992: 18), Syssoyeva claims that in the intervening period and, more evidently, in recent histories of collective creation, the ‘counter pull of autocracy and democracy, of creative authority and the generative capacities of the group’ (2013b: 13) has become less clear cut and this uncertainty and questioning of pre-ordained roles foregrounds the pedagogical approach used in the research detailed in Part Two of this thesis.

In examining the approach of the director (or facilitator), Syssoyeva draws on Vsevold Meyerhold’s view of the director’s role. Meyerhold saw this role as the hosting of ‘discussions’ before the artists are given complete autonomy to create and after which time the director comes in again, ‘bringing into balance all those pieces freely created by other artists within this collective creation [...] for the harmony of the show’ (qtd. in Syssoyeva, 2013c: 51).
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2013c: 51). The show is then given over to the actors once more to do with as they please; that is, ‘to either “set fire to the ship” [...] or bare their souls in almost improvisatory additions, not to the text [...] but to the director’s suggestions’ (Meyerhold qtd. in Syssoyeva, 2013c: 51). An approach even more radical than this was that of the work done at the Reduta theatre (a main influence on the style and models of Jerzy Grotowski) through which the notion was formulated that ‘[s]tage directing is a collective activity – it results from collective creation’ (Osinski qtd. in Salata, 2013: 63). This sense of communal responsibility gave an attitude to the directorial role, yet, would be generally led by a couple of individuals from the group who would work in similar ways to Meyerhold (Salata, 2013: 63). From the Vieux-Colombier School, Suzanne Bing advocates a more gradual approach; as if the director acted in a way akin to butterfly stitches, dissolving until their presence disappeared, she states that, ‘[t]he actor can become through his own movement the director’s collaborator and render the latter’s work more and more useless’ (Bing in Copeau qtd. in Baldwin 2013, 77). So, given this, is the aim of the facilitator/director/teacher to eventually fade into irrelevance? This dissolving of pre-defined, convention roles is discussed in more depth in Part Two of the thesis.

There is a fuzziness in defining what ‘devising’ or ‘collective creation’ is; even the terms themselves have no concrete distinction. Syssoyeva differentiates between the two terms, suggesting that collective creation is ‘directorless’ and describing the ‘devised theatre movement of recent decades’ as ‘actor-generated concepts providing a raw material to be sculpted (shaped, cut, refined) by a director’ (2013c: 51). That said, and given the embracing of ambivalence in practice, I tend towards the interchangeability of the terms group devised theatre, collective creation and ensemble devising.
The Body

Building on the brief discussion of the body in relation to devising, in this section I look at the role of the body in language acquisition and how ideas about devising and from Applied Theatre can be used to examine this notion. This section is further divided into sub-sections: Mind, Body and Education; Context and Performance; Rhythm, Space and Silence.

Mind, Body and Education

Introducing Body and Language: Intercultural Learning Through Drama, Gerd Bräuer situates his use of ‘drama’ as ‘not limited to artistic work or pedagogical use, but rather it means the interplay between body and language in general that leads to doubts, questions, and insights for learners interacting with themselves and others and their linguistic and cultural identity (2002a: ix–x). Other theatre theorists and practitioners have commented in a similar vein. For example, Colette Conroy states, ‘Theatre is fundamentally concerned with the human body, and it also allows us to ask what we mean when we talk about bodies’ (2010: 8). Boal in his seminal text Games for Actors and Non-Actors claims ‘the most important element of theatre is the human body’ (2002: 16). Prior to Boal, Artaud stressed that ‘[t]heatre is the only place in the world, the last group means we still possess of directly affecting the anatomy’ (200b: 58) and, in The Theater of Cruelty* (First Manifesto), he famously called for the rediscovery of ‘the idea of a kind of unique language somewhere in between gesture and thought’ (2010a: 63). The educational drama practitioner and researcher Betty Jane Wagner even claims: ‘Gesture is a communication system even more basic to humans than language’ (2002: 11). Following these thoughts around the concepts of physicality as a way of communicating, which is embraced by the drama format, it is surprising that the literature dedicated to the investigation of the body in relation to
language acquisition through drama is so sparse. A case in point is the recent RiDE Special Edition on second language acquisition which contains only one article addressing this area, which scarcely mention it, if at all. It is possible though that this is due to the body being perceived as self-evidently a part of theatre and drama and that, therefore, to explicitly address the use of the physicality in such a learning environment might be merely identifying the obvious. There are, however, some examples of research into the role of the body for SLA, for example in Bräuer’s collection mentioned above and recently in Erika Piazzoli’s work (Piazzoli, 2018).

A corporeal technique to come from the SLA field, though used principally for beginners, is Total Physical Response (TPR). This has emerged from psychological theories that looked at learning from physical action. TPR is a method of language teaching in which students respond to verbal instructions with a corresponding physical movement. Its originator, James Asher, commenting on the method, has noted that ‘[i]n a sense, language is orchestrated to a choreography of the human body’ (Asher and Adamski, 1993: 4). TPR has been somewhat overlooked since its initial appearance and seems to be limited to basic language acquisition, though it has re-emerged incorporating storytelling with more sophistication that could certainly be of value to my research (Davidheiser, 2002; Alley and Overfield, 2008; Lichtman, 2018). Indeed, in the field of education, neglect of more physical approaches has been evident since John Dewey’s thought from nearly one hundred years ago that ‘the pupil has a body, and brings it to school along with his mind. And the body is, of necessity, a wellspring of energy; it has to do something’ (Dewey, 1930). Dewey was here referring to ‘the evil results which have flowed from the dualism of mind and body’ (Dewey, 1930).

Conroy addresses concerns also raised by Elizabeth Grosz in regard to dualism, emphasising that ‘[t]he separation of mind and body is a highly influential way of thinking,
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an example of dualist doctrine’ so much so that ‘the notion of the body carries with it a separation from other aspects of humanness’ (Conroy, 2010: 18). Regarding language, it is evident from the majority of the SLA literature that such a separation is prevalent in the field and, furthermore, any notion of the importance of body is only paid lip-service. Dwight Atkinson identifies this in citing an extensive list of ‘influential statements’, attesting to the dominance of ‘cognitive approaches to SLA’ (2011c: 1–3); that said, approaches to language learning are now starting to gradually emerge and challenge the previously prevailing cognitive slant. Merrill Swain, for example, describes her concept of ‘languaging’ as ‘a dynamic, never-ending process of using language to make meaning’ as opposed to language being merely ‘an activity of the mind’ (2006: 96).

Identifying that Maurice Merleau-Ponty’s work on phenomenology ‘aimed to deconstruct dualism’, Conroy tells us she finds it useful as ‘a tool to analyse experience’ which she finds ‘occurs only in the moment of performance’ (2010: 53), citing Grosz’s description of Merleau-Ponty’s work that informs us:

He locates experience midway between mind and body. Not only does he link experience to the privileged locus of consciousness; he also demonstrates that experience is always necessarily embodied, corporeally constituted, located in and as the subject’s incarnation. (Grosz qtd. in Conroy, 2010: 53)

This thinking, in regards to learning (at least from an Applied Theatre perspective) is reflected in Thompson’s comments that ‘[l]earning is an affective, felt state – comprised of many elements of awe, fear, love and intrigue – that is only diminished in its banishment to that part of the body called the mind’ (2011: 130). This, in turn, has an influence on the emotions, a crucial factor in language development discussed above in the SLA section. ‘Affect’ (and the emotional factors which influence language learning) is a notion that has

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19 Conroy informs us, ‘Dualism is a form of analysis that holds that an entity can be divided into two separate but related parts, such as mind/body or body/soul or nature/culture’ (2010: 18).
recently come into vogue in SLA. Initially, the ideas were formed through the publications of Earl Stevick (1980) and more recently the work of Jane Arnold (1999). The concept of affect in SLA concerns the influence of motivation, self-confidence, and anxiety on language acquisition. Although this is interesting approach to examine, there is little written in respect to how we physically feel influences our receptiveness to acquiring languages, even though the renowned anthropologist Robin Dunbar claims speech is ‘completely inadequate at the emotional level’ (2002: 147–148). In relation to performativity theory, Marvin Carlson describes how Shoshana Felman’s *The Literary Speech Act*\(^{20}\) has the connection between speech and the body as its central concern with Carlson explaining that:

> [...] these two elements cannot be separated in the speech act they can never be made fully congruent either, since the actions of the body are never entirely volitional or capable of linguistic articulation. The speaking body always creates an excess that subverts the very speech it produces. (2004: 66)

The body’s influence on how and what speech is produced is also influenced by the mind, though a clear division between the two has now been dismissed in most lines of research.

In response to the strictly cognitive perspective, Dwight Atkinson has recently drawn together methods or approaches that factor in aspects such as physicality and the environment which are currently developing: the ‘Sociocultural’; ‘Complexity Theory’; ‘Language Socialization’; ‘Conversation-analytic’; ‘Sociocognitive Theory’; and ‘Identity’ approaches. Atkinson states, ‘The core claim of a sociocognitive approach is that mind, body, and world function integratively in second language acquisition’ (2011a: 143). In the same chapter, he challenges the cognitive position’s dismissal of the importance of physicality saying:

\(^{20}\) Later rebranded in 2002 as *The Scandal of the Speaking Body: Don Juan with J. L. Austin, or Seduction in Two Languages* (Meridian: Crossing Aesthetics).
The body is also intimately involved in cognition. Empirically, researchers have demonstrated that: bodily states, bodily orientation, and emotions affect and are affected by cognitive processes; cognitive development depends on embodied action; and neural mechanisms underlying cognition are fundamentally embodied. (Atkinson, 2011a: 145)

Following this, Atkinson claims that the discovery of ‘mirror neurons’ has led to doubts about ‘the mainstream view that cognition, perception, and motor action are clearly separate phenomena’ (2011a: 145 italics in original). Along with mirror neurons, increasingly, neurobiology is finding itself involved in thinking about language. Richard Sennett in The Craftsman describes the therapeutic work of neurologist Frank Wilson on apraxia and aphasia as suggesting ‘that bodily movement is the foundation of language’ (2009: 180).

Given the growing influence and importance of neuroscientific investigation, some form of interdisciplinary connection with drama in language learning offers intriguing lines of inquiry.

From the perspective of physical theatre, Mermikides and Smart in Devising in Process, cite Simon Murray and John Keefe’s claim that “physical theatre” [...] traces its origins in our contemporary sense to those ideologies and manifestos which sought to reverse a dualism and hierarchy of word over body’ (qtd. in Mermikides and Smart, 2010: 9). Mermikides and Smart also call upon Ana Sanchez-Colberg who thinks that physical theatre is ‘based on [...] a mistrust of [...] language which aims to articulate, and thus contain, universal truths without questioning the material practices which gave rise to that language’ (Sanchez-Colberg qtd. in Mermikides and Smart, 2010: 9). While being a somewhat surprisingly radical theoretical shift for mainstream SLA practice to accommodate, there is much that needs to be acknowledged in the importance of the physical aspects of communication. Inspired by Conroy’s lead, these ideas – in combination with practical

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21 Apraxia and aphasia are the loss of skilled movement and loss of the ability to use or comprehend words respectively. Sennett’s definitions (2009: 180).
techniques such as tableaux and TPR – lend themselves to looking at the possibilities of an approach to language learning and research through drama that pay particular attention to learning through the body in the context of embodied experience. I tentatively call this approach, ‘experiencing the word’ or ‘experience of the word’, echoing Merleau-Ponty and his notions of the ‘body experiencing the world’. This is a concept which I expand upon in the publishable article chapter.

**Context and Performance**

In regard to words and context, Colette Conroy posits that we need more than dictionary definitions to understand different concepts (2010: 15), so it seems apt to start with her ideas. She speaks of the human body needing to be taken in context (Conroy, 2010: 16–17) and this works in much the same way as when Michel de Certeau tells us ‘space is like the word when it is spoken, that is […] situated as the act of a present (or of a time), and modified by the transformations caused by successive contexts’ (1988: 117). It also echoes Mikhail Bakhtin’s notion of ‘utterances’ that I touch upon later in this section. Atkinson highlights the work of Charles Goodwin in his ‘research in cognitive science, anthropology, and education’ (2011a: 151). Goodwin examined the intricacies of the body and meaning-making and, in Atkinson’s words, argued ‘that worldly environments are also crucial to human interaction’ (2011a: 147). Atkinson later cites Goodwin’s proposal that ‘[t]he positioning, actions, and orientation of the body in the environment are crucial to how participants understand what is happening and build action together’ (Goodwin qtd. in Atkinson, 2011a: 151). Atkinson goes on to emphasise that this has great significance as ‘learning/teaching/understanding takes place in the world: It is publicly available. Far from being locked away in cognitive space, learning is effected in the hybrid, partly public form of sociocognition’ (2011a: 151 italics in original). This is notable in terms of the similar crucial emphasis on the notion of the physical body in ensemble devising.
In *Making a Performance: Devising Histories and Contemporary Practices*, Govan, Nicholson and Normington devote a section of the book to concepts of the body in devised performance and practice. They refer to the use of phenomenology being key to emphasise ‘the importance of the lived experience of the body’ (Govan et al., 2007: 156). To illuminate this point, they later cite Merleau-Ponty who says, ‘by thus remaking contact with the body and with the world, we shall also rediscover ourself, since, perceiving as we do with our body is a natural self and, as it were, the subject of perception’ (Merleau-Ponty qtd. in Govan et al., 2007: 159). This notion is troubled by Bourdieu’s concept of ‘habitus’, formulated within the framework of his theory of cultural capital. Habitus is defined variously, beginning with Bourdieu himself, as ‘a system of dispositions (lasting, acquired schemes of perception, thought and action). The individual agent develops these dispositions in response to the objective conditions it encounters’ (1977: 72). Bourdieu and Loïc Wacquant describe it as ‘appreciation, and action that result from the institution of the social in the body’ (1992: 127). In *Excitable Speech*, Judith Butler calls habitus, ‘a tacit form of performativity, a citational claim lived and believed at the level of the body’ (1997: 155). And the concept is tersely summarised by John B. Thompson as ‘[t]he body is the site of incorporated history’ (1991: 13). Boal speaks to this idea saying that ‘the emotion may be blocked by a body already hardened by habit into a certain set of actions and reactions’ (2002: 29). This could, in turn, be problematic in attempting to introduce change, for example, with a pedagogic or linguistic approach.

**Rhythm, Space and Silence**

Returning to the notion of ‘experience of the word’, a more speculative direction, and one I tentatively introduce here, is to consider the notion of rhythm and embodiment and the possibilities of silence and space. Discussing Lefebvre’s concept of Rhythmanalysis (Lefebvre, 2004), Ben Highmore informs us that ‘[r]hythmanalysis is an attitude, an
orientation, a proclivity: it is not analytic in any positivistic or scientific sense of the term. It falls on the side of impressionism and description, rather than systematic data collecting’ (Highmore, 2005: 150). In this way it can serve as a fresh orientation – ‘a form of poetics’ (Highmore, 2005: 145) – where learners can become ‘rhythmanalyst[s]’ who listen to their body and ‘learns rhythm from it, in order consequently to appreciate external rhythms’ (Lefebvre, 2004: 19). Using Lefebvre’s work, Ella Bridgland claims the ‘[b]ody, containing both social and biological rhythms […] is a constant reference […] to orientate ourselves, in relation to the analysis of external knowledge’ (2012). Nick Prior finds this vision of rhythm:

[…] locates the body as a constant reference point for the alliances and conflicts of rhythms – not just the anatomical, physiological body, but the body as being-in-the-world, perceiving, acting, thinking and feeling. (2009: 19)

If we take Boal’s observation that when people leave their ‘habitual environment’ and go to places where, amongst other differences, ‘people […] speak with another rhythm’, and in strange locations we find it maddening to ‘select(ing) from the sensations’ (2002: 30) and place it in the framework of Lefebvre’s notion that ‘[e]verywhere there is interaction between a place, a time and an expenditure of energy, there is rhythm’ (Lefebvre, 2004: 15), perhaps we can entertain the possibilities of the use of rhythm in the body for understanding languages or, at least, being more ‘at home’ in their environment.

Elias Canetti said ‘a language is a place’ and a new space for this to occur can be found in the concept of ‘heterotopia’. In ‘Of Other Spaces: Utopias and Heterotopias’, Michel Foucault took this concept from the subfield of human geography, briefly outlined as a space (physically and mentally) where norms of behaviour are suspended to create a space of ‘otherness’ (1984). Heterotopia offers intriguing possibilities for site-specific

22 Canetti saying ‘a language is a place’ was cited by Magdalena Dombek in Call for Papers: Word and Text – A Journal of Literary Studies and Linguistics, II, 2 (2012).
23 In contrast to bell hooks’s assertion that language ‘is a place of struggle’ (hooks, 1995).
learning and the chance to take the classroom into the theatre, rather than take the theatre into the classroom.\footnote{Foucault’s suggestions for spaces include: cemeteries; asylums; brothels; boats; gardens; museums; prisons; Jesuit colonies; and festivals (Foucault, 1984).} Lefebvre also asks us to ‘listen to the world and above all what are disdainfully called noises [...] and to ‘murmurs’ [rumeurs], full of meaning – and finally [...] listen to silences’ (2004: 19); Suzuki in Culture is the Body! wants ‘to learn to make the whole body speak, even when one keeps silent’ (Suzuki and Matsuoka, 1984: 28).

Therefore, perhaps, there is a path to take looking at what an emphasis on an understanding of non-verbal communication in languages can contribute to learning. For instance, there may be moments when silences provide protection. James Thompson cites Marian Tankint who, referring to people in a post-conflict situation, says, ‘[r]emaining silent makes people less vulnerable’ (Tankint qtd. in Thompson, 2011: 70), while Thompson himself says earlier that, ‘not-speaking’ might also be the most rewarding place for a person or community to occupy at a particular time’ (2011: 68). One can draw a parallel (albeit in less extreme circumstances) in the SLA field with Colette Granger explanation that, sometimes for some learners, silences are not just for understanding or calculating but an identity struggle with feelings of loss and anxiety ‘in the complex process of moving from one language to another, and from one self to another’ (2004: 6–7). As Patricia Duff noted in a study she conducted in a multicultural classroom with mixed ‘native’ and ‘learner’ speakers: ‘Silence protected them from humiliation’ (2002: 312). There is also the well-known ‘Silent Way’ created by Caleb Gattegno (1972). Though this method places the emphasis only on the teacher’s silence, we can take the lead from this seemingly counterintuitive (and certainly unconventional) approach and allow the participants, along with the teacher, to be silent and use speech when ready in much the same way as a child is

\footnote{Perhaps more so if we use Foucault’s ‘boat’ as a metaphor for the theatre space: ‘the boat is a floating piece of space, a place without a place, that exists by itself, that is closed in on itself and at the same time is given over to the infinity of the sea’ (1984: 9).}
allowed their time and space before producing words – the ‘silent period’ as Stephen Krashen has described it (1982: 26). As Claire Kramsch suggests, there is value in class time:

[... to listen in silence to the cadences of a student or to our own voice reading aloud, to follow silently the rhythm of a conversation [...] the episodic structure of a story well told [...] to even foster silence as a way of letting the students reflect on what they are right now experiencing. (2009a: 209–210)

Perhaps they are experiencing the word or the words and their rhythm and it might be worth listening and observing maybe through the notions offered to us by Merleau-Ponty and Lefebvre above.

Unfinishedness

In this section I examine the idea of ‘unfinishedness’, how it applies to language learning, and the role devising and Applied Theatre might have to play. My interest in this theme stems from three different strands of experience. Academically, reading Paulo Freire’s work, specifically A Pedagogy of Freedom (1998), first introduced me to the word itself and the idea behind it. In my practice and research, prior to this PhD research, I found similar notions in the practice of devised theatre and in the readings on that subject, some of which has been discussed above. The third element is the conversations throughout my work as a language teacher where my students and I could never feel that we were ‘complete’ or completely in control as we developed in the target language. There would always be an occasion that would cause us to slip back into that feeling of bewilderment.

Freire describes how our ‘unfinishedness is essential to the human condition’ (1998: 52) and fundamental to being engaged learners and our ability to learn, claiming ‘[e]ducation does not make us educable. It is our awareness of being unfinished that makes
us educable’ (1998: 58). Mikhail Bakhtin has a similar concept which he terms ‘unfinalizable’ viewing the future as an open and creative space, stating that:

\[...\] nothing conclusive has yet taken place in the world, the ultimate word of the world and about the world has not yet been spoken, the world is open and free, everything is still in the future and will always be in the future. (1984a: 166 italics in original)\[26\]

In the writing on Applied Theatre, Anthony Jackson has noted that learning and meaning making is an ‘accumulative and never-ending process’ (2007: 271). He identifies similar ideas in other renowned writers in the field referring to Taylor’s identification of the “incompleteness’ of applied theatre’ and Thompson’s description of the field’s work as based in ‘doubt not certainty’ (Taylor and Thompson both cited in Jackson, 2007: 271). Judith Ackroyd notes the need for ‘tentativeness and ambiguity’ in narrative inquiry in drama as where the ‘continual unfolding’ of the story is seen (2007: 113) and Patti Lather calls for a praxis based on ‘undecidability, incompleteness and dispersion rather than the comforts of transformation and closure’ (2007: 107). This thinking follows Carlson’s claims that poststructuralist theory insisted that ‘all positions [are] relative, shifting, and negotiable’ (2004: 57) and Janet Wolff’s challenge to philosophy ‘to establish a new discourse of value without a foundation in certainties and universals’ (2008: 5). These notions of ‘unfinishedness’ or ‘unfinalisability’ can be readily applied more specifically to the area of language learning informed by the linguist Guy Deutscher’s declaration that ‘language isn’t what it used to be, but then again, it never was’ (Deutscher, n.d.) by which he means that language is constantly dynamic and will continue to be so.

\[26\] Dmitri Nikulin differentiates ‘unfinished’ and ‘unfinalizable’ in On Dialogue (2005:57-58), stressing the semantics of each word, though I use them here interchangeably.
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**The Idealisation of the ‘Native’ Speaker**

Nicholson highlights Derrida’s suggestion that language ‘is always pretending to be universal’ (Derrida qtd. in 2005: 137) and Derrida’s expansion on that thought merits inclusion. He states that ‘universal, empty, formal language […] is always pretending to be universal, always under the authority of a hegemonic state, language, or group of states’, and concludes that a single language cannot avoid exclusion of non-speakers and elevation of that language’s speaker’s values and traditions (Davis, 2014). Nicholson complements her citation of Derrida saying that, ‘[t]his has particular political consequences for using languages that have become hegemonic, most obviously the English language’ (2005: 137) echoing the concerns of Pennycook, Widdowson, Naysmith and Graddol amongst others mentioned above.

Aside from the effect on cultures and their potential disappearance, there is the question of what the aim of language learning should be. Most responses would, with much merit and immediate logicality, incorporate an ideal of the native speaker at some point (discussed briefly above in the Second Language Acquisition section). This does however pose considerable problems. John Thompson, in his introduction to Bourdieu’s *Language and Symbolic Power* points out that a ‘particular set of linguistics practices as a normative model of correct usage […] produces the illusion of a common language’ (1991: 5). This ignores the conditions that made the practices dominant and legitimate initially, and positions that practice as correct and ‘victorious’; the standard to be achieved. This application of Bourdieu’s notion of ‘politics of purity’ in the general perception of what is ‘standard’ is seen, for example, most evidently in how sociolinguistic factors have given Received Pronunciation (or BBC pronunciation) and the more current successor, Estuary English, particular prestige not only in Britain but in its idealisation as the accent to be
replicated by the English learner. This is also true in terms of prescriptive grammar, which linguist Vivian Cook states, is ‘based on criteria to do with social class’ (2008: 20–21) and provides the basis for most learners’ framework for language acquisition contributing to what Bialystok and Hakuta critically term a ‘standard and perfect version of the language’ (1999: 165).

Larsen-Freeman posits that the very notion of a ‘target’ end-state is theoretically untenable warning against a ‘particular view of language – a view of monolithic, homogeneous, idealized, static end-state competence, where language acquisition is seen to be a process of conformity to uniformity’ with a repeated call to ‘entertain a view of language as a dynamic complex adaptive system’ (2006a: 194). Indeed, Meryl Siegal emphasises that ‘language learning and language use is not simply a case of one target language variety, but rather a complicated task of discerning power structures within a social order and power hierarchy’ (1996: 358). So if, as John Thompson explains, ‘differences in terms of accent, grammar, and vocabulary [...] are indices of the social positions of speakers and reflections of the quantities of linguistic capital [...] which they possess’ (1991: 18), which language (or style of language) do we teach? Ellis also addresses the subject of the idealisation of native speaker and its role in language learning challenging the assumption that interaction is predominantly between native and non-native and suggests

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27 ‘RP is probably the most widely studied and most frequently described variety of spoken English in the world, yet recent estimates suggest only 2% of the UK population speak it’ (British Library website - retrieved 08.09.2012).
28 ‘The term ‘Estuary English’ is a lay term and is considered inaccurate by many, including Peter Trudgill who prefers that it be described as being from the Home Counties Modern Dialect area (Trudgill, 2000: 80).
29 Ironically, in terms of its domination on a global scale, ‘many commentators even suggest that younger RP speakers often go to great lengths to disguise their middle-class accent by incorporating regional features into their speech’ (British Library website - retrieved 08.09.2012).
replacing the native/non-native definition with Constant Leung, Roxy Harris and Ben Rampton’s concept of ‘Language Expertise’ (Ellis, 2008: 285).³⁰

Group devised theatre could be an able vehicle in response to this as, Heddon and Milling assert, ‘a group devising process is more likely to engender a performance that has multiple perspectives, that does not promote one, authoritative, ‘version’ or interpretation, and that may reflect the complexities of contemporary existence and variety of narratives that constantly intersect with, inform, and in very real ways, construct our lives’ (2006: 192). Alternately, if we are to work with some form of the ‘ideal’, it may be interesting to follow Sennett’s line of reasoning where (albeit referring to craftsmanship) ‘[t]he challenge in the workshop is to treat the ideal model as something people might use on their own terms’ (2009: 102–103). Here learners might be asked to innovate rather than only imitate and, to some extent, using Sennett’s phrase, ‘[t]he model becomes a stimulus rather than a command’ (2009: 103).

A sense of incompleteness is typical – if not ubiquitous – in additional language learners, even with those who reach highly proficient levels (sometimes exceeding the linguistic capabilities of native speakers, though not their ‘finite comfort’). In fact, as a counterpoint to the idea of unfinishedness, another complication is ‘fossilization’ in adults – a sense that one can progress no further.³¹ In addressing this issue, Vivian Cook argues that the ‘model for language teaching should be the fluent L2 user […] not the native speaker’ (2016: 222), preferring, what Michael Byram calls, ‘intercultural communicative competence’ (Byram qtd. in Cook, 2016: 222). Cook concludes that ‘[t]his enables language teaching to have goals that students can see as relevant and achievable rather than the distant vision of

³⁰ Most communication in English is between non-native and non-native speakers (Graddol 2006, 87).
³¹ ‘Selinker [1972] introduced the construct of fossilization to characterize a type of non-learning that represents a permanent state of mind and behaviour’ (Han and Odlin, 2006: 3).
³² Instead of ‘fossilization’ (which can be seen to signify failure) Ellis (2008: 30) suggests the use of Long’s (2008) term ‘stabilization’.
native speaker competence’ (2016: 222). James Edie in the foreword to Merleau-Ponty’s *Consciousness and the Acquisition of Language* pictures this as the need to understand the ‘universality of incomplete but sufficient comprehensibility which we effect in actually speaking to others’ (1991: xxix). He argues that ‘very few native speakers know [...] what the laws of linguistic usage accepted in their linguistic communities are’, though they are able to produce understandable sentences (Edie, 1991: xxxii). Regarding teaching, Cook even goes so far as to suggest that in ‘non-native’ countries ‘the right to say how something should be taught is even less a right of the native speaker than the right to say how something should be said’ (2008: 165) invoking the legacy of colonialism and neo-colonialism.

Alan Firth and Johannes Wagner believe the ‘social and contextual dimensions of language’ are marginalised, if not ignored, by the ‘orthodox social psychological hegemony on SLA’ which causes an imbalance in SLA theory and bias in SLA methodology (1997: 295). This, they inform us, gives a ‘skewed perspective on discourse and communication’ positioning the language learner as a ‘deficient communicator’ with native speaker competence as the target (Firth and Wagner, 1997: 295–296). The awareness of context and its state of flux is increasingly important in additional language learning given that global communication has become increasingly fluid. An example of viewing language fluidity and the importance of context is shown when Carlson evokes Bakhtin, seeing what he named as ‘utterances’ as always citing previous speech, though never exactly in the same manner as context constantly changes (Carlson, 2004: 59). The importance of context and its changeability is noted by Victor Turner in *The Anthropology of Performance*, via the lens of post-modern theory. Turner points to how context ‘contaminates’ showing the ‘flaws,

33 John Thompson in his introduction to *Language and Symbolic Power* tells us that Bourdieu argues that Noam Chomsky’s ‘competence’ is too, ‘abstract’, “actual speakers (have) a capacity to produce expressions which are appropriate for particular situations” – practical competence’, as opposed to Chomsky’s “ideal speaker” (1991: 7).
hesitations, personal factors, incomplete, elliptical, context-dependant, situational proponents of performance’ which are ‘clues to the very nature of human process itself’ (1988: 77). There seems to be no consideration of this in the literature surrounding drama for additional language learning. It could be fruitful to see what drama, and, specifically, the tenets that devising is based on, is able to contribute in engaging with these challenges.

If we take Vološinov’s claim that ‘language is [...] a continuous process, an unceasing creativity’ (Bakhtin, 1994: 26) as a starting point, then, along with Govan, Nicholson and Normington’s suggestion that, ‘the imaginative space offered by performance-making [...] challenges what Boal has described as the “finished visions” of the world, which are often misrepresented as fixed and unchangeable narratives’ (2007: 81), it is certainly possible to suggest that the theories and practices of devising could address this sense of incompleteness. Indeed, as Heddon and Milling note, in its development during the 50s and 60s, devising began to consider ‘the possibility of presenting work that was ‘unfinished” (2006: 21) – a notion that is appealing to the aforementioned considerations for additional language learning.

Mermikides and Smart, in their introduction to Devising in Process, give examples of ‘the cyclical nature of devising’, stating that many practitioners think that ‘the devising process is never finished’ (2010: 23). They contemplate the importance of ongoing reflection, posing the idea that ‘if you never consider a production ‘over’, there is never a reason to stop thinking about how it might be developed or improved; thus, reflection is, in fact, an essential element of every stage of process’ (Mermikides and Smart, 2010: 23). They go on to point out, regarding devising and working with others, ‘the notion of reflection includes an ongoing consideration of [...] techniques, strategies and approaches to process’ (Mermikides and Smart, 2010: 27). This perspective may, therefore, do well to be considered in language
learning rather than the adherence to one form or approach, echoing the ‘multimodality’ approach used by Ntelioglou and discussed above.

I see using the notion of ‘unfinishedness’ particularly apt to examine pertinent issues in language acquisition, such as the role of identity, emotional considerations, and the negotiation of a dynamic ‘ideal’ model. The concepts of the devising process form a solid theoretical foundation for providing ways to address these concerns. As an additional critical element, something which has been evident in the literature is the length of the studies and projects that involve drama in additional language acquisition. I find it difficult to see how such short ‘interventions’ can provide convincing evidence of the impact of drama and so, therefore, I propose more long-term involvement. This is explored in Part Two of the thesis and involves experimenting with uncertainty and unfinishedness through theatre for additional language development.

In ‘The Body’ section, I discussed the relationship of language, body and education and proposed some possible directions language learning though drama. I have placed emphasis on the examination of the explicit role of the body in language development as I have found little investigation of this in the literature while critiquing the (still) dominant perspective of dualism in SLA. Along with this, I looked at possibilities of examining performativity and performance, and the importance of context. I have suggested interdisciplinary work with neuroscience and the return to look at the (re)adoption of methods that have been somewhat neglected until recently (in the shape of TPR). I have also put forward some ideas around the concepts of rhythm, space, and silence. In addition, I have begun looking at the body and/as research as suggested by Jennifer Parker-Starbuck and Roberta Mock (2011) and James Thompson (2011: 132). One strand of inquiry connected to the body that is not included in the literature review is that of gesture and kinesics. As I continued my practiced research and reading, the possibilities of studying this area began
to direct my research and led to a pilot study which is analysed and discussed in the next chapter, ‘Let Me Hear Your Body Talk’.
Chapter Two

Let Me Hear Your Body Talk:
‘Experiencing the Word’ for Additional Language Acquisition

Abstract

This article describes a research project created to investigate the application of theatre devising strategies to create a heightened awareness of non-verbal language and embodied experience of words in second language acquisition (SLA) learning and teaching. This is in response to the tendency in SLA teaching to lack an understanding of the importance and the potential of the body’s involvement in the process of language acquisition. Four workshops in Basel, Switzerland were designed and facilitated with adults from distinct cultural and linguistic backgrounds as part of my doctoral research from February-March 2013. I use data generated by an ethnographic approach to fieldwork by analysing interviews, written responses in the project blog (both by the participants and my own), and observations of responses from participants during the workshops.

I discuss the theatrical activities used for this purpose reflecting on the possible effects on participants’ linguistic ability and awareness of their physicality as part of an ongoing research process. I draw on Bourdieu’s notion of linguistic habitus and Merleau-Ponty’s notion of the ‘body experiencing the world’ to provide a theoretical framework for analysing the processes of these workshops. These frameworks also support the development of a theatre practice to support SLA that I am tentatively calling ‘experiencing the word’. I propose that this approach better provides the pragmatic and social conditions, re-created and rehearsed through drama, needed in learning an additional language. This can be done by turning attention to language learning as an embodied experience.
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Language can only be understood through being-in-the-world
Stephen Priest (1998: 175)

Heading Off: An Introduction

This article discusses a practical project called ‘Experiencing the Word’ that used group devising activities for additional language acquisition. The project consisted of four additional language learning workshops with adults in Basel, Switzerland. It was a pilot project in preparation for the ‘Performing Languages’ project, discussed in Part Two of this thesis. In this article, I analyse the role of the body and gesture for Second Language Acquisition (SLA) during the workshop series, including the use of the voice and breathwork with adult language learners. This is illustrated in three activities from the workshops that focus on different facets of the project: overt physicality, awareness of gesture, and breath and voice work. The article proposes that the use of devising, with its emphasis on physical theatre, creates a learning environment where there is a greater focus on the role of the body in communication. This is in contrast to more conventional SLA classroom techniques that have a ‘textbook-defined practice’ (Akbari, 2008: 647).

By using devising techniques with its emphasis on the role of the body, the learner becomes more physically relaxed and feels less anxiety in their use of a new language. Aligned with this emphasis on the body, a focus on the voice and breathing can improve desired pronunciation while also lessening anxiety in oral production for additional language learners. Furthermore, the practice and observance of gesture can increase the learner’s awareness of their own gestures and capability to choose appropriate gestures to accompany speech in the target language, aiding more precise communication. An overview of literature is provided, forming the theoretical basis of the article. It uses ideas from anthropology, philosophy and sociology, specifically the work of Bourdieu and Merleau-Ponty, and from the sociocultural movement in SLA theory. The three illustrated ‘moments’
from the ‘Experiencing the Word’ project are discussed in the context of these theories with an explanation of how discoveries from these moments add to the literature.

All in the Mind? A Theoretical Framework

Within the structure of Pierre Bourdieu’s concept of habitus which, according to John Thompson, comprises ‘a set of dispositions’ – a way of acting – acquired through inculcation into any social environment (1991: 12), Bourdieu identifies a subset called *linguistic habitus*: the verbal and physical characteristics that we acquire when learning to speak within certain contexts (1991: 82). Bourdieu elaborates that this linguistic sense influences how we regard and value ourselves and our own acts of (linguistic and cultural) production and how these are exchanged with others, which is dependent on how we are conditioned by, and positioned in, society (1991: 82). This means that certain social and political positions can mediate ‘the usage of language’ and the value appropriated to the ‘*sense of one’s own social worth*’ and even ‘one’s whole physical posture in the social world’ (Bourdieu, 1991: 82 italics in original). In his introduction to Bourdieu’s *Language and Symbolic Power*, Thompson explains that ‘[l]inguistic utterances or expressions are forms of practice [...] to speak in particular contexts’, further concluding that the ‘linguistic habitus is also inscribed in the body’ (1991: 17). Bourdieu himself expands on this idea in relation to world saying:

> Language is a body technique, and specifically linguistic, especially phonetic, competence is a dimension of bodily hexis in which one’s whole relation to the social world, and one’s whole socially informed relation to the world, are expressed. (1991: 86)

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1 ‘Bodily hexis, a basic dimension of the sense of social orientation, is a practical way of experiencing and expressing one’s own sense of social value’ (Bourdieu, 1984: 476).
This idea is one readily familiar to adult language learners in the *sensation* that when we are using an unfamiliar ‘technique’ like an additional language, we are *incompetent* and our being-in-the-world is confused.

According to Rod Ellis, the main development in second language acquisition (SLA) in the last 25 years is the appearance of ‘sociocultural SLA’, which emphasises and involves socio-cultural considerations in language acquisition (2008: xxi). This position situates the language learning process as inherently linked to the environment, with people’s ability to learn from experience through ‘the acquisition of other skills and knowledge’ intrinsic in linguistic and cognitive development (Lightbown and Spada, 2006: 19). In response to the cognitive perspective, Dwight Atkinson points to the fundamental contention of a sociocognitive approach to SLA is an integrative combination of the cerebral, physical and the environmental (2011a: 143). Atkinson also challenges the cognitive position’s dismissal of the importance of physicality by pointing out the empirically proven innate involvement of the body with cognition. This position of ‘extended, embodied cognition-for-SLA’ (Atkinson, 2010) indicates a need for a more overt examination of the role of the body in language acquisition from within the language teaching community.² In line with Helen Nicholson’s claim that ‘drama is unlike many other forms of learning because it has an aesthetic dimension and, as the aesthetic is a discourse on the body, it engages the senses’ (2005: 57), I suggest that there are great benefits in involving the physicality of theatre and drama in the learning process.

Though different traditions of practice place different emphases on the body, physicality as a way of communicating is certainly embraced by theatre so it is surprising that there is not more literature dedicated to the investigation of the body in relation to language acquisition through drama, proportionately mirroring SLA literature in this

² For an extended discussion of this idea, see Atkinson, 2010: 613-619.
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respect. There are, of course, some exceptions. For example, Gerd Bräuer’s *Body and Language: Intercultural Learning through Drama* (2002a) contains a wide range of contributions from practitioners and there are some notable recent exceptions, such as Erika Piazzioli’s *Embodying Language in Action* (2018) along with the work of Jean-Rémi Lapaire (2006, 2012, 2016), discussed later in this article. The use of drama for SLA, for Bräuer, is not intended only for the purposes of art or teaching, but also for the ‘interplay between body and language’ (2002b: x). He further elaborates, saying that ‘[t]he focus on (linguistic) signs and signals alone is not enough to convey language knowledge successfully. Communicating the physical language of things, ideas, and people is equally important for learning’ (Bräuer, 2002b: x). By this I understand that increased emphasis should be placed in language learning on ways of communicating through various kinds of gesture that are learned by living in a certain place and culture and which are not readily understood or explainable – a tacit understanding.

If discussion of the body is absent from the literature, the suggestion would be that it is absent from practice to the same degree. Therefore, my premise is that additional language development is lacking in something which would overcome some inherent weaknesses in the dominant cognitivist focus on the mind. Aligning with Bräuer’s position and the understanding ‘that learning is not all explicit and mediated by language, but often tacit and embodied’ (Calhoun, 2002: 15), I have begun to establish an approach, which echoes Maurice Merleau-Ponty’s theoretical framework of the body ‘being-in-the-world’ as a foundation for my research and my initial practical experiments. This approach is called ‘experiencing the word’ and is based on the notion that, in Merleau-Ponty’s formulation, we ‘begin to understand the meaning of words through their place in a context of action, and by taking part in a communal life’ (2002: 208). Although an approach that seeks to place the learner in a ‘context of action’ may appear obvious, it is still not a major consideration in language acquisition in formal education compared to the emphasis on learning vocabulary
and lists of verbs, and in contrast with common text-based approaches, which emphasises the production of the written word.

Recognition of the more affecting parts of SLA – the intangible sense of understanding of what to say and do in unforeseen circumstances – and resolving the difficulties of social engagement, especially for adult language learners, is neglected in favour of the more measurable and academic elements of language learning; as the learner ages, the more exclusively cerebral education tends to become. This is problematic as adults form their expectations of how languages are learnt through these more rigid, text-based experiences such as learning lists of verbs or memorisation of grammar. Though these cognitive methods can certainly be an important aspect of language learning, approaches that consider the emotional factors are neglected and may even be unnerving for students. This wariness of addressing this aspect of language acquisition persists despite many commentators emphasising the intrinsic emotional nature of language learning. For example, Jane Arnold (1999) and Aneta Pavlenko (2006), have shown, in theory and practice, the need to engage with this side of additional language learning as it reflects the reality of additional language speakers’ context of action. Katherine E. Garrett demonstrates this point acutely, telling us that an immigrant shopping for food in a grocery store in New Jersey in the United States could not ask a simple question and found themselves in tears, explaining, ‘So I cried, not for the food, but because I was unable to express myself in English’ (Garrett, 2006: 5) This emphasises the significance of language and communication in terms of sustenance. Butler underlines this vulnerability and the complications involved in understanding a new linguistic habitus explaining, ‘The speech situation is thus not a simple sort of context, one that might be defined easily by spatial and temporal boundaries. To be injured by speech is to suffer a loss of context, that is, not to know where you are’ (Butler, 1997: 4). This loss of where we are, I surmise, also alludes to who you are.
It is perhaps this emotional vulnerability – one of the deepest inhibiting factors for language learners – that prevents the learner from taking the inevitable risks that must be taken in engaging with a new form of speaking or communicating. This impeding element might be addressed through a more integrated approach to balance conventional approaches with methods that consider environmental factors encountered in everyday life. Of equal significance are drama techniques focusing on physicality including rhythms and nuance of language, gesture and vocal production. Such techniques could give more control over various aspects of our engagement with others in differing environments aiding our ability to communicate more comfortably in new linguistic habitus and comprehend our being-in-a-(foreign)-world.

To the Heart of It All: Project Outline and the Research Design and Process

To investigate the connection between physical theatre, gesture, and vocal work and improving confidence and control in using an additional language, I set up a pilot theatre workshop series to test the effects of these techniques. Ten participants attended a four-week theatre workshop series for English language acquisition. The duration of the project was two hours a week, meeting one evening a week, for one month (26th February–19th March 2013). During the process, the research subjects participated in various activities I led, based on developing an understanding of physicality. The activities explored non-verbal communication, the rhythm of the spoken word and, also, accompanying gestures. The participants discussed the possible effects that these activities have on heightening awareness of embodied knowledge and the role this plays in communication in relation to additional language acquisition, specifically English.

Attendees participated for a variety of reasons ranging from more exposure to the English language to being intrigued by something ‘different’. The group consisted of ten
participants, made up of four females and six males. Seven of the participants were Spaniards, two from Venezuela and one from Romania, and there was a variety in the ages of the group, ranging from 26 to 44 years old (one was in their 20s and most were around 40-years-old). Six of the participants had relocated to Switzerland from Spain within the last three years to work at a large multi-national corporation with four being spouses or partners of employees relocated by the same company and were actively seeking employment in their own right. All the participants had received formal education to university level in their home countries and had developed strong literacy skills in their own language as well as in other languages. There was a range of ability level in English: two people had no recent practice in spoken English while others were quite capable and mostly intermediate/upper-intermediate learners. The group were made aware that there would be a difference in levels, though there were no concerns about this. The participants were asked to be interviewed individually before and after the workshop sessions; group interview-discussions at each session took place, though not as extensively as planned. All the names of the participants have been anonymised. A pre- and post-project survey was sent out to the participants and a project blog was set up summarising each session and requesting responses after each session.

The activities and session concepts for the project were based upon those often used in theatre devising and geared towards the explicit use of the body in communication. They included mime, gestural work and vocalisation exercises and I discuss a selection of them in the following section. They were sourced in the work of Augusto Boal, Viola Spolin, Cicely Berry, Helen White, Tainan Jen, and other theatre practitioners along with my own experience and practice in theatre in education. Each session was planned to stand individually within an overarching aim of familiarising the participants with a variety of

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3 Bi-C1 in the Common European Framework Reference scale.
4 Boal’s *Games for Actors and Non-Actors* (2002) places much emphasis on the role of physicality in communication and understanding.
techniques used in theatre. There were performative moments throughout each of the sessions, which were informally observed by the rest of the group. At the beginning of each workshop, participants were asked to be especially aware of themselves, the others in the group and the space they were in, specifically in relation to developing a heightened awareness of the role of physicality in communication.

My research tools to collect data were: video documentation of the sessions to complement my own reflections and observations on the sessions, a project blog, a pre- and post-project electronic survey, and audio-recorded flexible and loosely or semi-structured interviews. The data was collected and coded then compared with other data to find possible thematic links. The discussion-interviews were based on the electronic survey questions with space for discussion to grow allowing for possible surprise discoveries. The participants were interviewed for sixty minutes individually before the four-workshop series began and again for another sixty minutes after the workshops were completed. The interviews took place between the 18th April and 21st May 2013. All the individual interviews were in Spanish as it was the most comfortable language for the participants and were translated by me to English for this article. The group interview-discussions during each workshop session were in English.

The Body: Let Me Hear It Talk - The Story and Findings of the Project

To illustrate my findings, I describe a selection of activities from the workshops, discuss participants’ responses to them and explain how they connect to my theoretical framework. Although there are numerous elements to the study, I would like to focus on those that presented the most tangible discoveries concerning awareness of gesture, breathing and voice work, starting with a discussion of the overall approach and its possible effects.
The Fabric of Language

A flash of fabric flies through the air, becomes a sashaying gown, and is then rolled out as red carpet filled with struts, smiles and swoops. 'Una faena' follows. The watching Caesar strides forth – a twist – and now a ghost! A tug-of-war, the limbo, a bed of hot coals to be walked. Sat at their transient table, the diners catch their reflection in the large window pane ...

This describes part of a sequence where the participants, after preparatory exercises, played silently in groups of four with a large piece of silken fabric creating 'sketches' or 'snippets' which would be later reformed as a short scene. It is from the final workshop session called The Fabric of Language: Words and the Spaces In-between. It was adapted from a workshop of the Taiwanese theatre company Tainan Jen which was created to examine intercultural collaborative creation. For the purposes of the project, I modified the original session, which incorporates elements of collaboration, negotiation and exploration, along with the creative improvisational and playful aspects, and I placed an emphasis on additional language acquisition. Various performances by the participants were produced at the end of the session and this was the first time the participants collaboratively created a performance piece in the workshops, although there were improvised moments where participants watched each other throughout the four sessions.

In fact, the workshops were as much an introduction to theatre as anything else. This particular instance allowed participants to be freer with their gestures – the fabric acting as a kind of ‘distraction’ – and it shares similar ideas to the work of Jean-Rémi

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5 In bullfighting, the matador's final series of passes before the kill.
6 I learnt and adapted the session sequence from Helen White – co-founder and a faculty member of the C.U.N.Y. Applied Theatre M.A. program.
Lapaire. Lapaire’s work is based on thinking of the anthropologist Marcel Jousse (1997) who believed human expression was rooted in gesture. This theory is supported by the conclusions of the anthropologists David Armstrong, William Stokoe and Sherman Wilcox (1995) on the relationship between language and physical action, who also posit that language is derived from and shaped by gestures and gesture is inseparable from language.

Part of Lapaire’s work in gesture studies is to have learners play with the size of gesture then develop, compose and perform short pieces of choreography where ‘gestural forms are explored’ and identifying ‘dimensions of movement, patterns and motifs’ (2012: n.p.). This has been demonstrated by Lapaire to lead to increased level of comfort in language learners and make them more at ease in their new linguistic habitus. Lapaire’s approach is very precise whilst the more improvisational sequence I have described and work with creates ‘raw material’ which is later sculpted into a short scene. Using drama, there is a greater emphasis on the observation and self-awareness of what we are communicating non-verbally and with this approach the participants can rehearse movements and gestures and from there can further articulate with the spoken word – the communicative act coming from the gesture rather than the gesture to accompany the word – taking away the burden of making meaning through words, which, in paying too much attention to word order, intonation and emphasis, can sometimes prevent fluency in the additional language learner.

Carkin also feels there is much that drama can offer in this regard. He comments that, in the work of Shin Mei Kao and Cecily O’Neill, ‘paralinguistic elements of gesture and movement’ allow participants to assume the ‘behavioral characteristics of the target culture, rehearse and experience the proxemics related to the environment of the fictional world

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7 Lapaire is professor of cognitive linguistics, gesture studies and dance theory at Université Michel de Montaigne-Bordeaux 3.
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within which they move and speak’ (2007: 1). Norah Morgan and Juliana Saxton suggest that '[n]ot only do expression and gesture help to 'fill out' the words we are saying but they often express thoughts and feelings of which we may not be aware’ (qtd. in Culham, 2002: 101). The implication is that a freer use of the body from the typical restrictive sedentary position in the language learning environment would lead to an overall re-balancing of additional language learning with adult learners from a purely intellectual and mind-centred methodology to a more holistic process. A methodology that pays more attention to gesture and kinesics, which we find in devising processes, alleviates the need to produce fully formed ‘perfect’ sentences immediately, and creates a strong corporeal framework on which to 'hang' utterances giving more confidence to the speaker. Also, there is a greater emphasis on the observation and self-awareness of what we are communicating non-verbally. In the following section, I will develop this idea further examining a moment from the workshops.

**Awareness of Gesture**

_Sitting less than one metre away from each other one participant remains motionless; the person opposite speaks animatedly about how they got here today. There is a growing sense of unease as the speaking continues. Around the room there are four other 'pairs' engaged in the same way, though there are nuanced differences: one person can clearly be seen trying to suppress the urge to move – they sit on their hands; another listener seems to lose interest and briefly looks at others in the room before flicking back to concentrate on what they are being told; a speaker leans farther and farther forward trying to find a response in their partner._

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8 Proxemics is the ‘study or interpretation of physical proximity between people in various situations; the ways in which people interact spatially, esp. in maintaining a certain amount of space between themselves and others’ (Oxford English Dictionary, n.d.).
These are impressions from an activity called ‘Poker Body’ (listening without gesture) for which participants were asked to listen to their partner for two minutes without any physical or verbal response (no nodding, affirmations or typical reactions).9 ‘A’ and ‘B’ chose who went first by whoever had the longest eyelashes – this caused participants to look at each other’s physical aspects more closely. The exercise is followed by a discussion where everyone talks about how they felt in the roles of listener and speaker and how, or if, the exercise has made them more aware of their gestures. We did the activity twice during the project after some of the participants had expressed that they would like to do it again, as becoming conscious of a normally unconscious activity was inherently intriguing. In fact, the exercise, if not solely responsible, was certainly a catalyst for developing a keener sense for the participants of their own and others’ use of gesture.

It can be understood that language, along with its overt linguistic value, also has a symbolic quality (Bourdieu, 1991). Then if, also, we accept the assertion that ‘theatre uses bodies in a way that mirrors or replicates the performative’ (Conroy, 2010: 62), the question can be asked: how can we remake ‘contact with the body and with the world’ (Merleau-Ponty, 2002: 206) through drama given, as Bourdieu posits, we are ‘habituated’, the body moulded through inculcation? A line of inquiry is that of the use of gesture and the way it informs discourse and communication. Regarding ‘discourse’, James Paul Gee includes non-linguistic elements in his oft quoted definition: ‘Discourses are ways of being in the world, or forms of life which integrate words, acts, values, beliefs, attitudes, and social identities, as well as gestures, glances, body positions, and clothes’ (1996: 127). Ray Birdwhistell who founded kinesics as a field of inquiry and research claimed, ‘all meaningful motion patterns are to be regarded as socially learned until empirical investigation reveals otherwise’ (1952:

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9 ‘Poker Body’ is my name for this activity that I learnt from Daniel Banks, a theatre director, educator and also a faculty member of the C.U.N.Y. Applied Theatre M.A. program.
Birdwhistell is here referring to the motion of the body and his point has yet to be discredited and I have found no conclusive evidence to show otherwise. James Edie further stresses the same claim stating that, ‘[t]he body is expressive of meaning in many ways more fundamental than speaking’ (1991: xiii). He later explains:

[T]he expression of our mental states into gestures, such as expressions of desire, frustration, concern, anger, pleasure, joy, etc., gives us [...] the physical embodiment and expression of a meaning which is strictly inseparable from its bodily expression. (Edie 1979/1991, xiii–xiv)

This phenomenological point of view reflects the concerns of SLA theorists, Pavlenko and Atkinson, expressed above, and they regard as a major area to be addressed in SLA practice and research.

The importance, and indeed inseparability, of gesture to thought and emotion also has support from other fields. For example, in ‘So you think gestures are nonverbal?’ (1985), the psycholinguist David McNeill tells us, ‘We tend to consider linguistic what we can write down, and nonlinguistic everything else; but this division is a cultural artefact, an arbitrary limitation derived from historical evolution’ (1985: 350 italics in original). For McNeill, ‘gestures are an integral part of language as much as are words, phrases and sentences – gesture and language are one system’ (1992: 2 italics in original); for Boal:

The human being is a unity, an indivisible whole. [...] ideas, emotions and sensations are all indissolubly interwoven. A bodily movement ‘is’ a thought and a thought expresses itself in corporeal form. (2002: 49)

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6x One of Birdwhistell’s students was Erving Goffman, the author of Presentation of Self in Everyday Life (1956).

8x In language learning magazines it is common to see references to kinesics/body language. Perhaps this is as these publications are directed towards the business professionals who might see this as an advantageous skill to acquire.
This understanding of the inter-connectedness of the body in communication and ‘being-in-the-world’ was noted in the reflections of the ‘Experiencing the Word’ project participants after doing the exercises and activities from the workshops. One of the participants, Alfredo, is now observing people more, ‘paying more attention to this phenomenon’, creating what he believes is a better awareness of the behaviour of others and what they wish to express and this in turn has aided his comprehension (Alfredo, 2013). Another participant, Ricardo, wrote in response to the post on the first workshop, ‘For me [it] was shocking to discover with the poker face exercise the amount of unconscious gestures that we all do while speaking’ (Ricardo, 2013), while Jeru commented that:

The experience of talking or listening for some time without the slightest gesture was very difficult for me. I noticed the amount and frequency with which I communicate nonverbally. Although I found the two alternatives (talking or listening) difficult, I must admit that listening without indicating to my partner that I’m following them was the hardest part. (Jeru, 2013)

Another of the group members, Diego, thought that the ‘Poker Body’ activity aided understanding of ‘the weight of body language’ (Diego, 2013) while Juan Carlos said that the act of not making gestures adversely influenced his ability to listen to his partner (Juan Carlos, 2013). This, I believe, brought about a more acute awareness of his way of being-in-the-world and the importance of physicality for him in expressing himself.

These responses demonstrate what James Edie posits in the foreword to Merleau-Ponty’s *Consciousness and the Acquisition of Language*:

The body is expressive of meaning in many ways more fundamental than speaking [...] the expression of our mental states into gestures, such as expressions of desire, frustration, concern, anger, pleasure, joy, etc. gives us ... the physical embodiment and expression of a meaning which is strictly inseparable from its bodily expression. (1991: xiii–xiv)
In relation to spoken language the evidence was not entirely conclusive yet has importance. The participants became much more aware of what their actual gestures were, though this did not particularly aid them in oral production. That said, if we consider other activities where gesture would include movements of the mouth and tongue with attention to the formulation of words, the participants noticed where some of their production challenges were. They became conscious that there were positionings that were not used in their mother tongues and so did not use in speaking English, which in turn had an adverse effect on certain pronunciations. Also, although somewhat alien to them, they now realised that with specific exercises these new positions could become more comfortable and so enhanced awareness of gesture combined with exercises exploring new facial formations can lead to better vocal production. The following section, ‘Voice and Breath Work’ further explores this.

In Gesture and the Nature of Language (1995), Armstrong, Stokoe and Wilcox propose that language is derived originally from actions or gestures, arguing that meaning is based on body patterns or schemata. They cite various notions and models regarding speech and the body including William Mowery and Richard Pagliuca who claim that words are ‘complexes of muscular gestures’ (qtd. in Armstrong et al., 1995: 10). Armstrong, Stokoe and Wilcox concur explaining that ‘[t]he human vocal apparatus is capable of producing a vast array of sounds, just as the body as a whole is capable of producing an enormous number of visible movements’ (1995: 12). This scale and spectrum of the outwardly visible elements is complex, yet it is further complicated by discoveries in neuromuscular activity. William C. Stokoe, is seen as the initiator of American Sign Language linguistics and the study of both spoken and signed language production has lead the inquiry for a neural basis of human communication and finding some vindication in the claims for ‘mirror neurons’
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(discussed below in the next section). Wilcox claims, ‘The model that encompasses both spoken and signed languages assumes that the key lies in describing both with a single vocabulary, the vocabulary of neuromuscular activity’ (1990: 141–142), though whether this reveals anything more about the ‘importance of hands, the visual system, and upright posture in the development of language’ (Armstrong et al., 1995: 19) is beyond the remit of this article. That said, the inextricable nature of physicality and speech directs us towards an approach to language acquisition with a greater emphasis on the body rather than the currently favoured cognitive orientation in SLA. While imitating a target culture might be less than desirable from the perspective of the debate around the ideal speaker discussed above, a greater emphasis on the observation and self-awareness of what we are communicating non-verbally should be welcomed.

### Voice and Breath Work

_Breathe in. A finger click counting each beat. Hold – the same 8-beat – and exhale. People are breathless. The timing is wrong; it is impossible. Concern passes over the faces: ‘why can’t I control my breathing?’ Repeat. More measured this time. Close your eyes. Concentrate. Now, breathe in; feel the air start to fill the lower and larger parts of your lungs. No gasping for air, just a smooth intake. You get bigger: your chest expands, the lower back widens. Now, hold – the breath under control – for ... click, click, click, click ... time to exhale. Keep the same control and let all the air gently leave your lungs and no need to gasp just gently repeat the process ..._

This _vignette_ describes one of the moments when working on awareness and control of breathing with these exercises being beneficial to most of the group and to two of the participants in particular, as their responses in the interviews demonstrate. Joaquin used

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12 The journal _Sign Language Studies_ (Stokoe 1972) established the research subject.
the breathing exercises and they had a significant effect, as he explains: ‘I exercised the one up to ten, breath in, hold and breath out for a presentation I run [sic] today, and I have to say that it works. Made me feel more concentrate[d]’ (Joaquin, 2013). Jeru states that she now also uses the techniques and feels it is working for her too, though in a different manner. She feels that she starts everything in a calmer fashion whereas before in meetings and discussions in English she started speaking rapidly and then accelerated, though she still finds herself ‘trying to speak English more slowly but start slow and finish fast talking as always [...] It’s something more to practice’ (Jeru, 2013). Listening to Jeru’s response reminds us that altering ‘one’s whole physical posture in the social world’, to recall Bourdieu’s phrase above, or even a small gesture is not done easily. However, as Jeru’s responses also show, increased self-awareness and having techniques, such as those from breath and voice work, that are incorporated into learner’s autonomous additional language practice can be beneficial.

A further discovery for Jeru is an awareness that how you act influences others – when she spoke too quickly she sensed that this affected others to become more agitated, which in turn caused her to feel less relaxed. Jeru describes one instance of her using the breathing techniques ‘not [...] before the meeting but I have used them (as discretely as possible) during a meeting’ (Jeru, 2013). She explains that during a disagreement:

I have not breathed waiting for the opportunity to explain my position. In doing so, I realise that I am tongue-tied (I guess that not breathing normally worsened the situation) and I cannot express what I want to say. So, I decided to wait for a small gap and breathe in the meantime. In the end, I was able to communicate in a clearer manner which made me quite happy. (Jeru, 2013)

In contrast, Juan Carlos, talking about applying the techniques to German, another additional language he was learning, rather than English, thought that perhaps right now he
would not be able ‘to maintain a conversation and at the same time think if my breathing is correct!’ (Juan Carlos, 2013). These instances demonstrate the participants’ need to become comfortable in a foreign linguistic habitus where control of breathing, and by extension, better command of the voice allows speakers to acquire a desired gravitas.

In *Voice and the Actor* (2008), Cicely Berry says in relation to relaxation and breathing that ‘[t]he voice is incredibly sensitive to any feelings of unease. In everyday life, if you are slightly nervous or not quite on top of the situation this condition reacts on the voice’; for Berry, the breath is the root of the sound (2008: 18). Most people, especially speakers of a language which they do not totally control, will recall moments where the situation affected the way they spoke – an inadvertent quaver, perhaps a garbled sentence and certainly, if presenting in some way, a dry mouth. In contrast to my emphasis on general physicality, Berry places the most importance in communication on the voice as ‘it is through the speaking voice that you convey your precise thoughts and feelings’ with gesture and movement only giving an ‘impression’ – an almost anti-theatrical bias – along with dress and posture in terms of importance to human communication systems. However, she does point out the need for muscular awareness and freedom to increase ease of expression (Berry, 2008: 7).

Therefore, as part of our general warm-ups, we followed the breathing exercises with vocal warm-ups. In the end, the participants wanted to return to these activities to practise elements of pronunciation and enunciation, and much of that was due to the obvious benefits that they could see on their vocalisation in the target language, English. The benefits included reassuring themselves that a particular word was delivered with sufficient clarity and certain pronunciations that Spanish speakers typically find difficult
along with more individual pronunciation and enunciation difficulties. This suggests that exercises that use repetition on the specific physical formation of the mouth and tongue are welcomed by students and might be more regularly employed. This focus on the actual mechanics of vocal production is not commonly in use in SLA learning and teaching and the idea that these skills could be improved or obtained surprised most of the group. This is understandable as when we speak about the role of the body in communication it is easy to forget that the actual mouth and tongue are part of the body too.

Specifically concerning this area of the body, and drawing on new developments in neurology, sociocognitive approaches to language learning point to the key discovery of mirror neurons which are ‘cerebral neurons that fire both when observing others performing specific actions and when performing those same actions oneself’ (Atkinson, 2011a: 145). Barbara Ehrenreich also comments on the significance of mirror neurons. She discusses the muscular actions of the tongue – how the sticking out of a tongue by a parent is imitated when perceived by the child is her example – and the way we use the tongue to formulate perhaps mirroring others) the shapes necessary to create sounds (Ehrenreich, 2007: 26). This is worth considering in the additional language learning context as accents are a product of how the tongue, throat and lips move and produce what, citing Pierre Guiraud’s coining of the phrase, Bourdieu calls the ‘articulatory style’ (1991: 86). This relates intrinsically to which accent we learn, forming part of Bourdieu’s ‘linguistic habitus’ and how that differentiates our social status, and was certainly an important aspect of language learning for some of the group. For example, Diego strongly believed that the tone of

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13 All the participants spoke Spanish as their first language except one person who spoke it to a highly proficient level and said she encountered similar pronunciation difficulties.
14 Participants talked about feeling very self-conscious about making the ‘th’ sound (voiced dental fricative /ð/) - feels like you are sticking your tongue out at the listener!
16 Ehrenreich was commenting on the report: ‘Cells that read Minds' Sandra Blakeslee NY Times 10 Jan 2006 http://www.nytimes.com/2006/01/10/science/10mirr.html?pagewanted=all
Spaniards speaking in English is dull, almost monotone (Diego, 2013), which was surprising to me, though it indicates the sense of inferiority that many language learners have with their vocal production.

Taken as a whole, the premise of gestural and physically orientated language learning is validated by the findings of the research project, though, with some reservations. In the example concerning voice and breath work, I have shown how a more deliberate focus on technical elements of vocal production can be beneficial for SLA learners by allowing the learner an introduction to new and perhaps unknown sounds in the target language, gaining the ability to then produce and perceive those utterances, along with more subtle nuances of intonation and stress. The work on breath control also had the effect of reducing apprehension in stressful moments where the participants had felt out of their element, though, on occasion, a focus on breathing could adversely affect concentration on what is actually being said inhibiting expression.

The findings also suggest that the demonstrated use of theatre-based non-verbal activities lend themselves to an approach to language learning with a focus on language learning as an embodied experience. With most of the group there was better awareness of the role of body language and non-verbal communication, especially on the importance of gesture. This, of course, only indicates the possibilities of this approach allowing the group to feel comfortable ‘performing’ with their body in front of others in an explorative way, and what effect this had on oral production is unclear.

To draw concrete conclusions in such a short study would be foolhardy. There are too many factors that might come into play in longer studies or ones with other groups. For example, students could tire of such repetitions or become frustrated with not being able to alter the muscular formation of the mouth and tongue, especially in the case of adults. With
a different set of students, group dynamics or cultural tendencies influencing the way individuals might react in doing something unusual such as these exercises could come into play. Therefore, I would like to investigate this route over a longer period of time rather than the culmination of just four weeks work as immediate changes are not readily observed. As Ricardo told me:

Self-awareness and awareness of the others is something that I'll use in the future in meetings and presentations, it was clear during the workshop that it requires some practise and effort to make it right, is not that simple to notice what is happening around you. (Ricardo, 2013)

From this, we can perhaps address Bourdieu’s notion of linguistic habitus saying that despite the sometimes very marked differences between habitus, with practice and observation, rehearsal, and perhaps imitation, a speaker can acquire the ability not only to feel comfortable in new linguistic habitus but also to be able to affect the codes necessary to inhabit different habitus.

Indeed, if we agree with Bourdieu that language is socially conditioned, this means that to become conditioned means participating not only with the mind but with the body too; use of drama for SLA can allow us to try on these roles in languages new to us – perhaps in a way not even possible in our native ones. Getting to know a new linguistic habitus, nurtured unconsciously in our native upbringing, can be awkward and perhaps impenetrable to outsiders, especially adult language learners. This nurturing and constant attention that native speakers receive in the context of social action needs to be created somehow in the additional language learning environment and, though somewhat artificial, by directly addressing and resolving linguistic challenges through the techniques mentioned. This is accompanied by creating an experimental setting which recognises need for learners to find their feet in a new linguistic habitus – a gradual acclimatisation to being
in a foreign world – allowing the mind, body, and world to function integratively, and learners can try on habitus for size, perhaps adapting better to them.\(^7\)

**Further Reflection and Conclusion**

After the series of workshops there was a lot of interest for the participants in learning techniques that have a direct effect on language skills, and the more obviously successful activities in this regard were breathing and voice work. This explicitness I found to be the main thing that the participants looked for. Because of adults’ time demands there is more of an imperative to have a clearly defined purpose for doing something: what can a technique be directly used for? An explicit explanation of the rationale for each activity is necessary, especially ones that had no clear connection to language learning or were in place to develop skills within the overarching purpose of the project: the results need to be evident. A longer research period will make it easier to gauge the effectiveness of the activities or, at least, for the participants to see progress in their own linguistic development; concentration on breathing and voice work will become more integral perhaps in the area of rhythm, as an area where theatre excels.

The call for work on accents, and in the participant Amelia’s (2013) coinage ‘marco de la voz’ (‘frame of the voice’), is ripe for further investigation. This could be achieved through voice techniques used in theatre such as those of Cicely Berry who proposes that by ‘exercising its physical resources’ you can ‘open up the possibilities of your voice’ and address this area of vulnerability explaining, ‘Because it is such a personal statement, criticism of your voice is very close to criticism of yourself, and can easily be destructive’ (2008: 8). While attention to phonetics is occasionally given in SLA, it is generally approached without consideration of other factors in vocal production, for example,

\(^7\) By ‘foreign’, I mean doing something that is out of your regular (comfortable) world, along with the sense of being in a ‘foreign world’.
breathing or the role of the whole body and is shown through diagrams of how the mouth, jaw and throat should look like when making a certain sound. With a more overall physical approach and employing warm-up techniques, the voice can be strengthened, and a better range of sounds produced in a more natural fashion. Outcomes of this may be better recognition of rhythmic and tonal differences between certain language along with increased ability to adapt to these new rhythms and tones. These strengthened abilities allow the speaker to feel more comfortable in varying linguistic habitus which could range from academia to the corporate world to the bar on the corner.
Addendum to Let Me Hear Your Body Talk

As this is a portfolio thesis, this addendum serves as a ‘bridge’ between the first part of the thesis, consisting of the literature review and the publishable article chapters through to the third chapter in Part One which is the methodology for the main case study in Part Two. The addendum demonstrates the implementation of the ideas and challenges that emerged from the initial parts of my research discussed in the previous chapter, ‘Let Me Hear Your Body Talk’, particularly regarding breath and voice work.

The pilot research project named ‘Experiencing the Word’, discussed in Let Me Hear Your Body Talk, was designed to investigate the use of ensemble devising techniques and activities for second language acquisition. The prominence of physicality in group devised theatre meant that there was a specific focus on the role of the body in additional language development and communication. In this regard, the ‘Experiencing the Word’ case study generated intriguing findings especially, as I highlighted in the previous chapter, the participants’ interest in breathing and voice work. This led to further research and experimentation with voice work techniques and during this time I found the voice practitioner Kristen Linklater’s method (Linklater Voice Training) readily adaptable to the work on additional language development. The reasons for using this particular approach are expanded on below.

For research purposes and part of further establishing my practice, I designed a course (a workshop series) for adults called ‘Confident Communication for International English Speakers’ to assess the effectiveness of voice and breath work in a context that was aimed at beneficially influencing confidence and communicative ability. I ran the course three separate times: from spring to summer March-July 2014; in the autumn of 2014 from September-December; and in spring 2015 from February-May 2015. All the courses took
place in Basel, Switzerland. The last of these courses ran concurrently with the ‘Performing Languages’ research project which is the case study I analysis in Part Two of this thesis, following this addendum. Each session was for two hours per week (32 hours in total for the first two courses and 24 for the last one). This time scale reflects the typical duration of current language programmes offered to adult learners by established language schools in the local area.

During the course, consisting of three modules, each workshop was planned to stand individually within an overarching aim of developing an awareness of the role of the voice and breathing in the communicative process along with a variety of techniques with a physical focus. The activities explored breathing exercises and voice work, non-verbal communication, the rhythm of the spoken word and, also, accompanying gestures. There were performative moments throughout each of the sessions, such as short presentations and involved side-coaching from me as facilitator. These were informally observed by the rest of the group, and their observations and subsequent discussion developed a heightened awareness of the role of physicality in communication. The participants discussed the possible effects that these activities have in the way they communicated in relation to speaking English, which was a second language to all but one of the participants.

The activities used for this purpose sought to affect participants’ linguistic ability beneficially and increase awareness of their vocality as part of the ongoing research process. I adapted the Linklater Voice Training techniques – which are based on elements from the Alexander technique and the work of Feldenkrais – to provide a practical and theoretical framework for the workshops. This approach, paying particular attention to voice work, provided pragmatic exercises to address tensions in vocal production in speakers of an additional language. This involved addressing physical aspects of communication and voice work in seven different sections as proposed in The Language Teacher’s Voice by Alan Maley
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(2000), one of the first practitioners to look at using drama for language learning. These seven aspects are: Relaxation, Posture, Breathing, Voice Resonance, Articulation, Modulation, and Volume. All these factors focus on vocal production to give more understanding of various aspects of our engagement with others in differing environments, aiding our ability to communicate with more confidence, comfort and clarity. Following this line of thinking, the main potential outcomes regarding voice and breath work were that by using an overall physical approach and employing warm-up techniques, the voice could be strengthened, and develop a larger and more nuanced range of sounds. This affords the speaker a better awareness of rhythmic and tonal differences in the target language and increases their ability to adapt to these new rhythms and tones. These strengthened abilities allow the speaker to feel more comfortable in varying linguistic habitus.

In my practice, I aimed at being an intermediary, interpreting and incorporating voice work aimed at actors (and other non-language learners) and introducing it to people who are mainly concerned with language learning. Rather than merely being used as ‘warm-up’ exercises, the workshops were centred on the voice work methods. The participants were involved in voice work from the beginning with a specific focus on affecting their confidence beneficially. This contrasted with the ‘Performing Languages’ project where breath and voice work was planned to be only one facet of the research design. How this worked in practice is explained below. It is interesting to note that although the description of the course was not aimed at non-native speakers, all the participants, bar one, identified English as an additional language to them.\textsuperscript{1} Although no planned interviews were conducted before, during or after the Confident Communication courses, there were many engaged discussions with the participants during and after the sessions which gave

\textsuperscript{1}The exception was bilingual (American-French).
substantial insight into the various effects that work on gesture and the voice had on the participants.

Each participant reported that, to some degree, applying breath and voice work methods in the workplace or everyday life, they improved their poise when presenting and communicating in English in front of their colleagues and/or with people they did not know previously. This individual use of voice work outside the workshops ranged from a longer warm-up routine of up to 15 minutes to just one minute of breath work to ease their ‘jitters’. Although anecdotal this feedback provides some evidence that the techniques that were learnt and applied were beneficial for a sense of competent and confident communication, for example, in dealing with nervousness associated with giving presentations. That said, one participant, Lara (a German female and very fluent English speaker), perceived only a minor improvement to her confidence during and after the first course. This was despite the appearance to her audience during in-course presentations that she had presented much more confidently at the end of the course training compared with how she began. This indicates the precarious nature of self-confidence and self-efficacy which can be brittle in even the most fluent of speakers. This perhaps relates to the sensation of never being able to attain the ‘complete’ status of the ideal native speaker in the target language. Lara signed up to a second workshop, after which she reported that her self-efficacy and feelings about her competence in presenting had improved. Her perception about how she ‘performed’ only altered slightly but her awareness of her body and gestures grew and she found herself, in her words, ‘consciously competent’, echoing the ‘conscious competence’ stage learning model used in education, psychology and by Adrian Underhill in SLA teaching (Underhill, 1992).
I now describe the use of breath and voice work in the main research project and case study, ‘Performing Languages’, and the challenges that this presented practically in a group devised theatre project.

**Voice Work in the ‘Performing Languages’ Research Project**

A gradual introduction of breath and voice work is in line with voice work specialist Rebekah Maggor’s explanation that, ‘Understanding the reasoning and desired result behind each exercise builds trust and encourages risk taking’ (2011: 182). So, while the intention with voice work is to avoid the superficial application of vocal exercises, implementing the spectrum of exercises is best done over time so that each exercise is understood in context. The incorporation of breath and voice work into the devising project, however, did not work as planned. Indeed, due to some of the group participants’ schedules, my plans to start each session doing voice work were undone. This was due to problems of punctuality caused by the changing of timetables at the university and, on occasion, the participants’ other commitments. This challenge to running a group devised theatre project is further discussed in the main thesis following this addendum.

In the initial stages of the ‘Performing Languages’ project, only two or three students were able to arrive on time for the official start of the workshop sessions. They were reluctant to start the voice work knowing other delayed members of the group would be coming into the session 20 or 30 minutes late. This was as, even in the initial stages of the project, the participants wanted to work as a group. Also, interruptions to the voice work led to a mutual sense of awkwardness both for the exercise participants and the late arrivals as it was difficult to integrate the people arriving and disruptive for those already committed to the exercises. Waiting for the whole group to be present before starting the voice work was unfeasible as it would have meant delaying or neglecting the devising work.
which was the project’s overall goal. Therefore, after discussion with the group the participants agreed that it was more important and beneficial to prioritise creating material for the final performance. This meant that we engaged in voice work during the ‘Performing Languages’ project much less than I had anticipated.

The group’s decision to focus on collective creation proved to be correct in the sense that the time gained allowed the group to concentrate more time on developing their language skills through group devising methods which led to a performance of which they were delighted and proud. Making this decision also meant that we were adhering to the egalitarian ethos that was a fundamental aspect of the research practice. Perhaps in so short a project with its constraints on time and punctuality it was too much to expect the successful incorporation of breath and voice work. We did, however, do a 40-minute set of voice work exercises prior to each of the two performances the group gave. This was done to address some of the nervousness that most participants felt prior to the show as it was their first time performing a theatre piece in front of an audience. The group later told me that they had enjoyed the voice work we had done in the project and, in retrospect, some of the group regretted that we chose to reduce the use of voice work. Several of the group told me they found it helpful for their performance and in academic presentations that happened during or after the project. That said, the voice work that was done cannot be seen to have been universally beneficial, even in one case having both beneficial and unfavourable effects. Pre-show nerves may have been abated but one of the participants, Julie, had two very different experiences, which shows the volatility of the work. Julie revealed in the interviews that followed the performance that she panicked in front of people and that she, ‘nearly cried ahead of the first show’. When asked to elaborate she said that it was when she, ‘was lay on the floor doing the relaxation stuff [referring to the breathing exercises] and had tears in my eyes and they were forming, and I was like “No! no!”’. Asked whether the relaxation helped she replied, ‘not the first time, but the second, yes’.

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This conflicting response from Julie indicates that adaption of voice work methods to non-actors and in a language development context evidently needs further research and development in practice as it is in its infancy (though other researchers, for example Piazzoli, have made some progress). It also demonstrates how emotionally powerful such exercises can be. For Julie it was the breathing aspect of voice work that she found provoked such a strong response, yet as breath work is integral to the method (Linklater places even more emphasis on this aspect than other voice work practitioners). Heightened awareness of the body and the voice can be a volatile state and much care must be taken when working with such exercises. Furthermore, there are other considerations one of which was identified in the notion of the ‘marco de la voz’ (‘frame of the voice’) from the previous chapter, *Let Me Hear Your Body Talk*. Katherine Meizel explains this as, ‘What a voice carries [is] not only lexical meanings and emotion, but also vital information about culture, identity, and the dynamics of power that suffuses human communication’ (2011: 267).

Separately, voice work, if not incompatible, can add strain to what can be the time-consuming process of a group devised project. Certainly it was the case in the ‘Performing Languages’ project which adhered to Oddey’s assertion that ‘every project generates its own working process’ (1994: 25). Effectively, it was impractical to implement the voice work to the extent that I had initially planned due to reluctance from the participants, at times, and the overarching need for the ensemble to concentrate on devising for the performance guided where the research went. What might be suggested is that in future research separate dedicated sessions to breath and voice work be scheduled into the group devising process. This means that the necessary time is dedicated to fully implement techniques that harbour such potential.

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2 ‘Linklater Voice Training and Foreign Language Teaching: Enhancing language learning through the use of performative vocal training’. A collaboration between Griffith University (Brisbane) and The University of Queensland looking at training a group of modern language teachers to implement a Linklater-based voice studies project with a group of undergraduate students of Italian as a Foreign language. The course ran from 2014-2016.
Although the use of overt physicality and gesture along with breath and voice work was employed in the ‘Performing Languages’ project, other elements of the practise and research became more pertinent, which I discuss in the introduction to the project, in Chapter Four, ‘Performing Languages in a Community of Equals: An Introduction’. This was due to how the process evolved, therefore, I chose to not to write extensively about it in Part Two of this thesis. However, the earlier research was important as it provides some useful insight into the use of gesture and breath and voice work in SLA and although important they do not constitute a discrete part of the main thesis, the embodied nature of the group devised theatre process means the influence of the body on the learning experience appears throughout.
Methodology

Introduction

In this chapter, I provide a rationale for the use of a case study approach and detail a validation for each of the methodological choices that were made for the research. A model is provided for the research orientation, which demonstrates the philosophical and technical basis and formulation of the individual methodological choices. I go on to explain the use of different methodological approaches of my practice and research that combines the philosophical and pedagogical methodology of group devised theatre, participatory action research and case study methodologies, along with an outline of the main project that constitutes the case study. An account of the research design and methods I used for the data collection, processing and analysis is then given. This includes a valuation of the strengths and weaknesses of adopting these qualitative methods and is followed by an explanation of how the data was analysed and the frameworks used to categorise and interpret the data. An account of the ethical considerations that were made regarding all these aspects of the research is provided to show how these concerns influenced the methodological choices.

The overall methodological reasoning that follows is based on what would most satisfactorily and aptly aid the investigation of the main research enquiry of how group devising theatre and voice work exercises affect participants’ confidence and motivation in additional language development. This includes considerations and questions about the role of overt physicality in the language learning process. It also considers creative collaboration in the form of a devising ensemble as a viable environment for language development in contrast to a more conventional higher education learning setting.
Making the Case

Joe Winston reasons that the ‘epistemological and political principles and opportunities’ of case studies (in the sense of how case studies emerged as radical approaches to research) is particularly suitable for drama educators and researchers in that case studies adhere to ‘practical needs’ and, moreover, find an apt articulation of the knowledge created by drama as an art form (2006: 43). Michael Golby has maintained that, for practitioners, case study ‘is uniquely appropriate as a form of educational research’, claiming that it can ‘relate theory and practice, advancing professional knowledge by academic means’ (1994: 9), which is very pertinent to the case study I present, ‘Performing Languages’.

The creation process of the case that is presented was an intrinsic part of the research. This embeddedness may even emphasise the particularity of the case study though, as Golby has warned, this particularity should not be conflated with uniqueness, or at least not from the perspective of how I am looking at the case, rather, just what I am looking at (1994: 13). From this perspective, the assertion I make is that the findings from the case can, to some extent, be generalised.

Helen Simons strengthens this position by explaining that case studies have a ‘capacity for understanding complexity in particular contexts’ (1996: 225). However, like Simons, I am aware that this may be seen as a weakness in the research in that generalization is problematic owing to the particularity of the subject being studied (Simons, 1996: 225). In response to this appraisal, Simons offers the argument that case studies are not merely limited in their applicability to a ‘single case’ but, ‘by focussing in depth and from a holistic perspective, a case study can generate both unique and universal understandings’ (1996: 225). In terms of generalisation, this thesis does not claim that adopting the methodologies that were used in the ‘Performing Languages’ case study had
the same effect on each participant nor, indeed, would have had in the use of those methodologies in other settings or studies. However, as Roger Gomm, Martyn Hammersley, and Peter Foster posit, the idea that case study research can produce causal explanations or theories as to the usefulness or effectiveness of those means is problematic in important areas though this can only be resolved ‘through practical investigation of what is and is not achievable’ (2011: 251–252). In this sense, alongside other pieces of research, the ‘Performing Languages’ case study can be seen as a small part in progress towards this potentiality.

As Golby points out, ‘case study is concerned with intelligibility’ (1994: 13) meaning how the case connects with other similar cases. There are various examples that allow for the ‘Performing Languages’ case study to make this connection in the sense that there are many groups or classes of language learners that have been studied. Indeed, there are many groups, and individuals within those groups, of language learners learning through drama and theatre that are relatable, ‘individual and particular: like other entities of a similar kind but never entirely identical with them’ (Elton, 1967: 8). An example of such is Peter Lutzker’s case study of the rehearsing and performance of a full-length play (Lutzker, 2007); others might be Nicoletta Marini-Maio & Colleen Ryan-Scheutz’s teaching Italian through the process of performing scripted plays or Stephen Boyd & Manfred Schewe for German (Marini-Maio and Ryan-Scheutz, 2010; Boyd and Schewe, 2012). The similarities to the case study I present would be that all three studies were based on the rehearsal process and eventual performance of a theatre production, yet differing, in that they used play scripts and were performed in languages other than English.

According to Simons, the concern for intelligibility in case studies does mean that it must also accommodate paradox (as opposed to contradiction). She points out that ‘[T]he search for certainty, comparison and conclusiveness tends to drive out alternative ways of seeing’ (1996: 237), such as the individual perspectives of the participants in the case study.
This is echoed by Louis Cohen, Lawrence Manion, and Keith Morrison’s view of case studies as providing interpretive paradigms ‘to understand and interpret the world in terms of its actors’ (2011: 51). Winston also warns that researchers should be aware that there might not be ‘one correct interpretation’ and encourages the consideration to ‘document alternative understandings of the same event’ (2006: 47). This understanding is duly considered throughout the chapters that follow in Part Two, particularly so in Chapter Eight, ‘Messing It Up As We Go Along’, where I discuss the ‘blurring’ of my depictions and revisit and interrogate my own interpretations.

**Ethical Considerations and Issues**

In its encompassing nature, the parameters of what constitutes a case study can be problematic. There have been claims that categorising qualitative research as being a case study is so far reaching, with boundaries difficult to define, and potentially including so many projects that a strong criticism is that it might become meaningless (Stake, 1995: 6). However, the character of case study allows the researcher leeway to understand the phenomena being researched in a more nuanced and holistic manner ‘as a means of understanding complex human situations and human encounters’ and embracing the paradoxical (Simons, 1996: 226). In the categorisation of this research as a case study, there was not one discrete ‘case’ as such, yet, nor were there separate, unconnected cases. The case was the group of participants in the ‘Performing Languages’ project and the cases of each of the individuals themselves. The dual (and, indeed, multiple) nature of this case study is addressed throughout the case study in Part Two, especially so in Chapter Six, ‘The Individual in the Collective’.

My own place in the study – the ethical perspective of how my interpretation as a researcher was regulated – is also considered in terms of my relation to ‘the individuals, the institutions and the processes that constitute the study’ (Golby, 1994: 20). Ensuring ‘an
appropriate form of objectivity’ as Golby (1994: 20) stresses (while acknowledging ‘objectivity’ as a ‘weasel word’) was achieved through a combination of retrospective data analysis, detailed later in the research design and methods section, and self-reflection and, duly, praxis as a practitioner-researcher. It must be acknowledged, however, that some parts of the case study concern researching parts of my practice and pedagogy – detailed in Part Two, in particular in the chapters four and five, ‘The Ignorant Facilitator’ and ‘The Individual in the Collective’, respectively. Golby’s exhortation to adhere to ‘the principles of honesty and openness [...] making all [...] intentions apparent to all concerned’ (1994: 25) is a position that had great bearing on the ‘Performing Languages’ project. This has great relevance on my position within the research as a “gatekeeper”, both as an educator, in my role as theatre and language facilitator-teacher, and in the role of researcher. These positions are discussed latter in the case study itself.

In disclosing the research aims, structure, methods and, indeed, the potential outcomes in an “honest and open” manner does, however, mean that the project can be affected. Personal interests in ‘aiding’ the researcher to find what they are hoping for is, contradictorily, potentially damaging to the authenticity and integrity of the research, along with the vicissitudes in behaviour common when people are aware of being observed.¹ Therefore, the main stated goal of the project was to create a piece of theatre and that would be devised, created and performed in English, rather than placing the focus on learning or acquisition, per se, or, indeed, the nurturing of self-efficacy.

Winston has made the case that ethical issues are often ‘related to the validity of the research’ (2006: 46), thus being intrinsic to the undertaking from the initial stages, including how we acquire data and how this is disseminated, even before publication. This began through the informed consent of the participants in the ‘Performing Languages’

¹ This is often referred to as the ‘Hawthorne effect’, coined by Henry A. Landsberger (Landsberger, 1958).
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project and was revisited throughout the project with the participants helping to decide what data was acquired and how. This is discussed in greater detail below.

Winston guides us to Robert E. Stake’s take on the matter of validity with Stake addressing arguments dealing with subjectivity and objectivity (1995: 99–102). Stake holds that the epistemological challenges of validity to be ‘ethical obligations to minimise misrepresentation and misunderstanding’, proposing categories of triangulation: data source; investigator; theory; and methodology (1995: 112–115). In line with Stakes guidance to see if the subject (and data source) changed when seen in ‘other times, in other spaces, or as persons interact differently’ (1995: 112), the participants had diverse temporal, spatial and interpersonal experiences during the ‘Performing Languages’ project. Along with me as the principal investigator, the participants themselves became co-observers in that they were encouraged to give their impressions of, and observations on, the process throughout. I use the writings of Rancière (1991, 2004, 2011) and others including devising theatre theory to provide a theoretical perspective on the research. Methodologically, the interpretation of the phenomena was channelled through diverse sources: interviews, observations and documents (both online and in handwritten form).

Informed consent was ethically essential for the study and paramount was the research participants’ awareness of the reasons why the research was taking place and what would happen to information they provided was addressed in both written form and reviewed in verbal discussions throughout the project. In terms of confidentiality, research participants were promised that their views or identities would not be exposed in undesired ways and, as I was engaged in a project in sites outside of the University of Manchester, that there was no conflict of interest. I endeavoured to manage encounters so as to minimise power imbalances that may have occurred, including making research participants aware of their right to withdraw from the research without giving an explanation.

Stake uses the protocols proposed by Norman Denzin in *The Research Act* (Denzin, 1989).
A participant information sheet, following the University of Manchester proforma for participant information sheets, was developed for the research project. This consent form is attached as an appendix (see Appendix 1). This was given to all research participants, was written succinctly and in layperson’s terms and included:

- The name and contact details of the researcher (University email, address and phone number only)
- An explanation of the research aims and what the research aimed to achieve
- The reasons why the research participant was approached
- The activities that the research participant would engage in, where these would take place and how long it would take, including brief details of the kinds of questions that could be asked (especially those questions that may have provoked strong responses)
- A description of what would happen to the data collected
- The likely outputs of the research
- A statement clarifying the limits of anonymity and confidentiality offered
- A statement emphasising that the participant was free to withdraw at any time without giving a reason
- The name and contact details of the supervisor and the University of Manchester Research Governance office

Participants gave written consent to participate in the study and for me to use the collected data after they had reviewed the participant information sheet.

The research did not explore topics that were likely to cause distress, as they were not specifically, for example, dealing with or discussing traumatic personal histories or experiences. However, some topics were explored which provoked strong feelings in respondents. For example, these were: explorations of identity, religious beliefs and
practices; the representation of specific communities in art and literature; questions of cultural difference; the production and reception of the performances; and the disaffection participants often expressed they had towards the university (where the project took place), owing to their perceived lack of status within the educational system there.

As the research took place across cultural boundaries (Mulhouse lies at the tri-national border of France, Germany and Switzerland) and with a mix of cultures (Italian/Italo-Arabic/French, English, Scottish, Austrian, German), I took account of and was aware of cultural norms in the research site/community and I took care to act in ways that are respectful of these at all times.

The working language of the research project was predominantly in English though, understandably given the cross-lingual nature of the project, there were pertinent moments where the other languages known to the participants were used. As these moments of code switching were discussed at the time (with an explanation given in English), or were stand-alone moments (discussed in the case study), it was not necessary to be fluent in those languages and/or to use professional translation and interpretation services. This may have meant challenges relating to communication and cultural awareness which meant that I needed to be ready to call on my experience as a trained and experienced facilitator in intercultural awareness and group dynamics and to facilitate discussion on the issues mentioned above.

Participants were photographed (during one workshop, by one of the participants themselves) and audio-recorded during the workshop sessions and audio-recorded when being interviewed so that this data could be analysed and the participants were assured that this data would be erased five years after the end of the project.
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Though the research participants did not find the research activities intrusive, there was some concern on my part that the workshop sessions that took place on weekend days might be tiring for the ensemble and this was closely monitored with participants being involved in the decisions on how the day would develop in terms of pacing of work in creating the theatre piece. Again, my judgment as an experienced facilitator was used in the case that in was necessary to alter the pace or style of the theatre work accordingly. There was a slight possibility of minor muscular strains due to the physical nature of some of the exercises, though none occurred. As a precaution and as an intrinsic element of the creative process, there were ‘warm up’ activities gradually and adequately to ensure the participants were physically prepared for the following activities. Participants were made aware of the requirements of each workshop session and they always had the option of non-participation in any of the activities in a particular session.

As attendance at artsmethods@manchester research ethics training is mandatory for postgraduate researchers at the University of Manchester, I attended a research ethics training session hosted by artsmethods@manchester (covering research ethics principles, risk assessments, good practice when carrying out fieldwork and working alone) and attended subject area research training sessions as relevant to my research. The research project took place off-campus and a risk assessment is in the appendices (see Appendix 2).

The School of Arts, Languages and Cultures Research Ethics Committee at the University of Manchester deemed the study to be one of minimal risk to participants and that the probability and magnitude of harm or discomfort anticipated in the research was not be greater than any ordinarily encountered in daily life, or during the performance of routine physical exercise.
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Research Design

Professional Practice and Research

I consider my professional creative practice and research as Practice-as-Research (PaR). I do this following Robin Nelson’s definition that ‘PaR involves a research project in which practice is a key method of inquiry and where […] a practice […] is submitted as substantial evidence of a research inquiry’ (2013: 8–9). In the first requirement, the practice I undertook constituted the mode of inquiry. Regarding the second requirement, I present evocative instances throughout the thesis which relates the collective creation process, theatrical performance and other cultural practice that came about because of the project. However, for the purposes of this thesis I use the term ‘practiced-based research’ following Nelson’s description that it ‘draws from, or is about, practice but which is articulated in traditional word-based forms’ (2013: 10). A debate on the terms with many nuances and differing interpretations would not be appropriate for this thesis; it is extensively covered in other literature (for example, see Allegue Fuschini et al., 2009; Kershaw and Nicholson, 2012; Nelson, 2013; Barrett and Bolt, 2014). It may suffice to say, once again using a Nelson definition, that, ‘knowing-doing is inherent in the practice and the practice is at the heart of the inquiry and evidences it’ (2013: 10).

Research Procedure

The practice-based research that formed the basis of the main research project was group devised theatre. Group devised theatre (ensemble devising or collective creation) for the purposes of this methodological approach, refers to the process and product of creative collaboration by a group of participants. The creative collaboration, in this case, was for the ensemble to generate and assemble a performance through theatrical activities such as improvisation, exercises and rehearsal, inclusive of the resultant production and discussions
about the process at all stages. Group devised theatre practice has differing methodologies, which are outlined in the introduction to the main project case study and expanded on in the following chapters. Many of these methodologies, though, adhere to a particular ethos of democratic, non-hierarchal practice along with claims of the emancipatory potential of this approach. As with most devising processes, rather than from conventional notions of a pre-existing script, it began with a range of stimuli including the theme of ‘light’ and the participants’ interest in questions around identity. It also drew on the individual experiences of the ensemble members as language learners, university students and community members of the wider area, and the interests and tastes of the ensemble as a collective or individually. Some of these elements and how they shaped the devising process and performance are discussed in each of the following chapters.

My experience in devised theatre and language teaching came from creating interactive theatre shows for language acquisition purposes, working on devised shows and facilitating courses emerging from my professional context as a language consultant and teacher and the project was part of the process of establishing my practice. The pliability and openness of devising appealed to me as a researcher and practitioner in SLA and theatre. This was because the aim of the research project was for the participants to design, create and produce as many facets of the performance as they felt capable, and they could decide on what final form the performance would take. I saw this approach as being apt to tackle issues that I had previously encountered working in and attending language learning classrooms that employ text-orientated, desk-based methods which I feel do not address concerns regarding physicality and self-efficacy. In such an environment, my own experience of being a learner and classroom teacher saw restrictions on physicality in

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3 There is a wide and complex discussion on the validity of claims that group devised theatre/collective creation has a more democratic ethos than other systems for creating theatre ( Syssoyeva and Proudfoot, 2013a, 2013b).
engaging with the target language, produced a sense of aloneness and limited the opportunities to practise among students.

Process drama, along with ad hoc use of theatre games in the conventional language classroom, is the more prevalent approach in researching drama for language acquisition. It has been shown to be successful in addressing many aspects of SLA, especially in both primary and secondary schools (Winston, 2012; Winston and Stinson, 2014). However, my preferred practice of devised theatre presents a much less chartered, liminal space in which to position my research and offers different elements to the approaches mentioned above, including a form of event or performance to culminate the process.\(^4\) Scripted theatre to aid language acquisition has also been researched and has had beneficial outcomes for learners such as the ones mentioned above in the section ‘Making the Case’. It has certain limitations, though, which made it less apt for my research. Scripts tend to have an emphasis on the text and therefore memorization of words becomes paramount which contrasted with the project’s intention of overt physicality. There can also be an underpinning necessity for precision that demands a set of theatrical and linguistic skills which would have meant a different orientation for the research. Instead, my intention was to build on a group devised theatre research project for language acquisition that formed the basis for my MA thesis submitted in June 2010.\(^5\) The research project had proved very successful in many aspects and especially so with issues regarding confidence and physicality.

My study used a participatory action research methodology, regularly assessing and evaluating the main research project. This decision was guided by the criteria for using

\(^4\) There has been some debate on the topic of process drama and whether there can be a ‘performance’ as such (see Piazzoli 2018, amongst others), yet I am taking the position that much process drama involves only the participants themselves rather than an outside audience.

\(^5\) The project was called ‘Crossroads’ and took place in New York City from September 2009-April 2010.
action research suggested by Jean McNiff and Jack Whitehead: ‘Action researchers undertake their enquiries for two main purposes’; firstly, ‘to contribute to new practices (this is the action focus of action research)’, and secondly, ‘to contribute to new theory (this is the research focus of action research)’ (Whitehead and McNiff, 2012: 45). I chose this as one of my research approaches because as an educator with the dual roles of practitioner and a researcher it was apt for the purpose of the ‘Performing Languages’ project. This aim was the experimentation with my theatre practice, specifically group devised theatre for SLA, with a participatory population intending to affect change in an area of concern with the objective of producing new theory to support this approach.

Action research’s repeated method of planning, practice, observation, evaluation and critical consideration before the next cycle begins (McNiff and Whitehead, 2002) has its roots in Freire’s concept of ”praxis” – practical knowledge formed from, and informing, action with praxis being described as involving engagement ‘in a cycle of theory, application, evaluation, reflection, and then back to theory’ (Freire, 1998: 75). From this cycle of action-reflection-action, based on my post-session notes and observations, I developed my own theories of practice in theatre for additional language development.

**Data Acquisition**

The source of the data for the analysis of this case study comes from my practitioner journals, session plans, and from the field notes made during the collective creation process and performances. It also comes from the reflections from participants throughout the project and responses from individual and group interviews.

My research tools were: audio-recorded semi-structured interviews, field notes on the sessions, a project blog, a Facebook group page which included online written discussions between the group members. Oral discussions took place throughout the length
of the project, discussing the workshop sessions and all other aspects that they felt the devising process encompassed along with the effects of the process on their English. Sometimes this was during the workshops themselves and sometimes during breaks, for example, while we ate together. The on-going discussions helped gauge thinking over an ongoing period replacing the planned multiple interviews that were to take place through the project. This came about because of the organic emergence of the discussions during the workshop sessions and at meal times and breaks. This approach appealed to the participants as it was less formalised and less conspicuously “research”. It was also an inherent (and important) part of the devising process and therefore meant the reflection and research was imbedded in the process.

The project blog was set up summarising each workshop to which the participants were requested to respond. However, a Facebook group, set up by the participants themselves, better served the dual purpose of discussion about the performance production and collaborative writing. There was also a video of the final performance (filmed by a relation of one of the participants) that was used to complement my own reflections and observations.

**Participant Observation**

According to Robin R. Alexander, participant observation ‘is a group of methods that stresses observation in the setting’, including, observation, analysis of documents connected to the subject(s), detailing of events and interviewing (1982: 63). He further stipulates that it ‘requires in-depth interaction because the inquirer adopts the role of subject within the research situation’ (Alexander, 1982: 63). This is supported by Piergiorgio Corbetta who describes participant observation as a procedure where a researcher positions themselves in a social group and establishes a relationship and interaction with its members
Group Devised Theatre for ‘Second Language Acquisition’

(2003: 236). The researcher can then illustrate the actions of the group and the individuals within it and, duly, form an understanding of their motivations, along with analysis of the role of the researcher themselves, which enhances the possibility for richly detailed and balanced description. As I was part of the theatre ensemble in my role as facilitator, it was an intrinsic obligation to participate during the project, and therefore not only was participant observation an apt choice of method, it was also one that was, again, imbedded in the research process. To achieve a more detached observation as a bulwark to the researcher bias this may induce, one of the main methods is the use of video recording.

The use of film and images and ethnographic research have advanced together from early in their development (Henley, n.d.) and the use of video is now a common method in social science and educational research (Walker and Boyer, 2018: 3), especially with the advent of high quality, affordable, digital equipment and has therefore ‘become an increasingly useful tool for researchers to gather data, aid in analysis and present results’ (Walker and Boyer, 2018: 2). It is also a valuable source in theatre research. For example, Winston sees video as important evidence as it permits ‘further viewings of the drama work’ and also allow for ‘scrutiny of complex spatial signifiers beyond the scope of an observation sheet’ such as ‘patterning of space’ and ‘the dynamics of various participants’ movements’ that could give evidence of gendered use of space (2013: 54–55).

This was an important consideration for the ‘Performing Languages’ research project. The videoing of the project would have created more than 70 hours of film and would have provided a rich source of data while allowing, for example, for more complex readings on the power dynamics at play throughout the project. Indeed, there was consideration of the use of multiple cameras to attempt to capture the experience of the workshops and rehearsal process more fully. As Harry Wolcott advises, this is ‘not to accumulate all the data you can’ (1990: 35) and to avoid the temptation to merely produce
reams of data; more cameras would have produced this result. Also, as with any medium, video would still not capture the entire process (Walker and Boyer, 2018: 3). Even though the use of video affords the researcher the capacity to use and review the data in different modes, and it may be a more reliable tool than the memories of participants and researchers to revisit and reflect on, the medium of video often fails to capture the 'essence' or 'feel' of theatre events – what Matthew Reason has described as 'liveness' (2004: n.p.) – or, indeed, the English language development of the participants. In respect to the positioning of the camera, whether it be single or multiple, there is also the ethical issue of who gets to decide where the camera points – perhaps that could have been part of a democratic negotiation yet the discussion on technicalities regarding research instrumentalisation may well have been confusing and off putting for participants.

Ultimately, though, the decision hinged on the informed opinion of the participants and there were some members that felt they would not feel comfortable being filmed. This response may have been negotiated and satisfactorily resolved yet, for me, there was a major concern around the inhibiting sensation of being recorded during the creative process with people new to devised theatre. This may have put adversely pressurised or distracted participants and may have affected the participants’ self-efficacy, the aim of the research.

**Interviews**

As we interview people to ‘find out from them those things we cannot directly observe [as] … We cannot observe feelings, thoughts, and intentions’ (Patton, 2002: 340–341), the participants were interviewed individually for, approximately, sixty minutes at the end of the project; a group interview-discussion took place at the final session involving the entire ensemble. Lengthy, semi-structured interviews were used due to their flexibility in
allowing both the interviewer and interviewee the time for deeper discussion on the points of enquiry and leeway for more open-ended discourse on topics indirectly linked with the research enquiry to emerge. Michael Quinn Patton tells us that this offers ‘flexibility, spontaneity, and responsiveness to individual differences and situational changes’ (2002: 343). This can mean that as semi-structured interviews do not follow a systematic process, as in structured interviewing, they are more difficult to analyse (Patton, 2002: 343). However, as the overall aim of the research was qualitative and affectual, in terms of understanding and knowledge, this style of interviewing was more accommodating. Also, as the interviews took place only with the members of the ensemble, connections between each different participants’ responses was more readily made than if the interviews had been with a much larger group of interviewees.

All these research interviews, including the group interview, took place on the 13th April 2015, except the one with Chloe on the 15th April 2015 and the joint one with Constance and Nadine, which was on the 12th of June 2015. The interviews were based on the research questions to result in a consistent process of data collection across all interviews though there was space for discussion to grow allowing for participants to steer the conversation. I used an interview guide with questions directly related to the research enquiry such as ‘How do you feel about your ability in English after the project?’ and ‘To what extent do you feel you were able to contribute your ideas to the theatre process?’. The interview protocol was explained to each participant individually at the start of each interview. I have included excerpts from three different interviews as documented evidence (see Appendix 3).

Data Processing and Analysis

The source material that was collected as part of the research project, included interviews with participants, field notes, and other documents containing research data,
such as the online interactions and writings of the group on social media, was thematically coded to identify the most prominent themes from the case study, which were related to the aims and objectives of language learning. Some of the coding categories for the data emanated from the research questions which informed the design of the project. Other categories emerged throughout the process influenced by what happened during the devising process. The coding categories discussed in this analysis include: self-efficacy; understanding of power relations and dynamics; understanding and opinion of collective creation; sense of identity; and the role of friendship in the creative process.

I then organised the thematically coded data using a spatial technique, placing, arranging and, duly, re-arranging, colour-coded post-it notes on a large wall in accordance with thematic categories. This allowed the findings to emerge organically with ideas or concepts being reinforced or relegated accordingly. This also helped to format the shape of my thesis finding that I needed to employ a portfolio methodology to describe the different approaches. This spatial arranging and coding method was conducive as it provided an all over more physical way of organising the source material during the analysis, which was apt given the emphasis on the importance of bodily movement in my thesis. It allowed me to walk and move in a much more physically engaged manner and allowed connections to be readily visible and/or reshuffling those connections by moving a thought, theme, theoretical concept or writer from one section to another. I then combined these themes and my interpretation of them in the research project with ideas from specific authors from the literature review and writers and thinkers in the fields of devised theatre, and both the use of creative collaboration in education and physicality, including breath and voice work, in language learning. In some way it was an extension of the devising process, producing surprising and challenging connections and, sometimes, contradictions.
Specific moments or instances from the project that reflected or represented the themes are the practical content that I analyse throughout the chapters. These moments are captured in phenomenological descriptions or *vignettes*, explained in the following section.

**Representation of Data**

As my methodology is based on practitioner-participant observation and reflection, I describe specific instances, as well as my responses as a practitioner and planning that took place during the devising process. The narrative is constructed from my practitioner journals, planning sessions, participant responses, interviews with participants and records of the sessions this combination provides a balance between my ‘voice’ as a practitioner-researcher and the voices of the participants.

Heeding Stake’s imploration to ‘develop vicarious experiences for the reader, to give them a sense of “being there”’ (1995: 63 italics in original), I give some evidence via a series of impressionistic *vignettes* to examine and analysis the beneficial aspects of creative collaboration for language acquisition and part of the artist crafting of the methodology. This is in line with Simons insistence that the use of case study should ‘approximate the “way of the artist” … in aspiring to describe and interpret those encounters’ while striving to ‘embrace the paradoxes inherent in people, events and sites we study and explore rather than try to resolve the tensions embedded in them’ (1996: 237). Winston, citing Simons, calls for artistry in research, noting the similar ‘journeys’ of devisers of theatre and researchers which can be irregular and uncertain (2006: 45). The *vignettes* I have included capture significant moments or aspects of the process in a form that intends to elucidate for the reader the sensation or ‘feel’ of those moments.6

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6 This echoes Collette Conroy’s (2009) employment of phenomenology as a tool, as mentioned in the literature review chapter.
The reason behind this approach is that, as Deirdre Heddon and Jane Milling point out in devising practice, ‘[m]emories of process are [...] unreliable’, are ‘continually forgotten’ and recordings and notes may not be enough as a ‘narrative does not accumulate an explanation of how work was made’ (2006: 23). This is further exacerbated by the ‘constant folding and faulting of influence and inspiration that is practice and production and documentation’ (Mike Pearson qtd in Heddon and Milling, 2006: 23). These vignettes therefore serve to capture an essence following Sheila Kerrigan’s advice to ‘highlight the important moments’ when examining a devised theatre production structure (2001: 40). The very notion of ‘important moments’ becomes a point of discussion in the final chapter of the Part Two of the thesis, thus adhering more to Leonard Koren’s suggestion that ‘[g]reatness exists in the inconspicuous and overlooked details’ (2008: 40). The vignettes are, therefore, a feather-dusting of the fault lines rather than a beating of the bounds.

‘Performing Languages’: A Case Study

Following the research in the pilot project presented in the article chapter, Let Me Hear Your Body Talk, the research for the main research project, ‘Performing Languages’, was also based on a qualitative approach. The Performing Languages project can be categorised as a case study as it was an empirical study that fulfilled Robert K. Yin’s stipulations that it:

... investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident ... in a situation [with] many more variables than data points, ... relies on multiple sources of evidence, ... and ... benefits from the prior development of theoretical propositions to guide data collection and analysis. (2009: 18)

In the sense of scope, the project covered the process of devising, rehearsing and performing a play in an additional language play over a specific period of time, including
the effects this process had on their competence in English with consideration of influences on the participants from outside the project. From the technical point of view, there were various data sources that considered the context and treatment of the data from a theoretical and ethical position, as detailed in the previous sections.

‘Performing Languages’ Research Project Outline: Setting and Participants

The ‘Performing Languages’ project was created in collaboration with *NovaTris* at the Université de Haute-Alsace in Mulhouse, France with students from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds as part of my doctoral research at University of Manchester into the use of group devised theatre for language acquisition in adults. This involved creating an original theatre performance in English over a 12-week period, which was performed as part of *Journées de la Culture* at the Université de Haute-Alsace on the 8th and 10th of April 2015. All the creative and developmental aspects of the project were carried out in English. This included improvisation, group discussion, script writing and written communication, and, of course, the performance for the ensemble’s fellow students at the university, lecturers, parents, visitors from a local arts organisation and members of the public that wished to come along. An account of the final performance can be found in the appendices (see Appendix 4). The theatre-making group named themselves *Ensemble Firefly*.

The project engaged group devised theatre, using its methods and methodology, as a vehicle for participants to improve on their communication and language skills in English. More specifically, this aimed at improving their confidence and self-efficacy in using the English they already had. The activities and session concepts for the project were based upon those commonly used in theatre devising and geared towards exploring movements of the human body and the role this plays in communication. The activities were sourced from

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7 *NovaTris* is an institute within the Université de Haute-Alsace that promotes multi-lingual education (mainly French, German and English).
the work of various theatre practitioners along with ideas developed from my own experience in the applied theatre field and language teaching. The group met on a weekly basis on Monday evenings for a workshop of two hours’ length. Additionally, the ensemble met on three weekends for creative workshop sessions and, toward the end of the project, for rehearsals. In addition, the ensemble members collaborated with other members of the group outside these times. This resulted in a time commitment of over seventy hours. To give a flavour of the theatre activity that took place during the project, descriptions of four separate workshops are provided in the appendices (see Appendix 5).

There were eight ensemble members, aged between 20 to the early 30s (most were 20-23), plus me. The research project aimed to accommodate 8-20 participants to replicate the general size of a conventional language classroom for adults. There were seven females and one male. Two of the participants identified as Italians (one an Erasmus student, Federica, the other, Aliya, whose family had settled in Italy and were originally from Morocco), one Austrian (Nadine), a Scot (Constance), a Suisse (Chloe), and three participants were French (Louis, Valérie and Julie). All the names of the participants have been anonymised. All the participants were intermediate/upper-intermediate learners or native speakers meaning there was a proficient level of English with regard to comprehension and fluency.\(^8\) A more detailed biographical description of the participants along with appraisals of their theatre competency and linguistic ability in English is provided in the appendices (see Appendix 6).

Three participants were from the English department and one from the school of Translation. Two others studied chemistry and two participants taught English and German at the Université de Haute-Alsace. One of these two teachers/lecturers, Nadine, was initially intending to participate on an even footing with the other participants (who were students),

\(^8\) B2 and one C1 in the Common European Framework Reference scale.
taking part in the interviews, exercises and, also, the final performance with the rest of the ensemble. Her participation, however, was less involved than planned due to other commitments at the weekends when much of the performance was developed. The other teacher/lecturer, a native English speaker, Constance, was only initially going to participate for the first couple of workshops, yet stayed with the project in the end, helping to organise the rehearsals and performances, and provide technical support during the show along with the other teacher. They became my confidantes and privy to information about the project in connection with administrative matters involving the university that were not discussed in depth with the other participants.

**Conclusion**

In this chapter, I have provided a justification for the use of case study for the ‘Performing Languages’ research project along with the motivations and reasoning for the methodological choices. The ethical considerations and issues of the research were first discussed, and an explanation provided for the decisions I made in this area. I then detailed the research design which listed a description of my theatre practice and research, the research procedure for this project including how the data was collected, processed, analysed and presented. Finally, I described the research project’s setting and participants.

This methodology brings to a close the first part of this portfolio thesis which consists of three chapters. First, there was a literature review which has five main sections: ‘Theatre and Drama for Additional Language Learning’; ‘Group Devised Theatre’; ‘Second Language Acquisition’; ‘The Body’; and ‘Unfinishedness’. The second chapter was an article-style piece called, ‘Let Me Hear Your Body Talk: ‘Experiencing the Word’ for Additional Language Acquisition’ along with an addendum. The chapter described the ‘Experiencing the Word’ pilot research project created to investigate the application of theatre devising
strategies for language acquisition and teaching. The findings suggested that the use of physically based theatre activities, with a focus on the role of gesture and voice and breathwork, give a heightened awareness of non-verbal communication. This benefited the participants in terms of lessening their communicative anxiety when using the target language. The third chapter in Part One was the 'Methodology' that provided a rationale for the choice of a case study approach and an account of the research design. What follows, in Part Two of this thesis, is the application of the methodology to the examination of practice-based research carried out as part of an ensemble devising project for additional language development. It addresses some of the issues and challenges raised in Part One along with other factors that arose from the further research that took place after the pilot study through to the end of the 'Performing Languages' case study.
PART II
Chapter Four

Performing Languages in a Community of Equals: An Introduction

This case study examines the use of group devised theatre for additional language development which challenges more conventional cognitive-orientated approaches and informs the ‘alternative’ ones in the debate concerning the nature of additional language education along with other drama-based approaches such as process drama.

This second part of the thesis explores various facets of both the methodology and methods associated with group devised theatre, collective creation and ensemble devising (terms I use interchangeably, explained earlier in the ‘Literature Review’ chapter) and their influence on confidence or self-efficacy in an additional language. Part two of the thesis is based on a case study of the ‘Performing Languages’ group devised theatre project, including the process and performances, which took place from January to June 2015 at the University of Mulhouse in France. This part of the overall thesis contains six chapters: ‘The Ignorant Facilitator’; ‘The Individual in the Collective’; ‘Voicing Identity’; and ‘Messing It Up As We Go Along’. They are bookended by this introduction chapter and a conclusion chapter.

The next section in this introduction discusses group devised theatre/collective creation. It outlines ensemble devising’s associated ethos of democracy and emancipation, foregrounding the exploration of this in my practice. There is a discussion of the notion of ‘groupness’ put forward by the theatre practitioner and historian, Kathryn Syssoyeva, as being the essence of ensemble devising. I relate this to the notion of friendship and how the forming of friendships, an argument developed in the following chapters, influences self-efficacy for the language learner. The next section introduces what Dwight Atkinson
describes as ‘alternative approaches’ to language acquisition that have been developed in the last two decades (2011b). These alternative approaches are referred to and expanded on throughout the following chapters and are interwoven with how I applied theatre practice to the concerns outlined in them. I then turn to the concept of ‘Communities of Practice’, which is an influence on one of the alternative approaches, and I outline the bearing it has on the process of creating a devising ensemble. Following this, I discuss the notion of self-efficacy and how it plays a significant role in SLA. Accordingly, throughout the following chapters there is discussion of how my practice and research informs those approaches and theories.

The concluding section of this introduction gives a brief outline of the four main chapters, each giving a particular perspective from group devised theatre practice and what that offers to the broader research inquiry of this overall thesis.

‘Groupness’: The Essence of Collective Creation and Friendship in Addition Language Development

In assessing what constitutes collective creation there are conflicting and sometimes contradictory definitions to be found from group to group (Heddon and Milling, 2006; Govan et al., 2007; Syssoyeva and Proudfit, 2013a, 2013b, 2016). This is the case regardless as to whether the collective is professional or community-based and liable to change even within the same collective (Heddon and Milling, 2006; Govan et al., 2007; Syssoyeva and Proudfit, 2013a, 2013b, 2016). Kathryn Syssoyeva finds that any precise description insists on caveats and closer inspection leads to elusiveness; elementally, though, what remains is clear:

By way of a working definition of collective creation, this seems to leave the following: There is a group. The group wants to make theatre. The group
chooses – or, conversely, a leader within the group proposes – to make theatre using a process that places conscious emphasis on the *groupness* of that process, on some possible collaborative mode between members of the group, which is, typically, viewed as being in some manner *more collaborative* than members of the group have previously experienced. Process is typically of paramount importance; anticipated aesthetic or political outcomes are perceived to derive directly from the proposed mode of interaction. (2013a: 5–6)

In the ‘Performing Languages’ project, there was a group. The group wanted to make theatre. As a researcher-practitioner, I proposed that we should collaboratively create a piece of theatre with the aim of developing the participants’ English. The ensemble members found this mode of learning was more collaborative than they had experienced (to varying degrees) and as we progressed we discovered a sense of ‘groupness’. The groupness itself, again, like collective creation, being difficult to clearly define, seemed to emanate from a combination of a shared experience, a specific purpose (to create a performance) and the bond of friendship, fraternity or perhaps in a theatrical reference, *complicité*. The third of these elements, the bond of friendship, begins to be discussed towards the end of the next chapter, ‘The Ignorant Facilitator’, and is further explored in the following ones where friendship is shown in ‘intermittent acts of emancipation’ (Rancière, 2013: 83).

Friendship can be discussed in the variety of its particular, and sometimes peculiar, characteristics; and, indeed, in the subjective nature of such definitions. Instead, it is the way friendship effects, what Todd May describes as, ‘relations of equality’ that it is explored in later chapters (2013: 70). May holds that the balance of give and take in friendships does not give the relationship equality, but that this balance is even taken into account (2013: 70). He further explains:

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1 From Late Latin complic-, stem of complex (‘partner, confederate’), from Latin complicō (‘fold together’) and in reference to the devising group Théâtre de Complicité.
Group Devised Theatre for ‘Second Language Acquisition’

We look at our friends as our equals, not because they are equal in measure to us but because equality of this type is, to a certain extent, beyond measure. The equality here is an equality of two or more people who take one another not as equals in this or that characteristic but, we might say, as equals, period. (May, 2013: 70)

For my purposes, here, I take May’s concept and, along with it, the caveats: friends can let you down, can compete, can annoy and fall out of favour. So, taking groupness as a beginning, the evolving of friendship in the sense of ‘relations of equality’ is part of the pedagogical and devising process. From the elemental yet unclear and perhaps messy roots of groupness, the complex and rhizomatic construction of friendship is developed where a relationship – educational in the case of this study – is rooted and imbedded and not a superficially imposed artifice. This aligns with both the Complexity Theory and Sociocultural Theory approaches to language development which see language in a more holistic manner and acknowledges that it is, for the most part, practised in the ‘real’ social world (which is also ‘messy’ and ‘unfinished’). Language is also intrinsically a group activity and therefore training to speak to only one point of authority is surely amiss. Instead, by incorporating more informal and varied communication the learning cohort becomes a supportive and challenging structure beneficial to the overall confidence in the individual to step out into the real-world environment.

Returning to Syssoyeva’s concept of groupness outlined above, she continues by describing the implications for using a collective creation approach and, by extension, what that means for the language development process:

Processual method may well be ideologically driven in so far as – historically, at least – collaborative creation has often constituted a kind of polemic-in-action against prior methodologies that the group has known: an investigation, a reinvigoration, a challenge, an overthrow. The extrinsic and/or oppressive
structure, if you will, that the group perceives itself to be challenging through the generation of a new methodology may be aesthetic, institutional, interpersonal, societal, economic, political, ethical, or some admixture thereof. (2013a: 6)

The embracing of non-hierarchical structures inherently challenges both traditional methods and institutional authorities within the second language learning field. It also challenges the hegemony of wider educational institutions and, furthermore, society's continued hierarchical structure. For example, collective creation in the 1960s provided a 'political response to the hierarchical structures of the established theatre' (Govan, Nicholson, & Normington, 2007, 47). Here, for my argument, 'established theatre' can be read as 'established language classroom'. Over the following four chapters, to what extent the 'processual method' provided 'an investigation, a reinvigoration, a challenge, an overthrow' is analysed by examining moments from the project.

Among the different elements that provide the foundations and theoretical structure for group devised theatre, the ideological stance of egalitarianism is the one that I examine in the following chapters in relation to additional language development. I argue that by adopting egalitarianism as a pedagogical guide, a more supportive, emancipatory learning experience is formed that can address obstacles to language learner development. These impediments, to what Peter De Costa and Bonny Norton specifically identify as confidence, motivation and investment, are caused by power relations and pressures found at various levels: micro-level – social activity; meso-level – sociocultural institutions and communities; and macro-level – ideological structures (2017). These and other concerns identified by the alternative language learning theorists (discussed in the next section) can be addressed by adopting and adapting, in Virginie Magnat's words inspired by an address by the theatre director Robert Lepage, 'the plurality of perspectives, experiences, and

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2 Some of these issues, such as language anxiety (Horwitz et al., 1986) are discussed in chapters four and five.
interpretations [of] collaborative work’ (2005: 82) and applying them to the additional language learning process. This is done in part by explicitly and implicitly negotiating the influence of what Ben Highmore sees as interchangeable terms for ‘the dense weave of aesthetic propensities’ (2010: 135). According to Highmore, Pierre Bourdieu terms it ‘habitus’ – both linguistic and cultural, Gregory Bateson calls it ‘ethos’, and Highmore himself terms it ‘the aesthetics of social life’ or ‘social aesthetics’ (all cited in Highmore, 2010: 135).4

Considering this, my proposal is that group devised theatre, taking collective creation as its (albeit moot) ideological guide, creates a vehicle for cooperative and non-hierarchical collaboration that can be used to address issues raised by the alternative approaches to second language acquisition. I now outline these alternative approaches and how they are compatible with the methods of group devised theatre.

‘Alternative Approaches’ to SLA: Complexity, Identity, and Sociocultural Theories

Among the six alternative approaches that Atkinson (2011b) has ascertained, in this thesis I work predominantly with three of them and the issues they identify: Sociocultural (Lantolf, 2011), Identity (Norton and McKinney, 2011; Block, 2013; Norton, 2013, 2016), and Complexity Theory (Larsen-Freeman, 2011, 2012a) approaches.6 These approaches seek to integrate the individual learner and the larger social world; they all acknowledge the messiness both from a research point of view with the collection of data being extremely difficult to aggregate and that teaching languages does not mean simply ‘transferring mental systems from head to head’ (Larsen-Freeman, 2011: 49).

3 Bourdieu’s idea of habitus was discussed in part one of this thesis.
4 The related term ‘ethics’ has bearing in light of the OED definitions as ‘the moral principles governing or influencing conduct’ and ‘the branch of knowledge concerned with moral principles’ (Oxford English Dictionary).
5 Highmore claims, ‘Ethos might well be approached as something like a tonality, or a feeling, but its polyphonic dimension must be continually stressed’ (2010: 128). He also sees ethos as being something that Rancière calls the ‘distribution of the sensible’ (2013, 12)
6 The Complexity Theory approach is also known as the Chaos Theory approach.
The main proponent of a Complexity Theory approach to second language development, Diane Larsen-Freeman, has noted her own change from a strictly cognitive orientation. This orientation remains the mainstream academic norm and sees language as a fixed system comprised of dictated grammatical principles. Larsen-Freeman now adheres to a more complex structure and understanding of ‘language as a complex adaptive system, which emerges bottom-up from interactions of multiple agents in speech communities […] rather than a static system composed of top-down grammatical rules or principles’ (2011: 49). Aligned with this, Larsen-Freeman points out that the process of SLA is ‘complex, situated, and likely multivariate’ (2011: 49). This has obvious parallels with group devised theatre given that Scott Proudfit and Kathryn Syssoyeva see collective creation dually as ‘an artistic form and a social practice, which, in the very structure of its creative processes, appears to foreground the complexities of give and take that lie at the core of all human interaction’ (2013a: 26).

The emergence of the idea, albeit in its infancy, for a Complexity Theory approach to SLA signals the need for a multi-faceted approach. This would combine an open-ended process and product encompassing elements which are not directly or immediately evident – the peripheries and beyond – of educative activity. The Complexity Theory approach also calls for engendering a positive sense of unfinishedness highlighted in Larsen-Freeman’s lexical choice of ‘development’ rather than ‘acquisition’ (Larsen-Freeman, 2015b). The collective creation model of ‘polyphony, not consensus […] of form and practice’ (Syssoyeva, 2013a: 4) accommodates this understanding and its complexity. Accordingly, the negotiating of the relations of power within the learning environment foregrounds the adoption of the democratic ethos that is eminent in the group devised theatre process. Its application to the language learning process provides a platform for an emancipatory and

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7 This was explained in more depth in the introduction to the portfolio thesis.
8 For example, learners’ access to the target language and its community.
collaborative learning experience, ‘if’, as Syssoyeva suggests, ‘collaboration is presumed to equal discussion, debate and subsequent accord, acquiescence or synthesis’ (2013a: 4). This leads us to the Sociocultural Theory (SCT) approach.

Because the power of language rests in its capacity to make meaning, the main concern of SCT centres on how individuals gain the ability to ‘mediate (i.e., regulate or control) their mental or communicative activity’ in an additional language (Lantolf, 2011: 24).9 An element within SCT sees behaviour as being shaped by motive, purpose and the conditions where it occurs, and the performance of communicative activities depends on these defining factors. This has a direct relation to the learning environment. Part of the construct of power relations and cultural capital in additional language learning is the native/non-native, teacher-pupil pedagogical structure, which, using Bourdieu terms, might be called ‘legitimate’ and ‘illegitimate’ speakers. This is still prevalent in current language teaching, even in the legitimacy of the teachers themselves (De Costa and Norton, 2017).

The Identity Approach, while seeking to locate the individual learner in the context of wider society, looks to do so considering ‘relations of power’ (Norton and McKinney, 2011: 73).10 These relations of power are not always rigorously defined and can shift and mutate depending on the prism or perspective that is used. An acknowledgement and awareness of such provides a departure from the values of dichotomies, such as student/teacher or native/non-native speaker, which have much less relevance in the contemporary world where ‘in-betweenness’ or ‘liminality’ is the most common experience in our societies and as citizens (Bhabha, 1991).11 Considering this, I will later look at how the group devised

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9 The SCT approach is rooted in L.S. Vygotsky’s psychological theory regarding consciousness (Lantolf, 2011).
10 ‘The identity approach investigates SLA as a sociocultural practice. SLA is conceptualized as a relational activity that occurs between specific speakers situated in specific sociocultural contexts’ (Norton and McKinney, 2011: 79).
11 This is the case at least in Europe in general, but also including countries which are more insular culturally and politically (Bhabha, 1991).
theatre milieu affected the learners differently to those of their usual places of study throughout the four chapters that follow this introduction, which are outlined in the final section of this introduction.

**Communities of Practice**

The Identity Approach is discussed in more depth in chapter seven, ‘Voicing Identity’, as it relates closely to the areas of multiple identities and multilingualism explored in that chapter. However, a concept that has been influential on the Identity Approach also has bearing on the formation of a group devised theatre ensemble and the notion of groupness discussed above. Identity Approach researchers have found inspiration in the anthropologist Etienne Wenger-Trayner (née Wenger) and Wenger and Lave’s work on Communities of Practice (Lave and Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998, 2000, 2010). Communities of Practice (CoP) are created by people wanting to participate in a process of collective learning in an area of mutual endeavour. Wenger-Trayner argues that we gain a better understanding of society by identifying these structures where informal learning takes place through ‘engagement in practice’, rather than relying solely on analysing more traditionally recognised structures in the guise of institutions, schools or nation-states (2015: 3). While Wenger-Trayner claims that CoP are ubiquitous, he also tells us that it is this ubiquity which means that they are often unnoticed unless overtly recognised and designated (2015: 3).

What constitutes a CoP is the combination of certain characteristics: the ‘domain’, the ‘community’ and the ‘practice’ (Wenger-Trayner, 2015: 3). The domain is founded on a shared interest and commitment to a specific interest. This can be deduced from those involved asking themselves several questions: what the partnership is about, why is it worth caring about, what is the mutual benefit in working together, what do the participants want to learn and what are the issues that need to be addressed (Wenger, 2010: 12). The
‘community’ aspect means there must be members interacting and learning together (as opposed to merely sharing the same occupation, for example, being students). There must also be a shared practice. One example of this shared practice given by Etienne and Beverly Wenger-Trayner is ‘a band of artists seeking new forms of expression’ (2015: 1). *Ensemble Firefly* can therefore be described as a CoP because, along with expressing themselves in novel ways, their shared practice was that of language learners developing in the domain of an additional language in a community-orientated manner. Returning to the questions posed by Wenger on the element of ‘domain’, the partnership was one of a research project pertaining to SLA and more specifically collaborative creation. Initially, people became involved as they thought it worthwhile to find other methods for language learning which were absent or lacking in their experience. This developed into wanting to create a performance that captured their experience in the ‘Performing Languages’ project. The participants were interested in the use of theatre to further their language skills to feel more comfortable in various types of situation and exploring elements of language such as writing and the role of physicality and voice. This they saw as being best done in a collaborative manner where they were encouraged to take the initiative while developing ‘a repertoire of resources’ that ‘takes time and sustained interaction’ which can be explicit or even incidental (Wenger-Trayner, 2015: 2). This was evidenced explicitly, for example, in our work on developing a heightened awareness of physicality and incidentally in our discussions over lunch which became one of the main moments of learning.

Two of the main characteristics of CoP’s application are particularly apt regarding the aims of the ‘Performing Languages’ research project. Firstly, practitioners are optimally placed to decide what knowledge they require and take responsibility to do so collectively (Wenger-Trayner, 2015: 4) which speaks to the learner autonomy that collective creation engenders. The second aspect is the connection between learning and performance that spans the threshold between two different areas (Wenger-Trayner, 2015: 4) in much the same
way as Syssoyeva argues collective creation does with ‘performativity of social life and performance’ (2013a: 6). This has an obvious connection with the ‘Performing Languages’ project in that it helps us to understand what occurred during the project where performance informed the learning and vice versa. These characteristics of autonomy and practitioner-orientation do, however, pose problems for traditional hierarchical organisations. Wenger points out that there is the common assumption made by organisations that accountability is lacking in relationships that are horizontal rather than hierarchical. In response, Wenger argues that there is and it is realised ‘through a mutual commitment to a learning partnership’ (2010: 13).

Accountability is perhaps the largest obstacle to be negotiated to allow institutional education to recognise the value and validity of CoP. For examinations of language ability there is a default manner of measurement, which for SLA means testing tangible areas such as grammar knowledge and comprehension of academic texts. From this perspective, language learning is very much seen as a final goal to be reached in marked contrast to the stance of the alternative approaches to SLA discussed above in this chapter. While recognising the individual objectives of SLA, proponents of such approaches seek to alter the pedagogical understanding of SLA from being teleological to one recognising the non-finality of language and how language development works in the world outside the institution. Speaking from the perspective of CoP, the Wenger-Trayners echo this, claiming ‘learning is not only a means to an end: it is the end product’, which has ramifications in that the institution:

[...] is not the privileged locus of learning. It is not a self-contained, closed world in which students acquire knowledge to be applied outside, but a part of a broader learning system. The class is not the primary learning event. It is life itself that is the main learning event. Schools, classrooms, and training sessions
still have a role to play in this vision, but they have to be in the service of the learning that happens in the world. (2015: 5)

The Wenger-Trayners suggest that this might be found in ‘peripheral forms of participation in broader communities beyond the walls of the school’ and looking at what would serve student’s lifelong needs for learning beyond that (2015: 5). Engaging learners in making connections beyond the environs of the institution in ‘peripheral forms of participation’ emerged unplanned during the project and included mealtimes, shopping trips, a Facebook ‘community’ and rehearsals and writing for the performance that took place beyond the workshop and in private space. This final element challenges my attempts to delineate what was part of the project and what was not and, in turn, perhaps contests what can be regarded as the boundary of a particular community of practice. This is discussed in sections of chapters six and seven, and extensively in chapter eight. The next section will outline the theoretical features of self-efficacy in SLA.

**Self-efficacy in SLA**

Self-efficacy differs from self-confidence in that it tends to be applied more narrowly to a person’s belief in their ability to perform a task (Bandura, 1997: 4), whether that be playing football, playing a piece of music or, in the area I am discussing, using an additional language. Self-confidence, or self-esteem, is more about the person as a complete being and their respect for themselves, their self-regard, and how they think others see them (Bandura, 1997). Here, it is well worth noting James Thompson’s observation about self-esteem which is similarly applicable to self-efficacy. He notes that self-esteem, rather than being ‘defined as a property emanating from a person […] should be understood as a property of the interrelation of the person with the situation they are in’ (Thompson, 2003: 74). This is a more general perspective, yet, even people who have self-esteem can have low self-efficacy

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\[\text{12}^\text{a}\] For a review of the literature on self-efficacy in the SLA field see Raoofi, Tan, and Chan (2012).
when it comes to specific inabilities and this is nowhere more evident than in second language acquisition where the incapacity to express oneself causes acute feelings of vulnerability which in turn accentuates learner distress (Horwitz et al., 1986; Horwitz and Young, 1991). One of the ways students deal with this is an over reliance on strict rules which can be seen in the guise of grammar, favoured forms of pronunciation and ‘eradication’ of accent. This, though, can be problematic as room for error is limited and can lead to restriction of expression through fear of failure. Apart from these types of influence on students’ learning, research shows that a main variable in the motivation and performance of second language speakers is self-efficacy (Raoofi et al., 2012). Albert Bandura identifies four elements that create the status of self-efficacy (1997, 2008). These are mastery experience, vicarious experience or social modelling, social persuasion, and physiological state and it is important to briefly address each of these before we further discuss self-efficacy in the frame of SLA.

Mastery experience is essentially the experience of success to ‘build a robust efficacy’ (Bandura, 2008: 168), perhaps manifesting itself in language development in the guise of good marks in exams or, from a personal point of view, a particularly satisfying interaction. Bandura though tells us that the mastery experience is not gained by only ‘easy successes’, but by building resilience and that ‘[r]esilient efficacy requires experience in overcoming obstacles through perseverant effort’ (2008: 168). Vicarious experience or social modelling is the notion that when a person observes colleagues or peers successfully complete a task or undertaking, they also benefit mutually as they see themselves capable of achieving the same success, which leads to further enhancement of the learner’s self-efficacy (Bandura, 2008: 168). Social persuasion is encouragement from people with perceived expertise in the area of concern. Bandura explains that this is not merely conveying faith in people, but by creating situations and structures that support people where ‘[e]ffective efficacy builders […] encourage judgment of success by self-improvement rather than by triumphs over others’
Group Devised Theatre for ‘Second Language Acquisition’

(2008: 168). The physiological state along with physicality also incorporates emotional aspects so, along with fatigue, emotional factors such as anxiety are liable to produce instability or feelings of deficiency in a learner’s self-efficacy. This might be when performing a task such as giving a presentation, contributing to a meeting, or even, making an order or completing a simple transaction. Feeling comfortable in such situations strengthens self-efficacy which creates a self-perpetuating cycle of encouragement (Bandura, 2008: 169). Saeid Raoofi, Bee Hoon Tan and Swee Heng Chan are concerned about the lack of research done into how to alter and develop people’s self-efficacy, specifically in education institutions, rather than merely attempting to measure levels of it (2012: 62).

In the field of second language acquisition, self-efficacy has been found to influence the ‘interest, persistence, extent of effort students invest in learning, the goals they choose to pursue and their use of self-regulated strategies in performing a task’ (Raoofi et al., 2012: 61). With this in mind, we return to the Identity Approach and another element of the methodology put forward by Norton which is the ‘construct of investment’ (Norton and McKinney, 2011: 75 italics in original). This concept, first proposed in the mid-1990s (Norton Peirce, 1995; Norton, 1997), regards the learner as being in a relationship with the target language that is mediated by social and historic constructs and furthermore the wish of the learner to acquire and develop that language (Norton and McKinney, 2011: 75). When learners lack investment in the language practices of the teaching space this causes restrictions on learning and a perpetuation of ‘educational inequities’ (Norton, 2013: 17). The meaning of ‘investment’, here, is related and complementary, though not equivalent to, motivation. Indeed, Norton has pointed out that the analysis of motivation in SLA does not pay enough attention to the impact of unequal relations of power, which she finds deeply problematic (2013: 6). To differentiate her work on investment from motivation, Norton situates the construct of investment in a sociological paradigm while the concept of motivation, from her reading of Dörnyei, she claims should be placed in a psychological
paradigm (2013: 6). I view self-efficacy as a factor that can be influential in both fields because while self-efficacy stems from a psychological base, it can be affected tangibly in the sociological environment in which learning takes place. This is supported by Raoofi, Tan and Chan’s comprehensive review of self-efficacy in second language learning (2012). However, in most of the studies examined by Raoofi, Tan and Chan, this was through interventions by a teacher and this emphasis on teacher-based efficacy building tends to set itself in the ‘master explicator’, hierarchical model of education that is critiqued by Rancière. Having already outlined my ideological approach, I illustrate in the following chapters a way in which self-efficacy need not, nor should not, be the responsibility of the teacher-facilitator but of the individual themselves supported by the collective.

**A Community of Equals: Three Aspects of Ensemble Devising for SLA**

*A community of equals is not a goal to be attained but rather a presupposition that is in constant need of verification, a presupposition that can never in fact lead to the establishment of an egalitarian social formation since the logic of inequality is inherent in the social bond. A community of equals is therefore a precarious community that implements equality in intermittent acts of emancipation.*

Jacques Rancière (2013: 83)

The analysis and discussion of the ‘Performing Languages’ case study takes place over four more chapters drawing on the ideas outlined above followed by a discussion of the combined findings of the chapters in a concluding chapter. The first of these chapters is called ‘The Ignorant Facilitator’ which takes its name from Shulamith Lev-Aladgem’s adaptation of Rancière’s work in *The Ignorant Schoolmaster* (1991). It examines my role and positioning within the project’s attempt at being more egalitarian than the conventional classroom. I also compare the collective creation approach to that of process drama in terms of differences in how the teacher-facilitator works within these approaches. This is followed
by how a less hierarchical, more friendship-based or fraternal relationship informs the educational process of language development and can affect self-efficacy in use of the target language.

The following chapter, ‘The Individual in the Collective’, continues to examine the power structure of the learning environment. The focus is on the effects of a shift in onus from the teacher-facilitator to the group having more input into the content and, with that, the individuals taking equal responsibility for creating material and making decisions on how that material formed the final performance. This provides ways that learners can produce course material that they find both motivating and relevant for their purpose of learning the target language, which is a major issue in SLA. The discussion takes examples from how participants contributed to the production’s conceptual framework and generated potential performance material seen through improvisation, group and pair discussion and writing. Before this, I outline how collective creation embodies an ethos that serves as a vehicle for a more egalitarian educational structure for adults.

I draw on the work of Jacques Rancière throughout these two first two chapters and relate it to some of the challenges and notions raised in the two that follow, ‘Voicing Identity’ and ‘Messing It Up As We Go Along’. His work informs the discussion of the egalitarian ethos engendered in ensemble devising and the examination of both my own role as teacher-facilitator-researcher in the first of these chapters and the wider concern of the individual learner in a collective creation context in the second. On a macro-scale, perhaps challenging the role and positioning of the teacher or teacher-facilitator is most delicate as it contests what is seen as the heart of conventional schooling and education. This is done none more so than by Rancière’s formulation in The Ignorant Schoolmaster that learners ought not to be defined by deficit, and equality between learner and educator is the starting point of the pedagogical process rather than an end. This informs the
discussion of my role which is further informed by Lev-Aladgem’s adaptation of Rancière’s work where the ignorant schoolmaster mutates to ‘the ignorant facilitator’ (2015).

The third chapter examines the ability of group devised theatre to create greater self-efficacy, investment and motivation in additional language development, which have been identified as research objectives in SLA. The Identity Approach to SLA acts as a theoretical fulcrum to the analysis that takes place which draws on three aspects of the case study. One of these continues the theme of the individual in the collective from the previous chapter and the others involve the challenges and opportunities that multiple identities and multilingualism provide. Educational approaches that ‘enhance human agency in more equitable worlds’ (Norton, 2013: 22) can address these areas and I argue that the ethos of group devised theatre provides a basis for this. One of the main points the analysis and discussion raises is the notion of learning in the ‘peripheries’ and the idea that research should also consider learning that is done beyond what we might recognise as the learning environment. It accounts for how the sense of ensemble created by the devising process influenced activities that encouraged participants to use the target language amongst each other and with non-participants that did not directly involve theatre activities. How these experiences then informed the devising process is also discussed.

The fourth and final main chapter, ‘Messing It Up As We Go Along’, continues in the vein of discussing peripheral events and ones that took place outside of what we might notionally regard the group devising process to be. Using the related concepts of ‘mess’, ‘uncertainty’ and ‘incompleteness’ put forward by applied theatre theorist practitioners such as James Thompson (bewilderment and difficultness), Joe Winston (uncertainty) and Catherine McNamara, Jenny Kidd, and Jenny Hughes (mess), I argue that these notions can be useful in understanding additional language development. I discuss how this understanding can somewhat paradoxically benefit language learners who can, by
recognising the sensation of incompleteness and uncertainty that they often feel when using the target language, better adapt themselves during language development. I give examples of how moments during the project that might normally be discarded must be considered and regarded as part of the process. Through these moments I describe, I seek to demonstrate how the ephemeral, unpredictable and sometimes ignored facets of language development can be just as integral a part and add to the richness of research in this field.

A concluding chapter brings together the elements explored in the ‘Performing Languages’ case study. This includes: relations of power in the learning environment, the value of theatre for addressing issues involving identity, and the value of understanding the eclectic and sometimes messy nature of additional language development from the sometimes ignored and peripheral. A discussion follows of group devised theatre as a vehicle and methodology for additional language development and what effect the contributory factors, mentioned above, had on learners’ self-efficacy and confidence for adult learners in using the target language, English.
Chapter Five

The Ignorant Facilitator

This chapter explores the effects of a teacher-facilitator encouraging an egalitarian pedagogy for additional language development with such a pedagogy supported by the group devised theatre process. The three following sections contain analysis and discussion the potential benefits of such an approach for self-efficacy and confidence in speaking the target language of English, drawing on specific instances from practice in the case study, ‘Performing Languages’. This introductory section sets out the theoretical basis for a more egalitarian pedagogy based in Jacques Rancière’s work in *The Ignorant Schoolmaster* (1991) and partly following Shulamith Lev-Aladgem’s adaptation and interpretation of Rancière’s proposals for Applied Theatre work.

The common practice in the field of SLA is to measure the achievements of learners against those of the native speakers of the target language (Piller, 2002) in an attempt to ‘sound like a native speaker’ (González-Bueno et al., 1997: 261), or trying to approximate the teacher as the ‘ideal’. Therefore, one of the aims of the research was to experiment with achieving language learning objectives that were different to attempting to match the standards of a purported ideal native speaker. Along with this, the participants in the ‘Performing Languages’ project felt there were very limited occasions to speak and practice the target language in their formal classes at the university. In contrast, the egalitarian working practice of ensemble devising actively encourages each member to contribute which, regarding SLA, affords ample opportunities for participants to communicate. I posit that encouraging students to be instigators and creators of the material and direction of the language learning environment benefits their self-efficacy and I propose that the ethos and working practice of group devised theatre offers a structure and creates the openings for this to occur. This challenges institutional power structures and the conventional notion of
the teacher or ‘teacher-facilitator’ being the provider of the material and ‘knowledge’. As I had initiated the project, I began the process as the focal point and assumed the role of the nominal teacher-facilitator. I could also be viewed as an example of the ideal native speaker and there was a challenge in how to negotiate the inherent power structures of these two factors by decentralising the role of the teacher-facilitator within the learning environment.

However, it would be disingenuous to negate any knowledge that I had about the target language or, indeed, about the devising process or my nominal position of facilitator-teacher-researcher. So, what did I know better than the participants? I had experience of working on the stage for many years and a master’s level of study in Applied Theatre (along with the PhD research I was actively doing in the field). I had also worked extensively as an English language teacher and I had worked combining theatre and language learning for fifteen years. None of the participants had this kind of knowledge or experience and for the project my expertise should have been ideal. The sense of ‘ideal’, though, can be challenged following the line of interrogation from perspectives of Rancière outlined previously in the introduction. In at least one way, I did not know more than them: they had experience of language learning that was beyond mine. For example, one of the ensemble, Aliya, was multi-lingual. She had learnt Arabic at home and Italian through her upbringing in Italy. In addition to this, she had learnt and developed French and English to a highly proficient level. In fact, most of the group members were able to speak more than one language and these were practised in their home environments or countries, for example, Federica and Aliya (Italian nationals) using French in France. As this became apparent, I came to the realisation that while I was a native speaker of the target language, English, I was certainly not the most experienced language learner.

Yet, my professional and/or academic knowledge did guarantee my authority. I had instigated the project and, by implication, the fact that I had been vetted and approved by
the university meant that I had somehow proved my validity as an educator. To alleviate the dominance of this kind of position, Lev-Aladgem suggests that being an ‘ignorant facilitator’, at least momentarily or to some degree, might serve to avoid our ‘knowledge’ becoming ‘the instrument of the social system, and a fundamental source of the legitimacy of domination’ (2015: 514). Her interpretation of Rancière’s philosophical stance is useful as, rather than seeing the teacher or facilitator as superfluous or, indeed, damaging to learning, Lev-Aladgem sees that the ‘teacher’s vocation is first and foremost to encourage self-confidence among his students’ (2015: 512). Antonia Darder, Marta Baltodano and Rodolfo Torres have proposed this ‘vocation’ as, following Paulo Freire, ‘to be humanized social (cultural) agents in the world’ seeking to ‘influence the development of a politically emancipatory and humanizing culture of participation, voice, and social action within the classroom’ (Darder et al., 2009: 10). Lev-Aladgem also highlights Rancière's insistence on the adaptation of what we term ignorance ‘as a deliberate political position’, which poses questions and has implications for theatre practitioners and their pedagogical approach (2015: 513). These pedagogical implications touch on how knowledge and power are assumed and wielded in education and how this affects the ‘authority’ of the educator.

The idea that teacher-facilitators can unwittingly be a proxy for authoritarianism is a critique noted in various radical pedagogies, such as critical and anarchist pedagogy (Giroux, 1984, 2001, 2011; Freire, 2000; hooks, 2003; Darder et al., 2009; Suissa, 2010; Haworth, 2012). From this perspective the educator’s experiences hold value, yet their knowledge is to be challenged and reassessed and, through that process, freed to rediscover things afresh; Rancière’s suggested alternative to authoritarianism is that the teacher-facilitator’s role is to ‘encourage’ others. Of course, the idea that teachers should encourage learners would not be viewed as at all radical and it is unlikely that educators would deliberately do otherwise. It is more in what is being encouraged that proves a radical
departure from those wishing their students to succeed and be the best they can be; the encouragement Rancière has in mind is that of demonstrating equality.

This verification of equality requires that we allow for some radical pedagogical premises, suggested by Rancière, for a new model of education. This is instead of what he argues has been the established educational model in Western societies: ‘The Explicative Order’ (Rancière, 1991: 4). Lev-Aladgem tells us this model is based on ‘immanent and permanent binary oppositions’ (2015: 515). This means that there is a polarisation of perceived intelligence where knowledge begets that there must be ignorance. The Explicative Order model establishes that there are those ordained to be capable of thought and those who are not: the philosopher versus the poor; the intellectual against the artisan; the teacher contra the student. The model employing a political use of expertise relies heavily on the idea of progress where, by following a knowledge ‘path’, the student can obtain the same knowledge as the ‘old Master’ (Rancière, 1991: 15). Rancière argues that this does not happen in practice and the inequality that is proposed to be overcome is in fact perpetuated by explication. Any explication, he argues, precipitates more explication and, likewise, any understanding gained leads to the need for more understanding. Due to the structural inequality of this explanatory model, those receiving the explication are stultified. This is a never-ending situation where the student, no matter how much they try or achieve, must always walk in the footsteps of the master – never alongside as an equal.

As an alternative educational model, Lev-Aladgem has mapped out how Rancière asks us in The Ignorant Schoolmaster to allow him to suggest five premises to assume a more egalitarian perspective (2015: 515–516). Firstly, she identifies his proposal that ‘all men have equal intelligence’ (Rancière 1991:8 qtd. in Lev-Aladgem, 2015: 515) and ‘everyone is of equal intelligence’ (Rancière, 1991: 101). This is not intended by Rancière to mean that everyone is intelligent in the same way or have had the same opportunity to demonstrate
this. He explains this saying that while there may be ‘inequality in the manifestations of intelligence […] there is no hierarchy of intellectual capacity’ (Rancière, 1991: 27 italics in original). In fact, almost paradoxically, Rancière declares, ‘We can never say: all intelligence is equal’ (Rancière, 1991: 46). This, Yves Citton explains, is due to the promotion of measurements and scales used to rank intelligences which suit particular political agendas and interests (2010: 32). Following this is a second premise that ‘equality and intelligence are synonymous terms’ (Rancière, 1991: 73), which is intended to mean that when equality is practised it demonstrates that person’s intelligence and vice versa (Lev-Aladgem, 2015: 516). Lev-Aladgem, citing Rancière, identifies that this demonstration of ‘confidence in the intellectual capacity of any human being’ changes the student-teacher relationship and allows for a third proposition that relies on another affinity where ‘[e]mancipation is the consciousness of that equality’ (Rancière qtd. in Lev-Aladgem, 2015: 516). It is then through consciously verifying equality that a person’s equality is shown. Keeping this in consideration, the fourth premise of thought being a universal human property allows those seeking emancipation to discard the dichotomies of intelligence and ignorance and the roles played by their purported agents. This has implications for the human will. As the fifth premise posits, not only are ‘equality and intelligence […] synonymous terms’, but this is also ‘exactly like reason and will’ (Rancière, 1991: 73). Lev-Aladgem suggests that this ‘not only refutes the traditional philosophical perception of reason as the supreme quality of the human being but […] reloads it with an alternative meaning of a sensuous faculty that is connected to ‘passion’ […], to ‘imagination’ […], to ‘feeling’ […] and to the human senses’ (2015: 516). This leads her to suggest:

This equation between reason, feelings, imagination, sensuous experience and the importance of will not only validates theatre as an art form and theatre in co-communities in particular, it also stimulates a redefinition of the relationship between the theatre facilitator and the participants. (Lev-Aladgem, 2015: 516)
A discussion of my ‘grapple with issues concerning our privileged position in relation to the participants’ (Lev-Aladgem, 2015: 513–514) is outlined and analysed in the following sections where I draw upon instances during the project which are relevant to both the use of group devised theatre for adult additional language learners and the concept of ‘the ignorant teacher-facilitator’.

**Post-performance Participant-led Workshops with the Audience**

Regarding building self-efficacy and confidence with English as an additional language, a significant instance was the participants leading the post-performance workshops in the target language, English. The workshops were aimed at engaging the audience after the ‘Performing Languages’ performance by doing some of the activities that had been involved in the devising process. Initially, I had planned to facilitate the process, however, mid-way through the project it occurred to me that, in line with encouraging participants to take the initiative during the devising process, that the other members of the ensemble facilitating activities might serve several purposes. I thought that the position of responsibility would be a platform to display the participants’ growing confidence in English and in their burgeoning ability to communicate via theatre associated activities. Also, it meant a continuation of our artistic democratic approach and would build on the trust we had in each other not only to perform but to support or, if we take Rancière’s line, encourage. Along with this, the group felt as strongly as I did about the importance of letting those in the audience who were interested (it was not an obligatory part of the performance) to find out more about the project and the process involved in creating the show.

This post-performance workshop part of the ‘Performing Languages’ project was an instance where the participants each verified their equality and intelligence and the facilitator-participant relationship was re-defined. It perhaps served as a separate yet
equally important ‘stage’, along with the show, for the ensemble members to affirm their self-efficacy in both theatre and English. The performers took full control of the demonstration activities which took place just outside the auditorium in an open indoor space. Each member of the *Ensemble Firefly* facilitated an activity of some kind with no direct intervention from me in how to do this either before or during the post-show. In fact, although I had intended to be present, I was requested to do the ‘get out’, striking the set, so that the caretakers could lock up, therefore, I only fleetingly saw parts of the workshop. There were many positives to this aspect of the project and it served as an interesting coda to the ensemble devising process. From one perspective, the way this happened validates Rancière’s ideas discussed above: I, indeed, was ‘the ignorant facilitator’ in both the sense of not knowing and having, as Lev-Aladgem explains, ‘the courage to ignore the prevailing suppositions and axioms’ (2015: 513) with the ‘suppositions and axioms’ being that the experienced facilitator should lead or at least overlook. This was one of the clearest instances where the learners were fully in control of how theatre was presented and facilitating the activities in the target language. Among a variety of questions on this theme, Lev-Aladgem asks whether we can perceive ‘ignorance’, in another way, ‘as a deliberate political position’, which would mean ‘rethinking what it means to be an expert in theatre’ (2015: 513–14). By occasionally displacing the knowledge that can come to dominate the learning space as Lev-Aladgem suggests, there is then space allowed for learners to ‘verify’ their ability.

The ensemble discussed the two separate post-show workshops at length in the group discussion-interview that took place after the performances (Group Research Interview, 2015). Federica reflected, ‘It was nice, it was nice. The reaction of the audience [attending the workshop] [...] they were obviously shy at the beginning and became more and more confident and started to contribute more to the exercises’ (Group Research Interview, 2015) while Julie qualified this saying that the ‘first time better [sic] because there
were fewer people’ (Group Research Interview, 2015). This, she further explained, was because there were thirty participants at least at the second workshop on the Friday. Julie continued saying that it was ‘great with the little group but never done it with twenty people!’ and it was ‘way more intimidating’ (Group Research Interview, 2015). Julie’s caveat here does though indicate that there is potential for such an undertaking to have adverse effects. Although this was not the case in this project, perhaps it might have been overwhelming for some people to have to deal with such a large group and rather than creating confidence it could have been detrimental. That said, the ensemble had discussed this possibility prior to the workshops and felt that had someone found themselves floundering, the others would be there to support them. This comfort and encouragement emerges in the sense of being an ensemble or ‘group’ and the important gradual building of trust and friendship that entails, which is further discussed in the last section of this chapter.

Achieving the learning objective of using the target language with increased efficacy also came with increased confidence to lead others to engage with theatre and drama activities. In the sense of there being a role reversal, there was a pertinent comment on the sensation of being the leader rather than follower. Louis told me that it was the first time that he had led theatre exercises said that it was ‘interesting to be on the other side for a couple of times. I don’t know if it helps my English [...] probably a bit, like explaining and stuff like this is nothing really new’ (Louis, 2015). So, while there was some improvement in his ability with the target language, what is clear is that there still had been a distinction between learner and facilitator despite aiming to be an egalitarian ensemble. What is important to note though is that the erosion of hierarchical status was evident and welcomed by the participants.
The group said how enthused they were to see the members of the audience who went to the workshop reacting in a comparable way to how the ensemble had done themselves when they did the activity for the first time (Group Research Interview, 2015). This sensation was particularly recalled in the post-performance workshop during an activity called *Name Circle*. In this activity, a group sit in a circle and each person, in turn, has a set amount of time to talk about an aspect of their name. The others listen to the speaker without interruption and questions and discussion are saved until after everyone has had their turn. Then the group decide to choose one of the stories or anecdotes and create a piece of theatre from it which is then shown to other 'name circles' if there are any.¹

The ensemble had found this to be one of their favourite activities from the devising process and when asked by someone in the post-show workshops about how the activities had served them in the creative process, Louis had replied that it was more about the anecdotes that came from the activity (Louis, 2015). The importance of these anecdotes was understandable as just by telling their own story meant that each member of the ensemble was able to use 'authentic communication', an important element in using drama for language learning (Stinson and Piazzoli, 2013). It also meant that as storytellers they were able to verify their equality given, as Rancière would claim, that '[e]quality is neither given nor claimed; it is practiced, it is verified' (1991: 137).² This is supported in Kristen Ross's understanding of Rancière. She tells us that '[t]he very act of storytelling, an act that presumes in its interlocutor an equality of intelligence rather than an inequality of knowledge, posits equality, just as the act of explication posits inequality' (Ross, 1991: xxii). I further discuss this activity in relation to the notion of friendship in the final section of this chapter and more acts of storytelling are discussed in the next chapter when the creation and development of the monologues is discussed.

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¹ I learnt this activity from John O'Neal (Free Southern Theater, Junebug Productions).
² Rancière does this through the historical character of Janocot, the sometimes appropriated alter-ego of Rancière in *The Ignorant Schoolmaster*.
Speculating about how the ensemble-led workshops after the show could have been extended, Aliya told us that it ‘would be good if we did just one day for workshops [...] just to show people we have done during this project’ (Group Research Interview, 2015). This showed a marked confidence in contrast to how Aliya had previously viewed leading the workshops. She had been the only member of the group who seemed nervous at all about leading an activity and anxiously had asked several times about how to do, as well as lead, her activity. However, as her comment above indicates, once given the opportunity to lead, she wanted not only to continue to be a facilitator, but to expand the range and dedicate a specific occasion to showing others the activities she and the ensemble had participated in. Aliya chose *Bananas of the world Unite!* (a physical activity with an accompanying song) for her activity to lead because she felt it encapsulated the overall project for her, although she did not say specifically what that essence was apart from it being ‘fun’. I surmise it was the blend of the unexpected, the unusual and sense of unison that the activity, with its song and movement, engenders.

As she knew some of her friends were there, Aliya told me that initially she felt ‘a little nervous’ (Aliya, 2015). However, this anxiety faded as she ‘felt fine [once doing it]’ telling me delightedly that ‘it worked!’, and further reflecting that even though at the beginning she was greeted by ‘strange faces’ she became ‘cool and confident and they [the audience participants] did it, so [...] I liked it’ (Aliya, 2015). Though a small and perhaps a secondary element to the performance, this event has equal import in demonstrating her growing confidence as an English language speaker. It also marked an emancipatory mode where she felt able to lead as much as any of the other members of the group, while not deeming the undertaking as anything special. If she had been told prior to the project that she would be facilitating theatre activities in English by the end of the process, then I believe it would have been met by her with incredulity.
Related to the post-show workshops but concerning an institutional perspective rather than an individual one, Chloe later told me that the group members had asked the people visiting the performance from the Filature ‘to join workshop and they said didn’t have time yet had time to carry on chatting and schmoozing. People say they want cultural things yet don’t participate. Like to put their names to cultural things for the kudos’ (Chloe, 2015). This is demonstrative of how the meso-level (and to some degree macro) influence of cultural capital can have an impact on the individual. If the voice of the language learner is readily ignored within the educational institution in this way it denies the speaker recognition and indirectly the right to speak or be heard; the machinations of cultural practice are more important than the artist or creator and, in this regard, language learner. It is also in stark contrast to what Rancière felt was required which was ‘a theatre without spectators, where those in attendance learn from as opposed to being seduced by images; where they become active participants as opposed to passive voyeurs’ (2011: 4). To what extent the participants in the project felt actively involved is discussed in the following section.

The Practicalities of an Egalitarian Approach: Who is Really Running this Thing?

*When I am playing with my cat, how do I know she is not playing with me?*

Michel de Montaigne

With the commitment to improving their English, there was a specific reason for the group to invest in navigating the more difficult or demanding moments of the process during the project. As Rosemary Parsons has noted in her study on group devised theatre, there can be a sense of instability in the process which manifested itself in her feeling ‘apprehensive as to the feasibility of asking people to devote so much time and energy to

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3 The Filature is the name for the board members of Mulhouse’s cultural centre who were invited to the performance and were briefly introduced to me though not the performers.
one non-professional production’ (2010: 71). Parsons’s theoretical suggestion is that a devising group ‘initially formed of friends [...] would lock into an efficient and work-focused rehearsal’ (2010: 88) This was not the case in our project, however, with the participants for the most part unknown to each other and only becoming friends through the project. Without some form of guidance (something Parsons herself found during her own study), I believe the group would have floundered due to the institutional limitations on student-led endeavours discussed later and the plain response from Julie when asked if they should have been given more autonomy: ‘Not really, because, like, we wouldn't have known what to do exactly’ (Julie, 2015). This is interesting to note seeing as the group members clearly proved they ‘knew what to do’ when they were leading the workshops, verifying their self-efficacy as discussed in the previous section.

Likewise, it could be said that it is questionable that someone who has taught or learnt a second language would countenance a method of merely giving adult learners the words of the language and expecting that they will be absorbed with a tacit understanding of their usage. This lies in the seemingly wishful world of the ‘eccentric theory [...] of Joseph Janocot’ (Rancière, 2011: 1). This is related by Rancière in The Ignorant Schoolmaster, which proposes the ability of the student to learn almost without guidance at all. As shown in the previous section, learners can demonstrate their intelligence without it having to be validated by the teacher-facilitator. To do this however means avoiding the pattern of what Rancière called the ‘Bourdieu effect’ where, Ross explains, ‘they are excluded because they don’t know why they are excluded; and they don’t know why they are excluded because they are excluded’ (1991: xi). In essence, the argument here is that people are ignorant because they are made to think they are stupid and being told that you cannot learn alone but only under direct, hierarchical instruction causes a loss of confidence in your own capacities. If given the chance, people can demonstrate their intelligence and equality.

4 Here, Ross uses ‘they’ to refer to ‘working-class youth’ (1991, xi) while I appropriate it to mean additional language learners.
The same argument could be applied to how the theatrical exercises and conventions that were an integral part of the project were introduced almost exclusively by me in contrast to the notion of collective responsibility, which is promoted in much of the present discussion on devised theatre (Syssoyeva & Proudfit, 2013, 2013b). Relying on each participant in rotation to ‘initiate’ a session of devising in some way during the project could have been potentially rich in both research and devised material. This was not the case as the ultimate responsibility was on me, as the teacher-facilitator, to organise activities that initiated the creative process and to mould the material produced into a cohesive performance in the target language throughout the project while maintaining the ensemble's democratic approach. As a solution or preventative measure to avoid the dominance of one person in the creative process, Sheila Kerrigan proposes the ‘ogre’ approach (2001: 94–96). It simply meant that the members of the devising group each take on the mantle of ‘ogre’ - the leader of the group – on a rotating basis. We did not attempt this for differing reasons including lack of experience and administrative practicalities like having the authority to be given the responsibility of a rehearsal room or performance space in the university. However, as the project progressed, participants did begin to feel comfortable in proposing ideas and ‘taking the lead’.

The structure of the devising workshops and, inherent in this, their direction, tended to be decided by me, especially at the beginning of the project. That I should do so was implicit in the validity of my authority granted by experience and vetted expertise, granted by meso-level verification from the auspices of the institution. The participants were also aware of my leading role, perhaps even expected it, though at no point did they indicate that this was detrimental to their creativity or target language development. Being the instigator of the activities does not mean to say that what happened during the workshops and the rehearsals was dictated by me and this is further explored in the following section. Still, the need for some level of theatrical expertise (and alongside this,
language teaching in this project) appears to be required when running a theatre-based project. For example, for devising theatre Paul Murray deems it ‘essential’ to have ‘an extensive and flexible dramatic vocabulary’ (qtd. in Parsons, 2010: 81). So, as there was only limited theatrical experience in the group – Louis had attended Clown School and Federica had been in a couple of productions – it was helpful for me to have had worked in group devised theatre previously. This position is supported by Cecily O’Neill who states, ‘The teaching of any arts subject, and in particular, the group processes that lead to theatre, is a cognitively sophisticated and demanding activity’ (2006: 121). More specifically to drama for SLA, Julie Dunn and Madonna Stinson posit, ‘when language-learning experiences are planned and implemented by teachers who are aware of the nuances of both language learning and drama learning, then the results achieved will be optimised’ (2011: 630).

This emphasis on expertise does however veer into the realms of Rancière’s notion of ‘stultification’ where everything in education requires an explanation, and it is claimed that ‘who is explained to will devote his intelligence to the work of grieving: to understanding, that is to say, to understanding that he doesn’t understand unless he is explained to’ (Rancière, 1991: 8 italics in original). Therefore, perhaps finding the balance in this relationship depends on how much the teacher-facilitator is part of the ensemble. When asked whether the project felt like a student- or ensemble-led initiative Federica replied:

I knew you were in charge. It was impossible not to think that you weren’t leading in some way – in a positive way – because you were directing, so okay, ‘this is not going to work’ or ‘let’s do some warm up’ [...] We needed to be led by someone [...] but I feel that it was ... erm ... my project, it was Louis’ project and all the others at the same time. (Federica, 2015)

Here it appears that Federica saw that I was the focal point of leadership for the project. My presence in a lead role appears to be unavoidable while also needed and perhaps expected.
Perhaps I was needed to provide a structure (and with that, constraints) within which the participants could explore and develop their creativity. Federica continued to explain that I was not ‘an imposing leader [...] We needed some advice [and] you were suggesting and then we were acting’ (Federica, 2015). This is mitigated in the way that Federica felt ownership of the project was equally distributed throughout the ensemble: ‘It was a collective thing’ (Federica, 2015). She then went on to tell me it was a ‘very supportive collective’ further telling me that this more student-orientated and autonomous approach gave her more confidence, not only in expressing herself in English, but also in other subject areas (Federica, 2015). So, while the collective was ‘very supportive’ and the project had a sense of collaborative ownership that engaged all, there was still a sense of personal autonomy, which I look at in more depth in the next chapter. Louis, when he was similarly asked about the extent of the process as an autonomous, student-led ensemble, commented that it was the ‘right balance for me [...] so you worked out most of the schedules [...] and you do it as it’s the not the pleasant part’ (Louis, 2015). Louis continued by telling me that for the creating of the scenes:

[...] you gave us the things we needed with the exercises and the workshops before and then you let us do what we wanted to do and just guide us when we had no ideas or bring new ideas and leave us free of choosing and keeping and changing what we want. That was really nice. (Louis, 2015)

Here, Louis indicates a need that my expertise provided. So, this provision can be viewed as material from which the participants could choose to use and then explore their own ideas. In this way, their creativity was nourished and encouraged which in turn led to a greater sense of self-efficacy both in the theatre they produced and the English they used to realise it.

Julie, discussing the benefits of devising told me, ‘you don’t have the stress of learning a script. And it’s [...] it’s good because it’s creative and you feel that you’ve created
something and not just been [...] this part of a play’ (Julie, 2015). When I asked her if being in a more conventional play was not creative she told me, ‘it’s just following a director’ (Julie, 2015). This indicates how by writing her own piece, or by being closely connected to the creation and development of it and other pieces, meant that she was able to confidently express herself because of the autonomy and ‘ownership’ this gave her over the creative and language aspects of the project. That said, in discussing the devising process with Julie, I brought up the consideration that it could appear that I had dominated the direction of the project: I brought in the project idea, I led the session, I did not act in the piece, I chose the activities, and many of the decisions about the piece were mine. This could indicate that I had not allowed enough time for the project to develop and unfold to allow for a more egalitarian input from participants. Yet, when further pressed on whether the group or she could have had more autonomy, Julie following the response I quoted above about not knowing exactly what to do, bluntly and perhaps pragmatically pointed out that they (the ensemble) needed ‘a kick in the butt [and they were] a bit lazy maybe’ (Julie, 2015).

Another way for looking at the contrast of autonomy and guidance or encouragement is Mermikides’ distinction between collective creation from devising in regards to her definition of ‘creative agency’ (2013: 53). She sees this creative agency as:

[...] a participant’s opportunity to contribute to a production’s conceptual framework and its stage realization – for example, through generating potential performance material (through improvisation, “pitching ideas”, discussion, and writing) and decision making (through consensus, majority “vote”, or by delegation). (Mermikides, 2013: 68)

This ‘creative agency’ was very much part of the organisational practice and working relationship of Ensemble Firefly, though there were aspects of the project that the participants were not privy to, the main example being the financing of the project (the budget and my payment). This brings the role(s) of the teacher-facilitator sharply into focus.
in an apparently egalitarian-orientated project. By this I mean there is a sense that the teacher-facilitator may find themselves acting as a shield or a conduit between micro- and meso-level power relations. If the educator is to act in this way, their behaviour is open to scrutiny as the participants are not on an equal footing and what is happening ‘behind the scenes’ is somewhat opaque.

Alternately, it could be argued that this is a necessarily pragmatic position to allow an egalitarian approach to function within hierarchical institutions while maintaining trust and confidence in a process like ensemble learning. Christopher Bannerman, in examining group devising practice, explores the need to maintain confidence through the process through what he calls ‘fluffing’. He explains, ‘While ‘fluffing’ may not seem to be an ethical practice, when used as a technique to maintain morale and creative momentum it might seem to be justified’ (Bannerman and McLaughlin, 2009: 67). Bannerman is here referring to when the facilitator might have doubts or be unsure of how things will turn out during the creative process. This chimes with the notion that the leader – the all-knowing schoolmaster or ‘master explicator’ – must have all the answers and that in failing to maintain this aura will mean the breakdown of the creative and educational process and, by extension, the project’s aims. It is perhaps then in the insecurities of the potential ignorant facilitator and their desire to ‘fluff’ the confidence of learners where this approach might falter. While Bannerman is talking about the pragmatics of maintaining the minute-to-minute, session-to-session running of a creative project it might also be applicable to ‘fluffing’ the unclear divisions of authority and egalitarianism.

It may be useful now to see how the conundrum of authority and egalitarianism is dealt with in process drama, the currently preferred method to approach language teaching and learning through drama, where the need for the diverse skills and artistry of the teacher-facilitator means that they play a central role in the approach.
Hey! Teacher! Leave those Kids Alone

If we compare process drama with group devised theatre, there are similar and contrasting elements. Process drama is ‘unscripted’ (Stinson and Piazzoli, 2013: 210) while with group devised theatre there is commonly a script produced and performed, albeit that the process most often begins without a text and that any ‘script’ produced is often more of a loose guideline than a set text – contingent and open to change. Having a final performance is also a marked difference as group devised theatre, in most cases, has one while process drama does not as it operates ‘without an external audience, stems from a pre-text and builds up from a series of episodes’ (Stinson and Piazzoli, 2013: 210). So, while process drama may be ‘unscripted’ in the sense that the participants do not have their words ready-prepared, there is a narrative in place that is decided in advance by the teacher-facilitator. From this it is possible to see that although there is much collective creation in process drama, the position of the process drama teacher-facilitator does not easily align with the concept of ‘the ignorant facilitator’ for reasons which I will now explain.

While process drama employs strategies to ‘reverse the traditional hierarchy of status within the participants, contributing to a more authentic context for learning’ (Stinson and Piazzoli, 2013: 218), the teacher-facilitator still has the tendency to take centre stage. There is an emphasis on the ‘centrality of the teacher’ (Stinson and Piazzoli, 2013: 215) in using drama for SLA by the major proponents of process drama for teaching languages, Piazzoli, Dunn and Stinson. Emerging from Griffith University, Dunn, Piazzoli, and Stinson’s line of thought lauds the specialism and artistry required for a proficiency to be able to use drama for language teaching (Dunn and Stinson, 2011; Stinson and Piazzoli, 2013). This pre-eminence of the educator is also stressed in the language teaching field, both from the more mainstream cognitive-based academic position and from advocates of the
Group Devised Theatre for ‘Second Language Acquisition’

creative approaches (Maley and Peachey, 2015; Xerri and Vassallo, 2016; Maley and Kiss, 2017). This would suggest that only those capable of corraling the disparate fields of teaching, drama and SLA are the ones capable of realising ‘the full promise of working with drama and additional language learning’ (Dunn and Stinson, 2011: 618).

I would argue that this resembles the position of the stultifying schoolmaster stepping ahead of the student, part of what Citton calls the ‘discourse of expertise’ where ‘it is in the nature of explication and expertise to produce the very inequality of knowledge and power it pretends to correct’ (2010: 30). The ‘full promise’, Piazzoli and Stinson also claim, ‘can only occur if the teacher has mastered the artistry of dramatic form’ (2013: 215). They use O’Toole’s definition which is that ‘dramatic form’ is the ‘negotiation and renegotiation of the elements of drama’ (Stinson and Piazzoli, 2013: 215). This includes elements such as, place, time, space, role, context, language, and movement and it is certainly a bold statement to say that these elements must be mastered. In addition, the teacher facilitator must be able to ‘draw on their deep knowledge of language learning’ (Stinson and Piazzoli, 2013: 216). Rather than disparage the abilities of drama facilitators or language teachers or those that can combine both, perhaps it is worth questioning whether process drama’s requirements, like the mastery of ‘dramatic form’, are placing too much onus on one person in this purportedly collaborative undertaking. Bowell and Heap’s ‘quadripartite thinking’ – simultaneously being the teacher, actor, playwright and director – is a prime example of this (2005). The intricate planning and interplay of skills, whilst impressive, can also be seen as controlling all the aspects of the learning environment and can mean the participants miss the chance to take these roles. From Rancière’s perspective, the critique of process drama is that the art of drama and language is kept in the hands of the ‘master’; the student is still stultified, pursuing the ‘just out of reach’.
Indeed, there is something of the ‘Agatha Christie murder mystery’ to process drama where all is revealed by the all-knowing narrator at the time of their choosing. The frequently employed technique in process drama of teacher-in-role is indicative of the continuing centrality and control of the teacher-facilitator where the focus is still on the teacher-facilitator, in character or not. This point was captured in a discussion with a fellow drama practitioner who had observed the technique used in process drama and voiced their frustration at seeing teacher-in-role as hogging the limelight exclaiming that they should ‘just give the kid the fucking cape’! This is despite research findings by Piazzoli and Stinson where students said that ‘here, you choose the direction yourself’ (2013: 219). It may well appear so, yet it could equally be said that the direction was always steered by the teacher-facilitator despite the assertion that students become ‘agents of their own learning’ because of the strategies employed in process drama (Stinson and Piazzoli, 2013: 220). It is in the emphasis on the centrality of the teacher-facilitator that is problematic as it continues to replicate the ‘ideal’ speaker in SLA. In contrast to this centrality of the teacher-facilitator in process drama, in my role as ‘ignorant facilitator’ of the ‘Performing Languages’ project, the participants were encouraged to ‘wear the cape’ more readily and take ownership and direction of the creation of theatre. This engenders the project’s underlying aim of increasing their self-efficacy and confidence in SLA and stands for the democratising ethos of devised theatre.

Yet, collective creation, such as the process used in the ‘Performing Languages’ project, is not immune to criticism of a similar ilk. Grotowski was not convinced by the enabling of emancipation via collective creation seeing it as nothing more than a ‘collective director’ interfering in much the same way as an individual would yet as it ‘oscillates between caprices, chance and compromise of different tendencies, [it] results in half-measures’ (Grotowski qtd. in Wolford and Schechner, 2001: 224). In some ways, that could

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5 The ‘cape’ being a common tool used symbolically in process drama to signify teacher-in-role.
be said to be the case with the ‘Performing Languages’ project, for example the control of
the course finances mentioned above, or artistic choices influenced by me, whether
consciously or not. Yet when Roger Bechtel tells of various companies where individuals
‘exercise their expertise’ meaning that ‘[a]uthority wasn’t eliminated so much as
decentralized’ yet it was ‘exercised ethically’ (2013: 49). Therefore, Bechtel draws the
conclusion that when the ‘politics of pure collectivity is unrealizable, ethics becomes a
powerful compensation’ (2013: 49). Indeed, much of the writing on collective creation
demonstrate what Syssoyeva and Proudfit identify as ‘the collaborative director poised
between the roles of auteur and facilitator’ (2013a: 24). This speaks to the position I had
during the project when I was ‘poised’ between teacher, admin, director and facilitator
alongside all the connotations of ‘ideal’ speaker that entails with Bechtel’s image of the
‘delicate balancing act, however, between authorship and authority’ (2013: 40). Perhaps
then, as an egalitarian aim could be called utopian given the institutional setting,
compromise could be considered a pragmatic reality. Practicality appears to always be the
mitigating factor in the ‘ongoing negotiation between institutional politics and aesthetic
product’ (Bechtel, 2013: 48–49). And while, as Bechtel further points out, ‘[s]uch a
negotiation is always particular’, he posits that it is always necessary to recognise ‘authority
within collectivity’ (2013: 49).

Even if we accept that proposition, it could also be argued that authority does not
necessarily always have to come from the same source. For example, in the following
chapter I look at how monologues written by individual members prompted collective
creation. Also, in the same vein as Kerrigan’s ‘ogre’, many of the theatre activities that we
used in the devising process can engender this ethos of collective creation where the
position of leader is not fixed and, rather than a hierarchical relationship, one based on a
form of friendship can be created. This is explored in the following section.
The integral bond, or friendship, that was formed between participants in the project was a major facet of the overall project. It was also a fundamental base for language ability and development. So, while disparate exercises proved useful it was perhaps not the individual activities or events that created or cultivated a sense of confidence or for that matter any kind of pedagogical outcome during the devising project; it was the overall accumulation of engagements and interactions between participants that engendered a sense of groupness and trust which encouraged a sense of self-efficacy and confidence. This was iterated by Federica when she told me that the group members were definitely friends now (Federica, 2015) and when I asked how working in a group where you trust people had affected her confidence she explained:

It’s kind of the reverse [...] The project developed our relationship instead of the relationship developing the project [...] so that working with them made me feel more confident in the group which improved the performance. It’s kind of a circle. (Federica, 2015)

Looking at friendship, Todd May, employing Rancière’s ideas on equality, sees friendship as a way to resist creating hierarchies stating, ‘we look at our friends as our equals, not because they are equal in measure to us but because equality of this type is, to a certain extent, beyond measure’ (2013: 70). Creating a sense of friendship and discarding measurement in this sense allows the learner more freedom to ‘fail’ and, therefore, learn and develop. In addition, May contends that:
Friendship is also motivating. Friendships, after all, are among the most rewarding of our social relationships. We would often like other of our relationships with others [sic] to share certain characteristics of friendship. Not that we can consider all our social relationships to be friendships: that would require too much commitment to too many people. However, most of us would find it a better world in which we could trust one another a little more, feel a little less in competition with one another, and feel less a means to others’ ends. By modelling such relationships, friendship can not only offer the preparation for political solidarity; it can not only show us, in the intimacy of our particular worlds, what a better world looks like; it can also motivate us to achieve such a world. (2013: 72)

Taking this line, it could be argued that rather than an educational relationship of dichotomy, such as schoolmaster/pupil, perhaps one that emulates that of friendship offers learners better support. It also means a stronger motivation for everyone involved in the educative process, both teacher and student. This is important as motivational factors in language acquisition are a fundamental issue in SLA led by Zoltán Dörnyei’s research on the subject (Dörnyei, 1998; Dörnyei and Schmidt, 2001; Dörnyei and Hadfield, 2013) along with Norton’s theorising on investment (Norton Peirce, 1995; Norton, 2001, 2013, 2016). These factors come into play here in the role of friendship in the learning environment.

The activities I now discuss were selected from the ‘Performing Languages’ project to demonstrate the general ethos of collective creation and a reflection on the emergence of friendship engendered by a more egalitarian approach. They are not meant to indicate best and certainly not ideal practice. These are more instances when the approach worked well or served to indicate how the overall project worked at times. At other times, as with any project, activities did not always work smoothly or perhaps had adverse effects for example when no-one seemed to want to take responsibility to begin or indeed ‘lead’ and motivation seemed to be lost. This side of the collective creation process is analysed and discussed in the following chapter.
The first activity I look at in this respect is called *Digits*, which is a ‘nano’ example of the physical contact, collaboration, concentration and trust that is to be found in the overall group devised theatre process. This activity will be familiar to the theatre practitioner and teacher alike. The essential premise is that the group are to count to ten together (or further to any number, the alphabet or, perhaps, the words of a story). To do this the group stand shoulder to shoulder in a circle; the optimum number of participants is between eight and twelve. The caveats are: if a number is said simultaneously, the counting must begin again; the participants do not tell each other, by word or gesture, which number to say; the participants are also asked to look at the floor – this is to avoid the temptation of anyone indicating when the group members should give a number – this helps to aid and cultivate a sense of togetherness through physical sensation rather than eye contact. This activity encapsulates the initial ‘getting-to-know-you’ stage of the overall forming of the ensemble. For the participants, it creates a sense of intimacy and ease with each other and introduces a playful form of physicality, which is representative of group devised theatre and is discussed at more length in the chapter, ‘Voicing Identity’. The proximity of the others without the need for speech allows for an immediate bond which, though perhaps transient, leaves a residue of ease and warmth among participants. There is an intimacy created immediately and a sense of collaboration – also collective frustration – and a lot of laughter.6

Another activity, *People Knot*, does a similar thing. Participants, again in a circle, form a ‘chain’ by holding hands – already creating a certain physical intimacy – with two different people in the circle and not standing next to them. They then seek to unravel the chain without breaking the links (the hands being held). As a language teaching activity, especially for students with a less developed target language, the use of prepositions of place and movement can be practised. We began by doing this and then I later asked the

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6 Bakhtin claims an emancipatory strength in laughter, arguing, ‘Laughter could never become an instrument to oppress and blind the people. It always remained a free weapon in their hands’ (1984b: 94).
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group to try this activity in silence as it engenders a deeper sense of groupness via physicality.\(^7\) This is because of the increased engagement with trying to gain eye contact and the exaggerated gestures that this involves when participants attempt to ‘tell’ the others what they are going to do or what they want the others to do. The activity also serves to foreground the group devising process and indeed as a metaphor for language development. Sometimes the ‘solution’ of unravelling the knot is found with ease; sometimes it is unsolvable; for the most part it is somewhere in-between. What is done is that the group participants come to find their own solution (or not!), rather than relying on the teacher-facilitator to validate it as so.

Depending on the group, there may be some side-coaching to encourage less dominant members to offer their unspoken ‘opinion’ and for leaders to take a back step. This is so that there is a sense of ebb and flow in leadership which in a small way captures the overall intention of the collective creation process. This is evoked by Bakunin’s words that, ‘No one rises above the others, or if he does rise, it is only to fall back a moment later, like the waves of the sea forever returning to the salutary level of equality’ (Bakunin qtd. in Joll, 1979: 91–92). This idea of a ‘salutary level of equality’ formed part of the post-activity discussion about People Knot when the ensemble talked about the roles they adopted while participating. The reflection aided those who did not feel confident in being assertive and conversely those who tended to dominate felt more aware of this. A transparency of this kind does not dictate that a participant should be made to alter their character in terms of assertiveness but to become aware of it – part of ‘becoming’ human – and accommodate

\(^7\) This could also be seen in the activity where two participants balance a broom handle between each other’s foreheads. This imposes the constraint that the two actors must work together to move around the space. There is an intimacy created by the participants having to use eye contact to indicate where to move and to maintain equal distance between partners.

\(^8\) Rosemary Parsons claims that the most useful games for devisers are ‘performative games’ which ‘evinc[e] a sense of “complicité” or ensemble within the group’ (2010: 5). She also claims enthusiasm increases when there’s an express practical purpose (Parsons, 2010: 95–6). Parsons also discusses her own experience regarding games effect on self-confidence (2010: 109).
others. These elements of trust and co-operation, commonly found to be the foundation of friendship, enhance confidence rather than a competition-based learning approach which is more centred on the individual and accommodates only the cognitive-based approach to language learning.

The activity *Name Circle* mentioned above in relation to storytelling and verifying equality also serves the purpose of forming the ambience for friendship to flourish. The simple sharing of unknown and sometimes surprising, yet accordingly familiar stories allows participants to find points of affinity and nurtures the vocabulary of ‘togetherness’ (Winston, 2013: 135). This can cultivate what Patricia White sees as an ‘attitude’ of fraternity (White qtd. in Suissa, 2010: 67) and, if fraternity is viewed, according to Judith Suissa, as ‘a moral disposition’, then it ‘can be learned’ (Suissa, 2010: 67). Fraternity, in this sense, might be achieved according to White through ‘feeling a bond between oneself and others as equals, as moral beings with the same basic needs and an interest in leading a life of one’s own’ (White qtd. in Suissa, 2010: 67). This is also important in an educational sense in that ‘the attitude of fraternity can be a motivating force’ (Suissa, 2010: 67). To a small, but important, degree this was seen during *Name Circle* when the ensemble members shared not only their name but also the stories behind their names in a meaningful and ‘authentic’ communication, creating a collective narrative that fosters friendship.

A similar effect, though enhanced by a sense of geographical and spatial elements, is found in an activity called *Mapping*. In this activity, the centre of the room is designated as a certain geographical position. The group designate compass directions of north, south, east, and west to the four sides of the space. The centre of the room was then designated as being an exact area, and the participants position themselves on the ‘map’. Then the participants are asked to position themselves around the whole room according to different specifications: where they live; where they were born; where one of their grandparents were born; their favourite place in the world; where they would like to visit. During each
‘repositioning’ or ‘re-mapping’, the participants negotiate their position on the map between themselves, each of the instructions altering the constellation of participants on the ‘map’. After each repositioning, the participants explain where they are, or in the later responses why they chose the positions they have. Again, the facilitator guides or encourages the participants to be able to tell a story of which they are the ‘author’. At the same time, this allows participants to deepen their connection, an essential element in the forming of friendship.

When we did this activity during the project, depending on the positioning of each person, which involves negotiating their positioning on the map, there were moments when the group could see how closely linked they were. This was sometimes surprisingly so, for example, when they realised that they had been unknowingly living close by another participant, or that they both wanted to visit the same place. There was also the explicit acknowledgement of difference shown by where parents or grandparents were born. For example, Aliya vocalised a sense of loneliness when she placed herself on the map in what we were told was Morocco and saw that others seemed further away in central and northern Europe. This, though, brought its own sense of bonding. The group got to see that others can be different and at times separate yet still want to maintain ties with the others. The activity also has an obviously practical purpose when the person speaking to explain where they are and must address everyone in the room, so they are in effect obliged to provide enough volume in their speaking voice, which engenders a sense of confidence in addressing a group in a large space.

Moving from looking at individual activities to the overall process, the complex interweaving of events and moments means it is difficult to specifically identify when the exact moments of bonding took place. However, the role of the ensemble set-up and a trust in the process and each other has a large bearing on building confidence and maintaining motivation. Joan Littlewood, working with The Theatre Workshop, is said by Govan,
Nicholson and Normington to have seen that ‘individual actors face and overcome their inhibitions, and learn to trust other ensemble members’ (2007: 49) and this applied equally to the Firefly ensemble. While overcoming inhibitions is discussed in the following chapter, it is important to note the earlier work done in group exercises that allowed the group to bond, while later devising work echoed this approach. Through drama, Julie Dunn and Michael Anderson claim that ‘for some [...] it seems that one essential ingredient for learning about community is the creation of communities, where trust is a feature and where social and artistic dissonance is valued’ (2013: 296 italics in original). This could be similarly said about groups and ‘groupness’ with the concepts of community and groupness perhaps overlapping.

In this chapter, Lev-Aladgem’s concept of an ‘ignorant facilitator’, developed from Rancière’s ‘ignorant schoolmaster’, was used to examine the role and positioning of me as an educator during the project. This chapter analysed and discussed the post-performance workshops which the project participants led and how this contributed to their ability and confidence to disseminate the devising process activities and their enthusiasm to do so to an audience outside the core process in the target language, English. Next was discussed the ensemble’s perception of my role and positioning during the process and to what extent this was egalitarian and when working with unexperienced, non-actors and non-native speakers – when I was the authority and when I was not. I then compared the role of teacher-facilitator in group devised theatre to that of process drama and critiqued the over-emphasis on the centrality of the teacher-facilitator. While the main proponents of process drama for SLA suggest that experience does not always mean expertise, there may be an overconfidence that accompanies both experience and expertise that should not avoid constant scrutiny either, though that can equally be said for group devised theatre.

The last section of this chapter begins to look at a way to navigate the problematic dichotomy of the student-teacher relationship: friendship. I drew on examples of activities
that we did together during the devising process that individually served to create a bond between participants. I also used these activities to represent the overall collaborative creative process and how this creation of groupness or friendship became an important supportive base that allowed the participants to be more confident and motivated in the development of their English. In the following chapter, 'The Individual in the Collective', I analyse and discuss the individual within the collective learning process.
Chapter Six

The Individual in the Collective

This chapter focuses on the autonomous learning that occurred during the project while continuing to discuss the power relations of the learning environment. This is seen in the way that individual student develops their language ability and self-efficacy during the project within a collaborative creative and learning process. However, the focus shifts away from the teacher-facilitator and student relationship to the individual student learning in a collective in the context of the creative process. This involves the individual contributing materials, thoughts and ideas to this process and negotiating with the group about the direction of the creative practice, which brings about the transferral or redistribution of responsibility from the teacher-facilitator to a more egalitarian approach. This addresses a key concern in SLA and autonomous learning about who controls course material as there can be issues with content that is seen as not relevant or that does not engage the language learner. Three aspects of the devising process are discussed in relation to how individuals produced material or ideas for scenes that they wanted to work on for the final performance. This provided investment for the participants in the learning process and in which way that also engaged the others in the group. This includes a scene from the performance, a piece of individual writing that was theatrically developed through collaboration with others from the ensemble and, in a similar fashion, the devising development of a scene from a playful improvisation.

Following this introduction, the first section, 'Emerging out of the Dark and the Opportunity to Speak', details the opening scene from the final performance. The scene represented a feeling in the ensemble of frustration at being denied the opportunity to speak in the target language in the university language teaching system. While there were exceptions, much of the teaching followed the 'master explicator' pedagogy challenged by
Rancière, discussed in the two previous chapters. At various points during the project, the students explained that they felt ‘trapped’ both physically (confined to lecture hall seats) and vocally, separated from communicating with their peers; they were individuals made to learn in the cognitivist ‘cage’ rather than in a mode of interaction. A scene that directly addressed these issues, *Un, deux, trois, Soleil!*, is discussed in more depth in the following section. It represented the individuals finding their own path and coming together to form a collective both in the devising process and in its performance in the final show.

While the sense of groupness tends, understandably, to have some homogeneity (this might be a way of looking at the world or, in our case, a performative aim), the values of the individual are of equal importance. In fact, Ritter argues that diversity of character and opinion is conducive to stronger community bonds, explaining:

> Being various in personality, developed individuals depend more on one another to satisfy their needs than do individuals with similar personalities. Their bonds of mutual dependence encourage developed individuals to explore each other’s character and thus to experience communal awareness. (1980: 29)

As discussed in the following section, ‘Writing the Individual, Creating the Collective’, the way the participants collaboratively ‘re-worked’ the monologue scripts initially provided by individuals to develop scenes is a good example of Ritter’s ‘bonds of mutual dependence’. This mutual dependence, following his reasoning, was necessary during the project because the participants were quite distinct in personality as they were socially or, indeed, nationally. This range of individual characteristics can be gleaned from the brief biographies they provided for the performance programme which ranged from quirky¹ to conventional²:

¹ Louis [surname] – ‘CliMMMMM(b)s. Loves Comté cheese.’
² Aliya [surname] – ‘I’m an Italian-Moroccan living in France. I’m studying foreign languages, which I love, so I am participating in this project because I wanted to speak more English, to get directly in touch with the language, to improve it and to do something fun. I wanted to speak English in a different context, so I liked the idea of devising theatre cause it is different and very funny, and very useful for learning languages! I hope my English has improved!’
the poetic\(^3\) to the droll\(^4\). The writing of the monologue scripts and their development through devising methods took place over several weeks and stemmed from the individuals initially working separately from the group.

The more spontaneous facet of the ensemble working together is analysed in the following and final section, ‘Creation and connections from out of the blue’. There, the focus is on group devised theatre’s provision for task- or activity-based learning in the shape of creating something theatrical. The section discusses how improvisation is supported by the ensemble and which leads to increased investment in the process with the material being ‘owned’ by the group. This, in turn, forms part of the creation of being a group – the ‘groupness’ – that Syssoyeva identifies above as the essential element of group devised theatre. The concept of ‘groupness’ and the strongly associated notion of friendship discussed in the previous chapters are further explored in this section.

Advocates for autonomous learning in SLA, such as David Nunan, David Little and Phil Benson, have supported the ‘idea that autonomy implies interdependence’ (Benson, 2001: 14). Indeed, Little has argued that ‘collaboration between two or more learners on a constructive task can only be achieved by externalizing, and thus making explicit, processes of analysis, planning and synthesis that remains largely internal, and perhaps also largely implicit, when the task is performed by a learner working alone’ (1996: 214). Therefore, while the individual can develop alone, interacting with others makes manifest the learning aiding a realisation of conscious competence and self-efficacy, which in the case study was in the target language. In respect to the content that was generated by the ensemble members for the devised performance, Benson has posited that:

\[^3\] Federica [surname] - ‘A perpetual enthusiast, absent-minded daydreamer, and stubborn optimist.’

\[^4\] Julie [surname] - ‘Depressed since the day she realized she would never get her letter from Hogwarts, English student.’
Control over the content of learning, in contrast to control over methods, necessarily involves the learner in social interactions regarding the right to determine and implement their own learning goals. These interactions may take place with other learners in the collective negotiation of learning goals and tasks. [...] Control over the content of learning requires [...] that teachers and education authorities create situational contexts in which freedom in learning is encouraged and rewarded. It also requires that learners develop their own capacity to participate in social interactions concerning their learning, to negotiate for the right to self-determine its broad direction and ultimately to participate in the transformation of educational structures. (2001: 102)

The ‘Performing Languages’ project certainly created ‘situational contexts’ where ‘collective negotiation’ took place, which is evidenced in the last two sections of this chapter, for example. And while I am not proposing that the project led to the ‘transformation of educational structures’ there was something resembling what James Thompson calls a ‘tactical performance practice’ or, in his adoption of de Certeau’s term, a ‘perruque’, which means while not being able to alter or ‘transcend’ the structure of an institution or context, participants or communities can act to subtly resist it (Thompson, 2011: 35–36). This ‘tactic’ is discussed in the following section.\footnote{A full explanation of the use of the term ‘perruque’ is provided by Thompson in Performance Affects (2011: 34–41).}

Emerging out of the Dark and the Opportunity to Speak

Rancière’s pedagogical, and overall political, philosophy is emphatic in its concern for people in the general population to be allowed to speak in their own voices alongside a steadfast commitment to equality (Rancière, 1991, 2004, 2011). It is perhaps the singular voice emerging from, yet remaining still part of, the collective that resounds where ‘human beings are equal not just in legal or moral terms, but also in terms of their intellectual and discursive capacities’ (Deranty, 2010: 6). Those who are ‘dominated’ are not so ‘due to false consciousness or ignorance’, argues Deranty, ‘but to a social organization that systemically
makes their voices and achievements invisible and inaudible’ (2010: 6). There were several instances of the ‘voices and achievements’ of the project participants being made ‘invisible and inaudible’ and I continue with an example where the participants voiced their frustrations with this and which was expressed in the opening scene of the final show.

Un, deux, trois, Soleil! (1,2,3, Sun!) is the French name for the popular children’s game Statues, also called Red Light, Green Light (US) or Grandmother’s footsteps (UK) and it emerged from devising on the theme of ‘light’. The aim of the game is for players to reach a wall which is guarded by one other player. A player must return from where they began the game if the guard turns around and catches them moving. In the ensemble’s adaptation for the scene, the players were caught and sent back from where they started if they were ‘captured’ in the light of the guard’s torch. I came to understand the collectively created Un, deux, trois, Soleil! scene as the ensemble’s analogical critique expressing their frustrations with the conventional lecture hall teaching methods common in the university. This interpretation was based on discussions with the participants throughout the project. Unintentionally, this scene was somewhat site-specific in that the performances were staged in two different lecture halls as the university theatre was unavailable to us. Un, deux, trois, Soleil! is evoked by a vignette of the scene being played out at the first performance and is followed by a contextual analysis and discussion.

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**Un, Deux, Trois, Soleil!**

*A flash of light. A scuffle in the seats. And freeze!*

*No motion, only rapt rows of eyes. Darkness again and more movement.*

*The poachers are gentle yet insistent in their onward stealthy steps.*

*The torchlight seizes one of them and, caught in silhouette, they*
are returned to from where they came.

Yet still they come out of the dark.

There are whispers of confusion in the audience – ‘Qu’est-ce pas?!’ – and surprise from the stationary woodland of the others present. They know the game but are lost in its interpretation. They were children then. Brash and full of confidence with no fear of failure.

Yet now fear clasps their throats. The chance to speak: numbed. No opportunity.

And then SLAP! The wall is touched, and the lights come on. Out of the shadows the players step.

An opportunity to speak.

The importance for the participants of this scene or, rather, the symbolism of this scene is found in a recurring conversation about how the students felt like children at the university. The sensation was that they were lectured at causing a sense of detachment from conventional learning practices and had little opportunity to express themselves or their opinions. This pedagogical approach commonly adopted in the lecture hall exacerbates what Patsy Rodenburg has identified as applicable to many people: ‘the fear of speaking out in public or even in private’ (2012: 3). This ‘communication apprehension’ has been established by Elaine Horowitz (and others) as being especially acute for the language learner (Horwitz et al., 1986; Horwitz and Young, 1991; Phillips, 1991).

As a result of this teacher-centred approach, members of the ‘Performing Languages’ project felt they were not afforded opportunities during university courses to use and develop their English abilities and, therefore, did not feel they had ‘the right to speak’

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6 Constance (one of the teacher/lecturers and part of the ensemble) told the group that she heard this during the first performance and told us it was a genuine revelation of surprise at ‘what’s happening?’.
Group Devised Theatre for ‘Second Language Acquisition’ (Rodenburg, 2012: 3). For example, Julie told me the project was ‘interesting in terms of speaking as we don’t really have a class where we speak a lot even in the English department [...] which is weird’ (Julie, 2015). Federica also noted a distinct lack of opportunities to speak English and pointed out the lack of involvement of students with ‘people sleeping in classes’ (Federica, 2015). This indicates that the university tuition followed the dominant cognitive-based idea of language acquisition ignoring the obvious need for individuals to communicate with each other and seemed to fail to engage in motivating students. According to the Complexity Theory approach, this lack of opportunity to practise stifles language learners because they ‘must be provided with abundant opportunities of language practice’ as ‘language learning occurs when people use it’ (Baghdadi, 2017: 10). This is in line, according to Larsen-Freeman, with what is most probably the most important construct in Complexity Theory: emergence (2017: 15).

Scott Thornbury elaborates, telling us that ‘[h]istorical linguists, sociolinguists and researchers into language acquisition (both first and second) suggest that the processes of language evolution and development are slow – and messy. To capture this messy, evolving quality, many scholars enlist the term emergence’ (Thornbury, 2017 italics in original). He further explains that:

[...] language emerges in second language learning situations, especially when learners are engaged in communicative interaction. The learner talks; others respond. It is the scaffolding and recasting, along with the subsequent review, of these learner-initiated episodes that drives acquisition. (Thornbury, 2017)

Thornbury then directs us to the applied linguist Mike Long who argues that the ‘recasting’ mentioned by Thornbury causes a shift in prominence ‘from the traditional interventionist, proactive, modelling behaviour of synthetic approaches to a more reactive mode for teachers – students lead, the teacher follows’ (Long, 2014: 70). Though this seems to create an imbalance toward the student(s), away from the ideal of equality, Long later qualifies
this by more clearly promoting the notion of an egalitarian approach. He explains that the way to encourage teachers to adopt a more egalitarian stance rather than an authoritarian one is to demonstrate the positive aspects. These, according to Long, would be ‘not only to improve classroom climate but also create advantageous psycholinguistic conditions for language learning’ (2014: 77). This, in turn, means that ‘[s]tudents treated as equals are likely to talk more and to have their own communicative and psycholinguistic needs met’ (Long, 2014: 77). Van Lier supports this by telling us that while a teacher-centred pedagogy may appear to give control and efficiency this ‘comes at the cost of reduced student participation, less expressive language use, a loss of contingency, and severe limitations on the students’ employment of initiative and self-determination’ (1996: 184–185). This underpins Long’s claim:

The egalitarian nature of classroom discourse will mean students are encouraged to initiate topics, not merely to return teachers’ serve in the response slot of the IRF [initiation-response-feedback] structure. They will be free to negotiate for meaning with the teacher and their fellow students. They will seek assistance with the language as object when they need it, and in tune with their psycholinguistic readiness to learn, not when a distant textbook writer decreed that they should (miraculously, all) need it. The teacher will be a guide, not a dictator (2014: 77).

Although calling a more control-orientated teacher a dictator may be more an exaggeration for emphasis, the point Long makes of encouraging students to initiate ideas to be further nurtured by both teacher and classmates is a valid one. It also ties in with cultivating the emergence of language, which Paul van Geert describes as ‘spontaneous occurrence of something new as a result of the dynamics of the system’ (2008: 182). Simultaneous with the emergence of creativity, this spontaneity was a common feature of the ‘Performing Languages’ project and was demonstrated in the case of the Un, deux, trois, Soleil! scene. The participants initiated the topic rather than waiting for me as teacher-facilitator to
instigate either the creative element or the language features of the topic. There was a form of collective negotiation in that there were members of the ensemble not familiar with the game and so the game was played as a way of understanding it. Once understood, those of us that knew the game responded with our own cultural equivalents, which in turn enriched the language that emerged with new vocabulary and turns of phrases. In this way, the individuals each contributed to the collective learning. As they were facilitating and leading each other in different ways of playing the game, this could be a foreshadowing of when the participants led the post-performance workshops discussed in the previous chapter, ‘The Ignorant Facilitator’. In this way, many different facets of language were emerging at the same time and, of course, as Thornbury states above, this was messy. Also to account for in this messy emergence is that the process was also very animated and physical.

The fundamental importance of the body to communication is hardly in doubt as so much of communication is inherent to the body from the sweeping gesture of the traffic police to the sly wink at the end of a joke. This is testified to from at least the beginning of modern anthropological studies during the Enlightenment to the initial research in to gesture and body language by anthropologists such as Marcel Mauss and Margaret Mead (Mauss, 1973, 1979; Mead et al., 1973). However, a misunderstanding of language learning being a sequential, strictly cognitive process persists in SLA, ignoring the aspect of social interaction and physicality in communication (Larsen-Freeman, 1991, 2018). This ‘building manual’ notion still prevails where reading a book and sequentially adding ‘brick’ units of language together in the belief that there is a fixed path to follow to achieve language competence, which is evidenced by the heavily textbook-based learning favoured by the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) and the various

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While the use of the term 'mess' in relation to contextualising language development during the project is explored in more depth in the closing chapter, ‘Messing It Up As We Go Along’, it can be useful to understand the notion of emergence in language.

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language examining boards (Schmenk, 2004). More specifically this is indicated in the concepts such as Universal Grammar which, although having been long disproven or discredited, are still fundamental to and still provide the reasoning for the approaches seen in language schools throughout the world (Larsen-Freeman, 2015a, 2018). That is, of course, not to say that this method is completely unsuccessful. Many people have managed to achieve great command of a target language following rote-learning techniques. This, though, does not work for everyone and it may well have seriously hampered even those that ended up being successful and almost certainly inhibited many expressively by limiting the role of physicality in language.

Along with the restrictions on the individual’s physical expression there were also physical restrictions caused by the learning environment. The university’s spaces for learning were cramped by green-legged metal chairs and tables or packed lecture halls. For the group, the act of ‘breaking out’ from the seated position in the audience (the final performance was staged in one of these lecture halls) was a sign of their frustration in being restrained both spatially and physically – being kept behind desks – and in their attempts to test and stretch their abilities. As Jean-Rémi Lapaire, citing Birdwhistell, has posited, speakers are ‘social actors and moral movers (Birdwhistell 1970) who articulate meanings physically, using the rich semiotic resources of the human body’ (Lapaire, 2016: 2, emphasis in original). As a caveat, classroom ‘control’ should not be discounted as one of the principal factors to a sedentary style of learning as the size and physical structures of school classrooms do not easily facilitate an overtly physical approach. While it could be argued that institutional places of learning are designed in this way because physical expression has not traditionally been seen as part of learning, this idea of control is problematic and is part of an undercurrent of distrust in the learners to ‘bank’ the information they are told. Being physically mobile, the constellation of communication could be altered (rather than being

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8 The Common European Framework of Reference and its influence on SLA is discussed in more depth in chapter eight, ‘Messing It Up As We Go Along’.
stuck in one place) and while allowing the individual a form of emancipation in how they related to the others it also encouraged a wider variety of interactions within the group, strengthening the collective.

The devising and development of the *Un, deux, trois, Soleil!* scene seemed to work as a catalyst for much debate and conversation about their experience of the educative system at the university as we worked on it. The participants became more articulate and confident about voicing their frustrations and concerns in this regard. The individuals finding space and opportunity to express shared concerns and having a way of conveying this in the form of theatre led to a greater solidarity within the collective. The actual staging of the scene also contributed towards this with the overtly physical nature of the scene and uncommon use of the space with the ensemble members scrambling over desks and emerging from the seats onto the stage out of the dark, surprising the audience. Darder, Baltodano and Torres’ interpretation of Foucault’s conceptualisation of power allows us to view the scene as a ‘creative act of resistance’ (2009: 7), echoing Thompson’s notion of the ‘*perruque*’. Darder, Baltodano and Torres argue that power is not static but dynamic and rather than dichotomy of the powerful institutions and powerless learners, those learners have potential agency (2009). This perspective gives a more complex and nuanced understanding of power relations through the lens of which the *Un, deux, trois, Soleil!* scene represented a destabilising act against a non-static sense of power, resisting how that power worked on bodies and relationships and ‘the ways we construct knowledge and meaning in the world’ (Darder et al., 2009: 7). Pedagogically speaking, Rancière would say that this is inherent in the design of the education system that the learner is destined to never catch up with the master explicator. This, Kristin Ross points out, is caught up in 19th century myth of progress with a ‘catch-up’ mentality meaning ‘[n]ever will the student catch up with the teacher’ (1991: xx). As mentioned earlier, the *Un, deux, trois, Soleil!* scene began in darkness with one person on the stage chanting the game’s name and turning around swiftly to
‘capture’ those advancing on their position. This scenario has echoes of the learner never catching the master explicator as discussed previously. The players, both in the sense of actors and participants in the game, came from amongst the regular audience members. As the performance took place in one of the university’s lecture halls, the Ensemble Firefly deemed their actions to symbolise their ‘escape’ from the confines of the conventional learning space. The process of creating this scene also marked a significant point in both the participants’ self-efficacy in creating theatre but also their willingness to engage with each other and discuss the merits of one decision over another.

The importance of this scene in the sense of a metaphorical emergence from the audience to establish a new take on their educative milieu and their emergence as more confident speakers in the target language is important to note. This is so even when taking into consideration that it did not and has not altered the established teacher-centred approach favoured in the university’s lecture halls. As Maley and Kiss argue, ‘micro-level subversion and resistance is more feasible than attempts to take on the entire system. And that, in order to achieve success, it is necessary to create a ‘community of practice’ in which students share and participate’ (2018: 81). The idea of a ‘community of practice’ was discussed in depth in the introduction chapter and concerned a meso-level of interpretation, but now I look at a more individual, micro-level of the creative collaborative process, drawing on another of Rancière’s propositions about equality. As was noted in the previous chapter, Rancière tells us that ‘[e]quality is neither given or claimed, it is practised, it is verified’ (1991: 137) and storytelling – recounting – according to Rancière’s reasoning is a basic operation of intelligence (Ross, 1991: xxii). In the following section, I analyse how the students told their own stories and the effect this had on their language development and their confidence, motivation and investment in this process. To introduce this section, I

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9 For Rancière (1991, 2006) intelligence and equality are synonymous terms, as are reason and will.
briefly recount an experience of mine as a language learner as this played a key part in the development of this research.

**Writing the Individual, Creating the Collective**

Starting just before my own research project, where I would take on the role of teacher, I joined a group devised theatre project for German as an additional language. The group consisted of around fifteen to twenty people participating each week in a three-hour session. The initial sessions were based on exercises and activities commonly used in drama work and many of them were improvisational. All those participating were clearly engaged with both the creation of theatre and the language learning process. The teacher-facilitator was well meaning and devoted a lot of his free time to the project. This work rate did have an influence though. While some participants found the process greatly beneficial for the development of their German, the workload was very high and the required skill in German to keep up was daunting for many of us at a lower level. This was indicated, for example, by having to read and respond to very long emails from almost at the beginning of the project. Midway through the process the focus changed from improvisational activities to one of creating a script. This emphasis, and reticence to edit, led to a final performance of more than two and a half hours plus an interval. The performance had long, dialogue-heavy scenes where often fifteen participants or more would be on stage with little movement. By the time things had progressed to the script-writing stage, I had left the group as work demands and my own research project meant I could no longer commit to such a demanding enterprise.¹⁰

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¹⁰ Commitment and the underlying motivational and investment factors are aspects of the devising process that I touched on in the previous chapter, ‘The Ignorant Facilitator’, and I return to later in this chapter and the final one, ‘Messing It Up As We Go Along’.
My personal experience is demonstrative of how subjective the learning experience can be, and the process overall was not as rewarding as I had hoped. Perhaps my German level was too low for this project. Perhaps it was that I saw the emphasis on scripted dialogue, and the task of scripting dialogue, as not to my theatrical taste. Speaking to one of the other participants, though, revealed that they found the process very beneficial while acknowledging the, at times, overwhelming workload. He was one of a core-group that eventually became the de facto script-writers under the guidance and editorship of the teacher-facilitator. Despite my misgivings, some sense of being a group was also to be found in the project. Among the other group members, though not all, there seemed to be a sense of the groupness, especially with the core group who would go on to work intensively on the script. The approach did yield a fully-scripted play with parts, perhaps understandably, distributed according to German ability-level, and those creating the characters also playing the larger parts. This project came to stand in contrast to ‘Performing Languages’, where pieces of writing by individuals or participant pairings were developed by the collective rather than finished scripts that were given to others to learn. In this section, I analyse this collaborative reworking of individually written material in two discrete parts of the development of a scene called Who is an artist?. This was done in a different and, I argue, more egalitarian manner and in a way that was more effective in terms of language development for the individuals in the collective.

The analysis of the development of the Who is an artist? scene shows how an individually written monologue was then developed by working with others in the group, firstly stemming from a contribution from Valérie, and secondly, from Aliya’s involvement in developing the scene. The first part of the scene development I look at explains how material created outside of the workshop time and space was introduced to the devising process and further developed with the help of other ensemble members. Following this, I discuss the monologues as part of the participants’ storytelling or recounting and how this
Group Devised Theatre for ‘Second Language Acquisition’

aided mutual language development and in what way that was closely tied to the establishing of an artistic identity and a more confident voice. Though here I focus on one piece, the various monologue pieces that individuals contributed to the devising process were developed in a comparable manner. Also, as the participants created the work themselves, they were, therefore, inherently expertly written in the sense that the authors were experts on themselves. This is in line with much ensemble devising practice where ‘[w]hile a conventional play exists in the template of a script, the devised production is initially located within its devisers’ (Parsons, 2010: 66). Similarly, this was the initial working method of the German as a foreign language project outlined above with the ideas for the performance being drawn from participants’ pieces of writing about their own dreams. However, this choice of theme and approach was mainly driven by the facilitator-teacher and how certain stories on the theme of dreams were chosen to be developed was unclear and many of the individual tales were merged or adapted to represent everyone. This sense of wanting to incorporate everyone is, in some senses, admirable yet many individuals found this process alienating as they had no say in the way this was done and, as such, trying to incorporate each individual caused confusion and detachment and perhaps disenchantment with the project. This is not to say that the project was not enjoyable nor beneficial for developing language, yet it does raise the issue of the role of the individual in the collective.

In the ‘Performing Languages’ project, the resources or materials were introduced by individual members in the same way as the German project but, contrastingly, they were treated and developed differently. In fact, the development of the scripts provided a catalyst for further creativity and it was intrinsically motivating to enhance the original written piece. In this sense, the individual’s original work was enriched by being moulded by the ensemble and conversely the collaborators found the material offered by individuals to be exciting and full of potential. In a slightly different way to the writing process during the
Group Devised Theatre for ‘Second Language Acquisition’

German project mentioned above, I acted as another resource to participants on certain questions and certainly offered input from a theatrical perspective, yet I was not the editor of their work. By collaborating, students shared the opportunity to discuss the nuances of the vocabulary, syntax and aspects of language usage and therefore engaged in an active rather than principally reactive way seen in the teacher input, student output model and adhering to development through interaction and negotiation of meaning favoured by the Sociocultural, Socio-interactionist and Sociocognitive approaches to SLA (Ellis, 1991, 2008; Gass and Mackey, 2007; Lantolf and Thorne, 2007; Atkinson, 2011a; Lantolf, 2011).

My anticipation was that much of the material for the performance would be created collectively or with the group at least in the same space and, by proxy, enabling that language development through the devising process would take place there too. Of course, in many ways this did happen, yet there was a substantial amount of work that occurred beyond the designated, ‘official’ devising and ‘learning’ space. This follows the assertions of Nunan, Benson and Ivan Illich (among others) that much of language learning takes place away from the classroom (Illich, 1971; Nunan, 1989, 1991; Benson, 2001; Benson and Reinders, 2011; Nunan and Richards, 2015). In fact, Illich makes the claim that:

Most learning happens casually, and even most intentional learning is not the result of programmed instruction [...] Most people who learn a second language well do so as a result of odd circumstances and not of sequential teaching. They go to live with their grandparents, they travel, or they fall in love with a foreigner. (1971: 12–13)

While I would disagree with Illich in that people have learned an additional language at least initially in a formal environment, the ‘odd circumstances’ might be read as the development of their language ability in the wider social world. These ‘unofficial’ or ‘unanticipated’ spaces where moments of learning took place away from the devising space, along with the deepening of the ensemble's interpersonal relationships, is explored further.
in the following two chapters. Now, however, I discuss writing and creation ‘outside’ the
direct devising space along with the shaping and creating that occurred within the time the
ensemble was all together.

The original idea for Who is an artist? was suggested by Valérie and the initial
devising work on the scene involved a lot of improvisation and was notable for the
individual effect on Valérie’s self-efficacy in the target language. This was due to the
supportive and fraternal ambience within the devising environment and in the overt
physicality that Valérie used to express herself. It was also important in the effect of the
scene’s development had on other members who collaborated on the scene, specifically
Louis and Aliya which, in Ritter’s terms, provided a mutual benevolence or dependence.
Valérie was at first very restrained and reticent to improvise in English. As we worked
together, she told the group that she did not feel capable or comfortable doing so.
Therefore, we discussed doing it in her native language, French, to negotiate her anxiety
about exposing herself in English. She was reluctant to do this as she felt that it might be
construed as ‘cheating’ and may have a negative effect on her English development because
she would not be using the target language. This is a common feeling and certainly the
absolutism of using only the target language is prevalent in language teaching classrooms,
the mono-lingual ideal (Cook, 2001). However, there are many researchers who welcome
and encourage a speaker’s first language use in the learning environment as it allows the
learner to feel more in control over their learning and clarify their understanding, if
necessary (Cook, 2001, 2010).11 When Valérie improvised in French, she was visibly more
comfortable and added dance movements, spinning and skipping amongst the other
performers.12 As the work was directed at a theatrical rather than solely a linguistic
outcome, this did not feel like a failure. Along with the verbal support of the ensemble,

11 For an in depth discussion of the area of bilingual and multilingual education see Wright and Boun
2015.
12 This took place during the session on Sunday, March 8th 2015.
doing the scene initially in French allowed her to achieve a level of linguistic comfort sufficient for her to bring an overt physicality to the scene. Then, when we returned to work on the scene later in the afternoon, without prompting, Valérie began to improvise in English. This indicates that once she was comfortable in her physicality, Valérie was able to discard the crutch of French. So, while her speech was not as smooth or fluent as it had been in French, it was a notable step forward and it showed her relaxation with using her skills in English in an impromptu and unsupported manner.\(^3\) This implies that having a good grounding in physical expression, albeit aided by a speaker’s first language use, can lead to increased motivation and confidence to use the target language.

The ensemble’s contribution to Valérie’s development was notable in how their support allowed her freedom to improvise and bring such an overt physicality to the piece. It also allowed her to display her individual talent and ability which is sometimes seen in ensemble devising to be problematic. Discussing collective creation, Bechtel identifies that ‘Collectivity is suspicious of the claims of individual talent and expertise [...] precisely because they engender hierarchies of profit and power’ (2013: 49). In his article, ‘Collective Creation’, Theodore Shank even claims, ‘[t]he group, not the individual is the typical focus of an alternative society’ (1972: 3). However, a challenging recommendation by Lev-Aladgem is ‘to stop perceiving individuality and collectivism as opponents’ and:

\[\ldots\] to facilitate the consolidation of the theatrical group as a heterogeneous body, in which the course of the creative process maintain [sic] some sort of physical and mental distance that preserves each participant’s awareness of the dialectic connection/disconnection between being both an individual and part of a group formation. (2015: 518)

Embracing and being aware of this duality is helpful to the language learner as it is unarguable that an individual must develop their language themselves. No-one can do it for

\(^3\) At lunch Valérie often turned to Louis for advice on lack of vocabulary which indicated her reliance on others for confirmation of ‘correctness’.
someone else, yet, for most language learners, communication is best facilitated in some form of group or community as established by the ‘socio-’ approaches to SLA mentioned above.

Claire Kramsch offers the concept of a third space (or ‘thirdness’ or ‘third culture’) to aid an understanding of this duality and move away from the dichotomies found in language learning of native/non-native speakers and the self/other, and, I would propose, of the individual and the group. Kramsch explains that '[t]hird culture does not propose to eliminate these dichotomies, but suggests focusing on the relation itself and on the heteroglossia within each of the poles. It is a symbolic place that is by no means unitary, stable, permanent and homogeneous' (Kramsch, 2009b: 238). According to Larsen-Freeman, a relational theory such as Complexity Theory should also ‘account for the nonduality of phenomena’ (2017: 29 her emphasis). This is done by viewing apparently discrete objects as ‘complimentaries rather than dichotomies’ (Larsen-Freeman, 2017: 29). Considering this, and given group devised theatre's emphasis on the collective, it is important to note that the emergence of the confident individual was a prominent part of the collective process of both creating theatre and learning the target language. As Oddey suggests about ensemble devising, ‘participants make sense of themselves within their own cultural and social context, investigating, integrating, and transforming their personal experiences, dreams, research, improvisation and experimentation’ (1994: 1). The devising process of this scene was also notable for the mutual benefit that occurred. This was shown through Aliya’s development in terms of physical expression and gesture which is discussed now. The development of Who is an Artist? scene contributed, in part, to her ‘making sense of herself’ along with the writing and development of her own written piece discussed in the following chapter, ‘Voicing Identity’.
The theatrical fulcrum of the scene was Louis balanced on his head being ‘sculpted’ by Aliya and served as an analogy for the project participants working on the scene in that they were somehow sculpting language. This part of the scene was a difficult piece of action to co-ordinate, yet it also brought about increased confidence both in physical and linguistic expression. Louis was already a confident performer which was rooted in his circus experience along with engagement with physical hobbies such as rock climbing. Aliya, on the other hand, was much less overt in her overall physical communication. She also found her role as a ‘sculptor’ challenging as it involved large gestures where the ‘clay model’ of Louis was slowly shaped by Aliya. Her hands did not actually touch his body, yet they shaped the ‘sculpture’ from a distance indicated by an open palm, circling slowly round him moving up and down, recalling Bräuer’s notion of ‘the interplay of body and language’ (2002b: ix–x). The physical exercises involved in the rehearsing and development of the scene were indicative of many other instances during the devising process and can be viewed as an activity-based approach to language learning. This activity-based process raises our natural curiosity and interest forming an intrinsic motivation which promotes learning. More directly connected with language acquisition, as mentioned in the previous chapter, Zoltán Dörnyei and others find that intrinsic motivation can promote long-term retention of language (Dörnyei, 1998; Dörnyei and Murphey, 2003; Dörnyei and Ushioda, 2009).

Simultaneously, the individual ensemble members working together was notable for the underpinning sense of ‘mutual aid’. Ritter posits that the idea of ‘mutual aid’, based on Kropotkin’s concept of ‘mutual benevolence’, supports the model of an egalitarian, co-operative society along with a belief in ‘creative individuality’ (1980: 57). He posits:

[I]f the treatment I receive from others is inspired by benevolence, my chance to become a creative individual grows. I can then rely on others to help me when in need, just because I am their fellow and regardless of defeats. Knowing they
will support me should I fail in my quest gives me courage to seek uniqueness and creativity in the face even of great risk. (Ritter, 1980: 57)

This is pertinent to the discussion of, not only the creativity of the participants in terms of the theatrical devising, but also the risks and failures involved in language development. Following Ritter’s argument, mutual aid supports the individual’s growth or learning, and this is reciprocated throughout the collective. Ritter substantiates this claim about individual development within the collective by stating, ‘[t]he knowledge that one can rely on this reciprocal support from others gives one courage to pursue unique and creative paths in self-becoming’ (Ritter qtd. in Suissa, 2010: 63). This was achieved in the development of the Who is an Artist? scene (an example of other scene developments) in the individual’s writing being supported and enhanced by the collective. It could even be suggested that the individuals wrote themselves as individuals into the collective, the written texts serving as a way of revealing more about themselves. With the demonstration and sharing of an individual’s potential the ensemble’s sense of groupness is enhanced, strengthened by the sense of friendship. As May argues:

Friendship can give a picture of solidarity, which is no mean feat in an era of the individualism [...] Friendship can be a movement of solidarity. It presupposes the equality of its participants, and thus trains those participants in the mode of political solidarity required by democratic movements. (2013: 72)

And it is to the notion of friendship that we turn in the next section as I discuss collective creation at the one of its moments of genesis and how this creates confidence in the participants’ ability to improvise and work creatively.

**Creation and Connections from out of the Blue**

On the aptness of theatre to accommodate friendship, I find the philosopher Alexander Nehamas helpful to set the scene. He posits: ‘Looks, gestures, tones of voice,
bodily dispositions are the stuff of drama, which is, accordingly, the medium in which friendship is best represented' (Nehamas, 2016: 179). He finds friendship depends on and is expressed in intimate actions and gestures only manifest in context and over a period of time, connecting the role of physicality and the growing intimacy between individuals. Nehamas explains further that:

Friendship is an embodied relationship, and its depictions require embodiment as well: they must include the looks, the gestures, the tones of voice, and the bodily dispositions that are essential to textured communication and on which so much of our understanding of our intimates is based. (2016: 179)

While Nehamas is discussing the display of friendship in more traditional theatre, Simon Jones finds similar connections in creative devising process stressing the, ‘complexity and intensity, the richness and variety of the events’ (2009: 28), that host the inter-relationships between collaborating artists. Bannerman takes this lead and offers a detailed expansion on it:

[...] the ways in which the performers are intrinsic to the creative process and the ways in which the creative engagements [...] combine to create the work. At times the subtlety of the communications, verbal and physical, are revealed, while at other points the spontaneity and immediacy of responses are in the foreground. The care and sensitivity of the interactions, the physical and emotional trust, are also key features [...] collaborative practice [...] is driven by a shared sense of purpose and which only succeeds because of the trust between the collaborators. (Bannerman and McLaughlin, 2009: 67–68)

The elements mentioned here by Bannerman – ‘the interactions, the physical and emotional trust’ and ‘the collaborative practice’ with its 'shared sense of purpose' – are ones that resonate with the process of not only the ensemble's devising practice but also with the development of their interactions. What follows is an analysis of how many of these
elements manifested themselves and how they influenced the creative and language learning process.

This section looks at a moment from the devising process when the participants had been asked to work on some writing to develop their monologues/pieces by writing them together in pairs. This moment took place during an all-day session, two-and-a-half weeks before the first performance. We had another all-day session scheduled the following day and on the following Saturday and Sunday. The sessions at this stage were to rehearse and hone scenes already created, yet also to generate more material for the final performance. The participants went off with various tasks to complete: Julie to work on her monologue with Federica and the others working in pairs too. In keeping with Nehamas’ requirement for descriptions, I include a scene-setting one prior to a vignette that tries to more poetically ‘capture the moment’ of the inception of the scene, *Puppets and Prometheus*.14

Federica is more conventionally formal in dress than the others; Valérie and Louis are in casual wear of loose or stretchable jeans and loose t-shirt and sweaters. Aliya has more conservative attire of hijab and noticeably more layers than the others. However, all seem comfortable sitting or lying on the ground with the large sheets of paper where they collaboratively write. Julie’s dress style is somewhere between those of Louis and Valérie and of Federica. The room is ample sized and, as it is the weekend, we have the space free to ourselves unlike the Monday evening sessions when we were interrupted by figures from the administrative offices who have benevolently ceded the space yet conversely still occupy it. It is the afternoon of a full day’s session on Saturday. In the morning, we worked productively on developing some scenes and lunch took longer than expected. The weather outside has been good in that the sun is shining and it would have been pleasant to be out.

14 While keeping in mind his own limitations: ‘But no description of looks, gestures and tones of voice can ever be complete, and so no description can communicate whether these belong to an act of friendship or not’ (Nehamas, 2016: 179).
Puppets and Prometheus

Scraps of paper and people’s thoughts are scattered around the floor. Caught in the cusp of creation, groups have wearied of their assigned tasks and are listing in the breeze of lethargy.

The room has quietened noticeably, and the ensemble seems to be floating in the space. A sense of indirection pervades along with a visible lack of discernible progress. We hover here for maybe 15 minutes, maybe more and in that moment of ‘perhaps’, the time seems longer, weightier given the imperative of cold reality to accomplish our tasks.

And all in our favour yet nothing emerges, nothing flourishes.

And we wait.

Puppets appear on the hands of Louis and Valérie. The two friends begin to play, and Federica from the group alongside them becomes involved. An idea jumps up and out.

‘An owl accompanied Athena so now is the symbol of wisdom.’

She is excited at the opportunity to incorporate Greek mythology. She is drawn away from the activity of writing up her own scene with Julie. Now joining enthusiastically in from the periphery she abandons her work and supports and is entertained by the puppet play. A listless laze, a lean over, a jumping off. And the flow of the process is back again.

The vignette illustrates an instance where the participants became more fluent as communicators as they animatedly discussed possibilities for the dialogue and character development. This emergence of collective creativity and communication capture in the vignette was a common occurrence during the project and arose naturally as part of the devising process. In ‘acquiring’ a target language, from a linguistic perspective, learners need a source of natural communication in a real context, which reflects language as a ‘semiotic system full of variations and struggles’ (Pennycook, 2001: 127). Furthermore, Renée
Marschke argues that the use of the communicative approach is not valued in many second language learning classrooms and because of the ad hoc nature of any communicative tasks undertaken, there is no authentic desire to communicate as there is a tendency ‘not to lead anywhere’ (2004: 5). As is shown in the development of Puppets and Prometheus, the participants found their own direction and along with this were also able to switch modes of working in English quickly from a writing task to creating ideas and use of the imagination drawing on personal intellectual and emotional knowledge.

Before the session, the ensemble had agreed that we needed to form some sort of script to aid rehearsals for various scenes that had been developed earlier and/or we had worked on earlier in the day, though it became apparent that there was little desire from Louis and Valérie to start work. Julie had begun to write some lines on a large piece of paper but I observed Federica becoming less involved as she was not actively writing. Following Pablo Picasso’s counsel that, ‘La inspiración existe, pero tiene que encontrarte trabajando’ – ‘inspiration exists, but it has to find you working’ (Villasante, 1994: 264) – I encouraged them to continue with the writing task, though in this instance, the opposite seemed to be the case: during a lull, the inspiration came. Louis and Valérie were sat together and began playing with hand puppets. Louis and Valérie were clearly not actively doing the devising task they had been set, yet their spontaneous puppetry improvisation used the target language which indicates that they were still engaging in the overall goal of practising English. Their attitude was not intentionally disruptive but playful and part of the educative goal we had discussed which included the stated aims on the participants’ language

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15 The puppets were an owl and a dinosaur that were bought in a large chain store and, while not being special in the sense of being unique, the attachment of the group to the characters created through the puppets was notable. The purchase of the dinosaur puppet was in large part inspired by an earlier creative brainstorm that suggested the possibility of life-sized dinosaur suits/onesies being used.
learning maps\textsuperscript{16} of the desire 'to play, to talk, to have fun, to improve' (Chloe) and 'talk [English] in a non-native group' (Valérie). Further to this, when Valérie returned to her language learning map in a post-project workshop she specifically addressed this comment writing that this 'was the case and I've further improved my confidence'. She also identified that there was a 'New aspect: in the group I felt confident enough to try and help other people with communication, for an example by reformulating what one had said and the other had not understood' (Valérie).\textsuperscript{17} I cannot say whether this was the case in the further development of the piece I am discussing in this section but it is reasonable to assume that it was, as it is with the other scenes she worked on.

Although the puppet play did impinge on the work of others, rather than a call for focus which tends to be the default position – the return to hunched shoulders of the language learner over their texts, perhaps – allowing leeway appears to have been key to the participants' investment in the project. Louis and Valérie had continued to find something playful to do which absorbed them and, as that was being done in English, it was realising the essence and one of the fundamental reasons for doing this project. That they felt comfortable to improvise indicates a growing security and confidence in their abilities and endorses a playful approach. The ‘distraction’, too, led to a creative breakthrough with Federica being drawn to the play and the dialogue that was being created via the two puppet characters.\textsuperscript{18} In the light of Federica’s enjoyment of literature, when this moment was recalled later in an interview, she called the genesis of the idea as ‘a wonderful surprise’ (Federica, 2015), signalling how it was a key moment in the creative process and ‘fun to see

\textsuperscript{16} The language learning maps were ‘maps’ drawn by the students on large > A0 (140x110cm) pieces of paper where they ‘mapped out’ what they wanted from the project and following the performance the ideas/hopes for the project were commented on.

\textsuperscript{17} Something else which is noticeable is that the comments are much more extensive post-project than the initial map and points to her being more comfortable in that aspect of her English though other mitigating factors may have come into play.

\textsuperscript{18} Again, another reference to prior thoughts on what the participants might want to include in the performance. Federica talked of Greek myth and, as 'light' was one of the aesthetic themes, Prometheus was notably discussed.
how the idea can change and be transformed during the process’ (Federica, 2015). This is a reflection of how an expression of an individual’s ideas can develop within the collective while aiding the devising ensemble’s goal of creating a final piece or performance. Louis also discussed this moment of the scene’s genesis excitedly recalling there was a pullulation of ideas with a ‘better idea then better idea’ (Louis, 2015) that came from Federica pointing out the symbolic importance of the owl (one of the puppets) and the development of the scene burgeoned, with the rest of the ensemble becoming involved. This creative turn from idle play inspired philosophical discussion and historical tale-telling and continued to become one of the main scenes from the final performance. It provided enough motivation for Louis and Valérie to continue to speak in English while rehearsing and writing the scene at their apartment. Louis commented on this investment and motivation to continue their language learning in this way, saying, ‘That’s something that’s really a huge step towards learning’ (Louis, 2015) before he concluded that ‘[t]he first step to learn is to be willing to learn’ (Louis, 2015). This recalls Rancière’s exhortation that, ‘There is a will that commands and an intelligence that obeys. Let’s call the act that makes an intelligence proceed under the absolute constraint of a will attention’ (Rancière, 1991: 25). It also concerns Benson’s claim of ‘the importance of factors of willingness and opportunity’ for autonomous learning to emerge (2001: 53). However, he warns that ‘[i]f the institutional context of learning or the immediate demands of the learning task do not value or reward autonomous behaviour, it is likely that the learners will be reluctant to exercise whatever capacities for autonomy they have’ (Benson, 2001: 53), which returns us to the importance of interaction and investment. The relaxed nature of the participants’ interaction throughout the project, illustrated in the devising of Puppets and Prometheus, and how that contributed to their overall investment in the project became a crucial factor in their development of self-efficacy as speakers of English.

Federica wanted the project to be more based on dialogue rather than my stated interest in overt physicality.
In this chapter, I explored the idea of the individual acting within the ensemble and the influence and benefits this had on students’ language development. I analysed and discussed three parts of the ‘Performing Languages’ project: the Un, deux, trois, Soleil! scene in its development and in the final performance; the input of writing material by one individual and how that was developed by other members of the ensemble to become the Who is an Artist? scene; and how a piece of improvisation led to the emergence of the Puppets and Prometheus scene. Emergence, with its allowance for spontaneity, was discussed in the sections, ‘Emerging out of the Dark and the Opportunity to Speak’ and ‘Creation and Connections from out of the Blue’. This is key in encouraging language development and this, I posit, is convergent with creativity that was provided by the group devised theatre in the project. I further supported the assertion made in the previous chapter, ‘The Ignorant Facilitator’, that a creation and nurturing of a form of friendship in the notion of groupness can provide a supportive base that engenders a sense of trust which allows for the risk-taking of emergent language and enhanced self-efficacy.

Throughout this chapter, the ‘groupness’, that Syssoyeva has posited to be the essential element of ensemble devising, was looked at from the perspective of the initial input from the individual. The social significance of interpersonal ties that constitute a friendship along with the sentiments of affection and solidarity that friendship engenders can be seen both as supportive and motivating in language development for the individual to find their voice while contributing to the whole. Yet even the individual cannot be completely discrete and uniform. The intrapersonal notion of the language learner having multiple identities put forward in the SLA field by proponents such as Norton (Norton Peirce, 1995; Norton, 2013) became apparent during the project. The sometimes confusing, sometimes liberating sense of alternate identities was highlighted in two separate scenes concerning Federica and Aliya. Those scenes and their development are discussed in more detail in the following chapter, ‘Voicing Identity’. I also further explore this facet of SLA
along with the motivation and investment with a section that looks more in depth at on the role of self-efficacy in SLA. The chapter draws primarily on the research, writing and theories of Bonny Norton in forming the Identity Approach to SLA, which, in line with Rancière's educational philosophy, calls for a more egalitarian pedagogy.
Chapter Seven

Voicing Identity

‘Do I contradict myself? 
Very well then I contradict myself; 
(I am large, I contain multitudes.)’

(from section 51 of ‘Song of Myself’ Whitman, 1965)

The concerns of investment and motivation, which greatly influence self-efficacy in additional language development, are highlighted by Norton as research objectives in the Identity Approach in the field of SLA (2013, 2016). For Norton, addressing these objectives involves the advancement of both learning and teaching styles that ‘enhance human agency in more equitable worlds’ (2013: 22). Before I analyse and discuss three facets of the case study, I explain the main features of the Identity Approach to SLA. I examine three aspects of the project from the perspective of this theoretical foregrounding. Firstly, continuing from the previous chapter, ‘The Individual in the Collective’, I look at the development of confidence from the perspective of an individual within the group (the participant, Julie). Secondly, two instances concerning multiple identities and multilingualism are discussed, and finally, I reflect on moments from the project which challenged where the boundaries lie for the devising process and language education, discussing what may be termed the ‘peripheries and beyond’ as places and spaces for learning, which opens the area for further, extended and theorised discussion in chapter eight, ‘Messing It Up As We Go Along’.

Benedict Anderson’s concepts of ‘imagined communities’ and ‘imagined identities’ (2006) have been further developed by the main proponent of the Identity Approach to SLA, Bonny Norton, both individually and working alongside others such as Carolyn McKinney, Aneta Pavlenko, Kelleen Toohey, Yihong Gao, Peter De Costa and Yasuko Kanno (Kanno and Norton, 2003; Pavlenko and Norton, 2007; Norton and McKinney, 2011; Norton,
Norton suggests that the language classroom should be ‘a community of the imagination’ where learners can explore an array of possible identities that might be a long-term or temporary fit for differing circumstances (2013: 3). This might be when different registers are required, for example, at an academic conference or an informal social gathering. These alterations of circumstances can be difficult to negotiate, even for someone operating in their native language, and so the difficulty in moving between different registers can be exacerbated with the sense of being an imposter in an alien community of speakers. That said, a more positive stance on having a community of the imagination is a potential ‘enhanced range of identity options’ (Norton, 2013: 3). This means that the learner is able to morph from what may have been a constricted identity, conforming to their own native language’s societal norms, to represent themselves in a manner that they believe represents them more truly (Norton, 2013). This, of course, is a far from clear path and learners may not find flitting between identities easy or, indeed, desirable. This will be seen in the later section, ‘Julieism: Confidence in the Cracks’, which discusses Julie’s experience in exploring these possibilities.

Currently, there is still the tendency for second language education scholars to view SLA as the internalisation of a static system (Norton and Toohey, 2011) – ‘a fixed object to be acquired’, according to Pennycook (2001: 143). This position has been contested by Identity Approach researchers who view additional language development as a dynamic and complex process and a ‘semiotic system full of variations and struggles’ (Pennycook, 2001: 143). From this perspective, language learners are seen as embodied and have their own agency while existing in a stratified social world (Norton Peirce, 1995; Norton, 1997, 2013; Pavlenko and Norton, 2007; Norton and McKinney, 2011). This stance emerges from the work of post-structuralists such as Bourdieu whose analysis of habitus foregrounds much of

1 Also see (Norton, 2001; Kanno and Norton, 2003; Pavlenko and Norton, 2007)
the Identity Approach and which was discussed at more length in Part One of the thesis. Norton directs us to another post-structuralist, Christine Weedon, who posits that language is ‘where our sense of ourselves, our subjectivity, is constructed’ along with practices found in institutions and being the site of definition and contest for how society is organised (1997: 21 italics in original). From this notion, Norton derives the idea that each interaction of a language learner in the target language constitutes the construction and negotiation of identity. This understanding of how someone perceives their position in the world – their ‘being-in-the-world’, recalling Merleau-Ponty’s term – has great bearing on how learners see future possibilities, which Norton regards as ‘central to the lives of many language learners, and is integral to an understanding of both identity and investment’ (2013: 4).

Relations of power in the social world forms one of two parts of the central argument of the Identity Approach put forward by Norton and others including McKinney, Toohey and Pavlenko (Pavlenko and Norton, 2007; Norton and McKinney, 2011; Norton and Toohey, 2011). The Identity Approach concerns itself, partly, with additional language learners’ access to the target language community whether in their native countries or in target-language lands. The other part is the ongoing search for ‘a comprehensive theory of identity that integrates the individual language learner and the larger social world’ (Norton and McKinney, 2011: 73). This concerns the social structuring of language learning both in formal and informal settings and how speaking, reading and writing, which are central to language development, are practised (Norton and McKinney, 2011: 73). The former part of the theory of identity focuses on the manifold ‘voices’ and positionings of those voices by language learners, and the malleability of these learners’ identities when engaging with the

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2 Habitus encompasses both the hexis (the way the body is held and used in certain ways ranging from posture to even enunciation or accent) and abstract intellectual traits, such as ways of perceiving, manner to understand, feelings and ways of acting.

3 Norton explains that the terms subject and subjectivity are viewed differently by Weedon who claims from a humanist viewpoint that the individual has a fixed, unique, coherent core, while post-structuralists think of subject as ‘diverse contradictory, dynamic and changing over time and space’ (2013: 4).
target language community. This is especially so if the learner is marginalised, or when integration or submersion to the dominant culture – becoming ‘normal’ as Foucault might suggest – is seen as the key to gaining linguistic or cultural capital, for example, pursuing the ‘ideal’ native speaker status, discussed in previous chapters.⁴

Norton calls into question traditional SLA scholars’ assumptions that opportunities to practice are ideal and that there are, indeed, ideal language learners at all. Furthermore, the categorisation of learners in binary terms, such as being motivated or not along with other affective factors, is questioned by Identity Approach theorists who reframe language learning as ‘socially constructed in inequitable relations of power, changing across time and space, and possibly coexisting in contradictory ways within a single individual’ (Norton, 2013: 2). This chapter embraces ideas about the connections between language learning and identity by looking specifically at how the ‘Performing Languages’ devising project gave speaking opportunities for participants that were not promoted in their academic studies, building on discussion from the previous chapter, ‘The Individual in the Collective’. It also analyses how this took place in differing social situations: the individual speaker in rehearsal and performance and their navigation of their ‘contradictory ways’; in the act of collaborative creation with the learner taking responsibility for the direction of the learning process; in the manifestation and navigation of multiple identities and multilingualism; and outside of the devising process itself where the learner has no reliance on an ‘ideal’ speaker.

One area that affects learners in taking these speaking opportunities and becoming more autonomous in their learning is that of self-efficacy. The nurturing and strengthening of self-efficacy enhances both the learner themselves in developing their abilities in the target language and also their peers in doing the same. Using a more egalitarian pedagogy,

⁴ In Love, Leo Buscaglia discusses the idea of perfection which means that we are afraid to do anything as we cannot do it perfectly (1996: 22). He also relates the story of the art teacher drawing a tree and asking students to draw their tree and they all end up drawing the teacher’s tree (Buscaglia, 1996: 10), which will serve here as an analogy for the teacher as the ideal English speaker.
with the idea of classroom interaction based on the democratic ethos found in ensemble devising approaches, I would argue that support is more reliable when garnered from a collective. Where there are many interactions from peers who encourage, support is likely to be stronger and more resilient than relying on the support of one person in an unequal power structure, as I have already argued in the previous chapters in part two of this thesis. I explore how this worked in practice in three separate instances, discussed below in relation to the concepts found in the Identity Approach. The next section looks at Julie’s navigation of identity that came to the fore during the creative process.

_Julieism: Confidence in the Cracks_

The scene called _Julieism_, that I discuss in this section, was principally created by one of the ensemble’s participants, Julie. Her role was an all-knowing, self-absorbed and pretentious university lecturer that Julie saw as pervading the university. This notion, of aloof and dismissive figures within the university system, which recalls Rancière’s ‘master explicator’, resounded among the other ensemble members. The scene was a pastiche and a harsh critique, from Julie’s perspective, of the teaching styles of faculty members within the university. It was a brave piece to construct bearing in mind that some of Julie’s teachers (lecturers or _professeurs_) would attend the performance. In the piece, the professor character espouses the theory of ‘Julieism’ in reference to a heavy book she carries, which is also essentially the entire reading list for the ‘Julieism’ course. It is described during the faux-lecture as ‘a book about me, written by me, talking about me’ (_Julieism_, 2015). In contrast to this symbolic tome, the development of the scene came to capture the essence of the inclusive, supportive, and student-led nature of the group devising process.

The _vignette_ below is my impression of the scene from the final performance. The scene was set and staged in a lecture hall (as noted previously, the performances took place in one) and involved Julie portraying a university lecturer and Chloe as a student who
Group Devised Theatre for ‘Second Language Acquisition’

speaks up from the audience. Following the vignette is an analysis of this performance and the writing and rehearsals for it, and how it affected Julie’s self-efficacy in her English language development.

### Julieism

In a drab green and cream lecture hall, a lecturer scolds their pupils for their implicit idiocy and ignorance. Pontificating to the pupils, the theoretical underpinning of Julieism is laid out, encompassing the author, the proponents and the adherents to the theory. The students in their darkness seem to absorb the words like damp cloths. The theory of Julieism is professed to be widely known. Professeur Julie distils its virtues and essential nature to the listeners, chiding them for their illiteracy in having not read her tome and rebuking them in general with a snarling sarcasm and a sneering stance. Spiteful barbs are doled out like cards from a contemptuous croupier.

Then a disturbance.

One of the underlings stands in the lecture theatre in brash defiance. There is a sustained critique that, while at first dismissed, boldly hammers at the auteur’s artifice. Where once they felt safe in their unsubstantiated musings devoted to talking about themselves, our main speaker feels the sun’s white light of revelation dawn upon the previous imperious façade, causing the insular and previously unexposed inadequacies to crumble and crash down. The imposter pang of the academic reveals itself in her countenance. Her responses stammer down the stairs of defensiveness; her face darts round to find corners in which to dive. Now the protagonist, Professeur Julie, reverts to outrage and then indecision prevails. Self-loathing is uncloaked onstage and the occupying silence that surfaces with self-doubt fills the hall.
Group Devised Theatre for ‘Second Language Acquisition’

Julie was ostensibly one of the shyer members of the group, and though a certain self-deprecating trait remained, she became more assured in communicating her point of view and expressing herself in English by the end of the project. Yet this was not a straightforward process and the fluctuation between character and ‘real’ persona contained many seeming paradoxes and contradictions. During the development and rehearsals for the scene, as the character she played sometimes closely reflected facets of her own personality, she sometimes fell out of character and back to a Julie that doubted herself. However, when she inhabited the role of Professeur Julie, she found a confident gait, shown physically and verbally by her striding around the stage while throwing out pithy put-downs.

Even within the structure of the scene itself, the play with identity was evident. In the moment during the scene when she was interrupted by a student criticising the aforementioned book, she (in character) quite visibly crumbled onstage. It became apparent that, just as the professor character was examining her own self-belief, Julie was doing something similar, framed in the frailty of her self-efficacy in English, while the piece itself critiqued her feeling of being a pseudo-intellectual and faux academic. Later, in the interview, she told me that the scene made her nervous because it was about herself (Julie, 2015). It seems contradictory that, later, after the performances, she seemed and claimed to be much more confident, reflecting my own observations. Julie’s confidence was also noted by Nadine and Constance, the teachers who were also part of the ensemble, who were also able to observe how the project participants were practising their English around the university.

During the rehearsals, Julie attempted various ‘takes’ on the professor character with the rest of the ensemble as her audience. Although there were moments when she felt reticent in her portrayal, worried that an audience would believe she was playing herself, the group encouraged her to continue and pointed out that she was representing what they
also believed. Julie’s self-efficacy appears also to have been influenced by an increased awareness and openness to expressing herself physically, which was encouraged by the rest of the group. Whereas beforehand her posture would be hunched, Julie was noticeably more relaxed in her body. This was achieved through a mixture of physical exercises in warm-ups and direction from the group that asked Julie to be bolder with her physical gestures. Throughout the project there was a marked improvement in Julie’s posture in the sense that she appeared more relaxed and ‘looser’.

While this did regress somewhat between sessions, with Julie reverting to her original posture, it took less time for her to ‘leave her shell’ once she re-engaged in rehearsals for this scene. However, the observations we made only cover the four or five months of the project’s duration, so the long-term affect cannot be assessed. Indeed, these indicators of self-efficacy, where the subject feels more agentic due to creative situations they have been involved with, may wane when the context is changed. What can be said, in line with Bandura’s premise outlined in the introductory chapter, is that Julie may have developed ‘resilient efficacy’ and that her improved sense of self-efficacy did not dissipate once the project had finished or if the members of the ensemble lost contact.

An intriguing aspect of the project was how the participants would respond to a contrasting style of additional language learning and which, given the subject matter of Julie’s scene, makes her case particularly apt to discuss. On a meso- and macro-scale, in contrast to the general ideological stance of the university, the ensemble adopted an egalitarian and democratic approach to guide how decisions were made during our project. The ensemble’s perception of the university system at Mulhouse was that it was hierarchical, which could be seen in the various relationships that evolved between the project participants and the organisations/institutes within the university that had invited
me to do the project and financed it. This was also felt in NovaTris’s problematic working relationship with the English department and the auspices of the university as a whole. These institutional factors have a bearing on the learner and as Norton explains, from an Identity Approach perspective, ‘symbolic or material’ resources and practices influence the formation of identity (2013: 2). However, Norton also claims that language acquisition can be enhanced through ‘human agency’ by learners re-framing relationships and how they can develop and position ‘alternative, more powerful identities’ (2013: 3). This is readily applicable to Julie’s lecturer persona.

Norton explains that a learner may be motivated yet not invested in the learning process as the learning environments, classroom or community, in which learners find themselves could be racist, sexist, elitist or in some other way discriminatory (2013: 3). The group were very vocal in general about the perceived elitism of the university and Julie’s representation of the professeur was indicative of this. Although a highly motivated language learner, Julie (like others in the group) professed little investment in the language practice of her university lectures and seminars, claiming they had little opportunity to speak (as discussed in the previous chapter). Other scenes that the group developed were also indicative of the ensemble trying to find a voice within the institution. This certainly influenced the moulding of the scenes of much of the final show. These scenes contained overt references to freedom and art, and showed hypocritical and pompous lecturers and professeur ‘types’, both archly and explicitly.

During the development of the Julieism scene, improvisation played a significant role in both the development of characters, but also how Julie voiced her own various identities. Initially, Julie had intended to write scripts for others to perform – ‘I like to write stuff but not for me’ (Julie, 2015). Yet, as the group began devising together, she became

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5 NovaTris and Cultural Projects management.
more engaged with the idea of sharing her work with herself as the medium. Julie started to
develop the idea for the scene about a month before the show and presented what she was
intending to do to the small audience of the other ensemble members. As she received
acknowledgement and encouraging responses from the others, Julie went through the scene
again, embellishing aspects of it with notable changes in the words she delivered and the
order of events. This process altered when Chloe offered to play the role of the questioning
student. As Julie worked with Chloe, she could now respond to the student character’s
interrogation of her professeur character, and this added sharpness and clarity to her
‘lecture’, though this did have a mitigating factor in Julie’s predisposition to improvise: ‘I
prefer improv rather than a full script’ (Julie, 2015).

Perhaps it could be said that Julie was shedding her identity as being shy and self-
conscious as she suggested later that being in the professeur character ‘changed the
problem, like, it wasn’t me talking’ (Julie, 2015). She also discussed this change over the
period in which the project took place, citing that previously she had had problems with
presentations for oral class as she was ‘so nervous that […] sentences weren’t even finished’
(Julie, 2015). Notably, this contrasts with how she felt about another presentation she made
at the end of the ‘Performing Languages’ project when she claimed to ‘feel a lot more
confident now’ and the presentation ‘was way easier’ (Julie, 2015). When I asked if that was
because of the work she had done, developing roles she played such as the professeur
character, she replied, ‘maybe a little because I was like, okay, if you can say bullshit in front
of everybody you can say something serious’ (Julie, 2015).

Despite the apparently flippant nature of her response, the change in Julie’s self-
efficacy is encapsulated by the attitudinal tone of the sentence. Here is a Julie that is bold
(while at the same time somewhat self-effacing) in contrast to her reticent demeanour prior
to the project. Of course, this could be put down to familiarity. Yet, other indicators, such
as Julie engaging other speakers of English outside the classroom, broke the unspoken convention at the university of English being confined to the lecture hall, demonstrating her new-found boldness was not just displayed to the ensemble.

In isolation, this scene could be considered merely a pastiche, or only a singular facet of the creator’s character. Yet, in the context of the ongoing developmental nature of the project, I would suggest, the theatrical moment served as a conduit for an explicit self-examination and self-reflection of Julie’s confidence speaking in English and self-efficacy as an academic, or, at least, her place in academia. This also ties back into the ensemble’s ongoing frustrations with the perceived repressive educational system that seems not to encourage budding ‘public’ personalities. Whatever the underlying motivations in terms of SLA, the use of a wider vocabulary and its intrinsic widening sense of expression served to demonstrate Julie’s improving self-efficacy. Adopting roles or characters to ‘try out’ various aspects of her identity in an additional language seems to have liberated and benefited Julie, at least for the duration of the project. In fact, to some degree, Julie’s experience gives credence to Grotowski’s claim that ‘[t]he creative process consists [...] in not only revealing ourselves, but in structuring what is revealed’ (Grotowski qtd. in Wolford and Schechner, 2001: 38).

So, while Julie became more confident in revealing her personality, this was structured through rehearsal of the self and thereby she controlled what she revealed about herself. Indeed, Bert States’ claim that the actor ‘is always slightly “quoting” his character [...] there is always the ghost of the self in his performance’ (1983: 360) might be applicable to Julie’s theatrical and language work during the project. This seems to be a typical aspect of group devised theatre practice. For instance, Parsons says that, during her research into group devised theatre, in her ensemble ‘the “self” was seen as raw material to be
conventionally structured, and therefore arguably homogenised, into a naturalistic character complete with a life-narrative’ (2010: 148).

In this section, I have discussed the effect of the support and interaction from the other members of the ensemble in enhancing Julie’s self-efficacy in English and her exploration of identity. Also brought into this discussion was the emergence of the challenging notion of multiple identities at work in the development of an additional language. In the opening chapter of *A Thousand Plateaus*, Deleuze and Guattari playfully explain about co-authoring a text that ‘[s]ince each of us was several, there was already quite a crowd’ (2013: 3), establishing the notion of the individual already being a form of collective, echoed in the concept of each of us having multiple identities. This idea is further examined in combination with the added layer of multilingualism in the following section.

**Since Each of Us was Several, there was Already Quite a Crowd: Multiple Identities and Multilingualism**

There were various multilingual participants in the ‘Performing Languages’ project. They were multilingual in the sense that they were fully competent or proficient in at least two languages other than their proficient levels of English. Firstly, there was Aliya, who was Italian and was fluent in French and Moroccan Arabic, as her parents grew up in Morocco and she had learned it at home (and within a Moroccan community in Italy). Federica also spoke Italian and French, and Louis spoke Alsatian, German and French to a highly proficient level; Valérie was also a German and French speaker.⁶

In the case of Aliya and her fellow Italian, Federica, this concern with multilingualism was reflected in the scenes that came out of their writing, which then

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⁶ This was common in Alsace region of France and, in fact, the *NovaTris* institute was set up with this multi-linguistic approach in mind.
became scenes in the performance through working with other members of the ensemble. For example, to create the *BASTA!!! [Stop!!!]* scene, Aliya merged her monologue with a separate scene the group had created earlier which involved a different performer each entering the stage (one after the other) playing an instrument. These instruments, at first, had some semblance of cohesion yet quickly escalated into a cacophony to which Aliya broke from her character to scream, 'Basta!', bringing the band to a halt. She then explained, directly addressing the audience, how each of the sounds of the instruments represented one of the languages that she had in her head. This was a representation of Aliya’s grappling with the various languages that she had to use in, if not her daily life, then, her various interactions throughout the week: classes and studies in English, and communicating with friends and other Italians in Italian. She lived and studied in France, though the university’s proximity to Germany resulted in her having to use German, which was humorously referenced in the scene.

The development of both Aliya and Federica’s original pieces (Federica’s scene was called *The Shades of Language*) may have cross-influenced each other as both tackled similar concerns with multilingualism. In both scenes, the nuanced effects on multilinguals and the negotiation of identity when speaking other languages were the driving theme. For example, Federica’s scene raises the issue of switching languages and there being ‘a slip, a slight change that prevents you from being the person you usually are’ (*The Shades of Language*, 2015). She also pinpoints ‘a deeper level of speech’ among ‘the shades of language’ (*The Shades of Language*, 2015). Indeed, these creative pieces hone in on and grapple with the questions and challenges raised by Claire Kramsch on the complexities and paradoxes of language learning:

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7 It should be noted that, once, after rehearsal, when Federica realised that Aliya was a native Italian speaker, their interaction moved to their shared ‘mother’ tongue.
How can I be open to other languages, worldviews, ideologies, and internalize the other in me without losing myself in the process? How can I be at once outside the phenomena that I study and part of these phenomena? This is the fundamental philosophical problem of learning someone else’s language. I am in fact both a self and an ‘other’: the other is me, I am in the other. The foreign language is there for me to appropriate, but it will never be mine, because it has always already belonged to others. (2011: 17)

A similar sentiment to Kramsch’s is put forward in the opening line of the BASTA!!! Scene, when Aliya’s character states: ‘This is what happens in my mind: the languages that I speak start arguing one against the other. They don’t agree, each one wants to lead and to control me’ (BASTA!!!, 2015). The protagonist even asks herself, ‘Why does it happen?’ and then replies, ‘It seems like there are different personalities inside me, like little me, little Aliya, each different from the other’ (BASTA!!!, 2015). This brings the sense of having multiple identities into an already complex arena that interweave around the various languages that also appear to be in conflict. This notion is further expressed later in the scene when Aliya says:

Right now, I perceive not being able to speak none of these languages!! It seems like I’m only doing noise with my voice. English feels like this horrible sound, [Louis is playing], it is unbearable! [Moving right, toward Julie] Listen to French, it is not sweeter, it has lost its magic! My German makes no sense: it is better if you don’t hear it at all! Arabic, my parents’ tongue should sounds like the harp, but it’s like bad saxophone [Valérie plays it]. (BASTA!!!, 2015)

This chaotic sensation has some respite, though as Aliya lets us know, ‘[s]ometimes everything changes and I am able to speak one or two languages well, instead of none’ (BASTA!!!, 2015). She finally resolves her quest to ‘find harmony’ by telling us:

Italian is my melody [Chloe plays violin], my powerful harmony! I have complete control over it, I’m able to do whatever I want with it! I’m confident and when I speak it, order is established in my head. No more war ... . (BASTA!!!, 2015)
While this may not appear to be an entirely positive state in regard to Aliya’s additional language development in English, the process of creating the scene does have some less obvious significance in terms of identity and the three characteristics that Norton and McKinney see as being specifically applicable to SLA. These are ‘the multiple, non-unitary nature of identity; identity as a site of struggle; and identity as changing over time’ (Norton and McKinney, 2011: 74). While the third feature is difficult to establish from Aliya’s experience, due to the relatively short length of the project, the other two have demonstrable relevance.

Aliya was clearly exploring the ‘multiple’ and ‘non-unitary’ elements of her identity, and it was apparent that this was a site of struggle connected to her use of languages. However, by acknowledging and expressing these – sometimes divisive, sometimes complex – understandings of her internal linguistic world, Aliya was concurrently finding a way to come to terms with this complexity. In creating and publicly performing, or, perhaps ‘translating’ her struggle into a piece of theatre, Aliya found that she had begun to come to terms with what Edgar Morin calls ‘the core problem of the one and the many’ (Morin qtd. in Kramsch, 2011: 17), which prior to the project, for her, had been an unacknowledged or unaddressed concern. What can be acknowledged is Deleuze’s assertion that ‘the individual is also a group’ (Deleuze and Lapoujade, 2004: 193), yet it does have implications for the collectively creating group.

In terms of being a structure to explore the notion of multiple identities, Laura Cull argues that a collective creation approach is well suited to do this (2013: 139). While Cull makes the reservation that collective creation should not necessarily be viewed as the theatrical epitome of how to approach this area, it is better suited than those more focused on the individual. She posits that:
There are forms of individual practice that reinforce the idea of the unified, artistic subject, while collective practices [...] invite their members to explore their difference from themselves as well as from one another. Collective creation is one way to directly experience ourselves as relation. (Cull, 2013: 139 italics in original)

The theatrical development of Aliya’s initial writing took the insular inward-looking thoughts via a script to a place where these complexities could be displayed and related to in an overtly physical and collective way. This enabled Aliya not only to show what she meant but also to share it. It is in this sharing – an inherent quality of friendship – that the individual in the collective is engaged and satisfies the Identity Approach’s insistence that SLA should be viewed as a sociocultural practice and ‘a relational activity’ (Norton and McKinney, 2011: 79).

This insistence reminds us that, while the process of language learning has cognitive and individual roots, it is in the social practice of language which bears fruit or, as Michael Breen proposes, ‘The language I learn in the classroom is a communal product derived through a jointly constructed process’ (1985: 149). This process which occurs in the language learning environment produces a hybrid of individual and collective, as Breen posits:

The culture of the classroom represents a tension between the internal world of the individual and the social world of the group, a recurrent juxtaposition of personal learning experiences and communal teaching-learning activities and conventions. The culture of the class has a psychological reality, a mind of its own, which emerges from this juxtaposition. (1985: 144)

Breen’s ‘culture of the classroom’ finds equivalence in the concept of ‘groupness’ and the inter-related notion of friendship discussed in the previous chapters. Building on this here, Norton argues that viewing the learning environment in this way gives a necessary framework for understanding the motivation and investment of the individual. She tells us that ‘an imagined community assumes an imagined identity, and a learner’s investment in
the target language can be understood within this context’ (Norton, 2013: 3). This is supported by Wenger’s idea of imagination as being ‘a process of expanding oneself by transcending our time and space and creating new images of the world and ourselves’ (1998: 176). This, he finds, is another integral element of community practice along with ‘engagement’, which emphasises direct involvement and tangible relationships (Wenger, 1998: 176).

Yet, in contrast to Breen, Norton’s understanding of the learning environment extends beyond the conventional classroom. She proposes that the notion of an ‘imagined community’ should consider the peripheries of the classroom and, even, beyond the classroom, which is discussed in more depth in the following section (Norton, 2001: 164). There are also implications in terms of cultural and intercultural competences. For example, Ann Axtmann suggests, ‘By listening to one another’s stories, students [...] learn to accept others by shifting their own cultural viewpoints’ (2002: 44). It is also worth noting that, rather than shifting cultural viewpoints from one fixed position to another that, during the devising process, cultural viewpoints are constantly shifting – if not set adrift, then always altering and accepted as being so. This could be readily recognised in Aliya’s situation, with her shifting from the Arab in Italy to the Italian in France to the Arabic-Italian in France as English student, and her respective relationships with other group members. And she was not alone in this. The other participants involved in the process might easily have given a list of their own set of circumstances complimentary, yet different, to Aliya’s.

Patricia White finds fraternity able to accommodate individuality and freedom positing that it has a ‘tolerance for diversity’ and while it allows for individuality, it also provides an amicable place of welcome should it be so desired (1983: 74). It could be suggested that both Julie, Federica and Aliya found the friendship or groupness of the ensemble a welcoming place where they were able to express their vulnerabilities and
negotiation of identity struggles. This is necessary as the learning of languages can be a confusing, threatening experience, as Eva Hoffman tells us of her own experience of learning English:

Since I lack a voice of my own, the voices of others invade me as if I were a silent ventriloquist. They ricochet within me, carrying on conversations, lending me their modulations, intonations, rhythms. I do not yet possess them; they possess me. But some of them satisfy a need; some of them stick to my ribs. [...] I could learn to speak a part of myself [...] Eventually, the voices enter me; by assuming them, I gradually make them mine. I am being remade, fragment by fragment, like a patchwork quilt; there are more colors in the world than I ever knew. (1998: 220)

This sentiment was echoed in the words of Federica, at the end of The Shades of Language scene when she proposed that: ‘The shades of language can’t be replaced. They add shadow to shadow but your idea, the one that was in your mind, clear, defined, will be lost forever’ (The Shades of Language, 2015).

**Eating and Shopping Together: the Bits In-between the Teeth**

If the sense of identity is somewhat blurred and complex from the perspective of the Identity Approach, another aspect of the approach also challenges the notion of where the learning process takes place, both in terms of location and the individual learner. In his work on ‘Communities of Practice’, Wenger distinguishes between peripherality and marginality (1998). This distinction is used by Norton to create an understanding that some forms of non-participation should be (somewhat paradoxically) considered to be part of the construction of identity for the additional language learner within a community, as what we do not participate in is as relevant as what we do (2001). Non-participation should not, however, be viewed in the same way as marginalisation which obstructs full participation (Norton and McKinney, 2011: 80).
Group Devised Theatre for ‘Second Language Acquisition’

For the purposes of this section, I define periphery events as notable moments that were not intended or planned as part of the main devised theatre project but were occurrences that emerged unexpectedly or came from inadvertent sources. The importance of these peripheral activities became apparent during the project’s longer weekend sessions when students would have periods where they were ‘non-active in’, rather than actively working on specific tasks. As the weekend sessions lasted six to seven hours – a lengthy period for intense creative work – the ebbs and flows of the creative process necessitated these ‘natural’ resting periods. Much of the literature in drama in additional language learning focuses on the output of the participants rather than the involvement and different understandings of participation. I argue how these moments of differing kinds of non-participation enabled a sense of comfort that led to creative output and stronger bonding of the ensemble. This provided a conductive and supportive environment for risk-taking which is an essential part of improving in an additional language – a kind of stretching to improve ‘linguistic muscle’ size and flexibility – which in turn can enable greater self-efficacy.

One of the difficulties of the research project was establishing what is included in the devising process and differentiating between when collective creation is taking place and when it is not. For example, although separate from the ‘Performing Languages’ project, because of the nature of some day-long devising sessions, the ensemble ate meals together. This is where much of the cohesiveness of the group was formed and friendships made. During these periods of eating together, the group became at ease with conversing freely in English in a ‘real’ setting, which was a main objective of the project. Because we were preparing and eating food together, the group made a couple of excursions to the local supermarket. This also had some important moments for their language development, including a sense of ease and naturalness speaking in English even in a ‘foreign’ environment. This sense of ease and confidence was demonstrated during a supermarket
visit recounted in the following vignette, which took place in a supermarket about a twenty-minute walk from the room at the university that we used for devising sessions.

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**Doing the messages**

The more famous labels are instantly recognisable, yet their ubiquity is peppered by the odd packaging of goods previously unseen to me. The experience is similar: wandering up and down overstocked aisles, confused by quantity. This type of supermarket is often found on the continent and increasingly in the UK: low-ceilinged concrete block walls; the wide-caged shelves holding oddities not groceries; winding corridors to negotiate before finding the long queues suddenly formed, surprising the customer as when they last looked there was no-one there!

And amid this a half dozen or so 20-odd-year-olds wander around. Remembering, discussing, and changing their minds. The merits of a biscuit are debated, and consideration given to the restrictive diets of the group – ‘No swine?’ ‘No, I just don’t eat meat’. They have their personal giggles between themselves as they navigate this place at once familiar – these supermarkets are common place and readily recognisable to them – and at the same time, strange – they are not used to being in this place with so many friends.

None of the group notices that they are curiosities themselves until the cashier does not understand a reply Aliya makes: the cashier speaks no English.

The group had been speaking in English throughout the shopping trip and Aliya said ‘goodbye’ to cashier in English and did not realise it until the others pointed it out.

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8 ‘The messages’ is a term used by people in Ireland and Scotland to mean shopping for groceries or doing errands.
The ensemble’s commitment to the use of English as the language of communication was evidenced in these (seemingly) peripheral events. Though I was there, my influence on this particular aspect was minimal. The participants discussed what they would buy, taking into account dietary and cultural concerns, which is, of course, to be expected. However, according to the group members, surprisingly for them the conversation in the supermarket took place in English. This was even to the extent that members spoke to the cashier in English, only to be met with bemusement, and only then realising that the nominal language in which we were devising/working had been brought into the ‘real’ world and in an unforced fashion too. This was echoed, as the group later explained to me, when the members came across each other on campus during the week. Instead of conversing in French, which is how they began talking to each other at the beginning of the project, the discussion or greetings would be in English as communicating in any other language amongst ensemble members would feel ‘unnatural’ to them – except perhaps between the two Italians, noted above.

The instances above support the assertions made by Atkinson concerning the Sociocognitive Approach, which involves ‘re-envisioning cognition as an open system—as continuously and dynamically adapting to worldly conditions [in] situated activity systems’, where learning is no longer a ‘rarefied activity’ taking place in ‘exotic locations’ (classrooms), directed by the revered (teachers) for the ‘hazy, abstract purpose’ of education (2011b: 143–144). In many ways, ensemble devising facilitates ‘re-envisioning’ and ‘adapting’ to new ways of communication while encouraging participants to become more than individuals learning a subject or language. Yet, it must be acknowledged that this was also found in the space beyond the actual creation of theatre. In this sense, some credence must be given to Maley and Kiss’s notion that ‘what is certain is that the teaching of foreign languages in schools is not the only way to learn them, and in all probability not the most

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9 One consideration was if food was Halal, for example. Others were if anyone was vegetarian or had allergies. These too were components in the ensemble getting to know each other better.
effective way either’ (2017: 56). Indeed, the educationalist, John Holt strongly asserts that the school is not the place at all for learning:

> It is as true now as it was then that no matter what tests show, very little of what is taught in school is learned, very little of what is learned is remembered, and very little of what is remembered is used. The things we learn, remember, and use are the things we seek out or meet in the daily, serious, non-school parts of our lives. (Holt qtd. in Maley and Kiss, 2017: 55)

While Holt’s dismissal of learning being achieved in schools is debatable, it does bring into focus the neglected learning space beyond the conventional classroom and school environment. From this perspective, these ventures out from the bounds of the workshop space, while perhaps initially seemingly ‘extra-curricular’, came to be real moments of bonding and integral to forming the ensemble’s identity, beyond the alternative language learning experience in the shape of the theatre project.

Along with the supermarket visits, there were the lunches that the ensemble had together that seemed to be key to the creation of the groupness discussed earlier. In fact, my field notes suggest even more so: ‘[...] the lunch break morphs from a perfunctory event to almost imperceptively produce intimacy unhinted at in the theatre work’ (Scally, 2015). If this were entirely the case though, the proposal could be made to just dispense with the theatre and go shopping and eat together. However, I would suggest that a mutual relationship existed in the play-off between the ‘work’ we engaged in with theatre and drama and the ‘free time’ of shopping, food preparation and ‘breaking of bread’. The theatrical activity provided the stimulus for discussions around identity and increased intimacy in the physicality of the activities. While Maley and Kiss suggest ‘the richest potential for creative language use emerges from socio-cultural and intimate domains’ they also point out the problem of how this is to be done (2017: 72). Although the meals together and shopping trips were not part of the initial objectives of the project, the ensemble
Group Devised Theatre for ‘Second Language Acquisition’

devising process creates a structure that allows for ancillary events and occasions to become part of the process. This, in turn, enriches the sense of groupness and friendship. There were, of course, other moments in which the group felt themselves become closer, yet, the meal times and shopping trips, along with other instances where we left the usual location of the workshop, provided a tangible sense of togetherness; we were a group. And through being in that group, bearing in mind the engendering of a sense of self-efficacy through the success of others, the individual’s self-efficacy in the target language was strengthened. It could also be said that the target language of English became the lingua franca to voice the ensemble’s identity.

In the post-project interview, Federica pointed out the ‘influence of eating’ (Federica, 2015), stressing the importance of mealtimes, with her sense of herself and her culture reflected in the matter-of-fact statement regarding this discussion: ‘I’m Italian!’ (Federica, 2015). She believed that ‘sharing a meal strengthened the group relationship’ because it was ‘not just working together, but also sharing something else. Sharing our pause [break] together’ (Federica, 2015). These breaks, or times away from the ‘work’ of devising were also where Federica found that the ensemble could get to 'know each other better […] and strengthened the relationship between the people in the room’ (Federica, 2015). Louis found the meals to be a source of inspiration, especially for the development of his piece of writing for the show. Initially, he did not want too much text as his preference was for physical theatre (more than speaking) though later he was content with having worked on scripting the scenes, finding that ideas and content about studies and work defining a person, came about ‘from the fact that we were just chatting a lot together […] during meals […] for example we chatted about your way of working […] and our, I dunno, studies and stuff like this’ (Louis, 2015). Chloe also pointed out that ‘a few ideas come up through eating [together]’ (Chloe, 2015). Julie also emphasised the important aspect of

For example, the group had to rehearse in public (outside in the street) – in the periphery of the project’s own initial space.
chatting at break times or over meals, telling me that even if the workshops had been held elsewhere – a place with cafes or restaurants, for example – that ‘I think we would have still ate together’ (Julie, 2015). Though of course a moot point, it does however stress the importance that the ensemble placed upon this aspect of the project. So much so, that eating together over a lengthy period of time (an hour to an hour and a half) seemed essential, even when we were under pressure to create and develop the show. Perhaps, this is where the ensemble recognised itself as a community of practice, allowing the participants to appreciate the activities we did as conduits for learning, while also seeing the learning situated in a real world context.

As we were clearing away plates and utensils towards the end of one of the lunches, Aliya announced to everyone: ‘Back to work!’ . This was interesting in that she saw the collaborative creative and, by extension, educative practice in this way. However, it also indicates that there was a clear division between what she saw as effort and ease. Aliya’s call to return to work, jolted me into realising that the group had been progressing in a different way and not only in the morning session, but at lunch too, in that they had become much more relaxed about interacting in the target language outside of the notional ‘learning time’. The actualisation of this seemed to be very surprising for the group. For example, Louis stated, ‘I am quite amazed that we ended up talking English in the supermarket […] because it’s not a French people thing’ (Louis, 2015). When I asked what he meant by that statement, he told me that after the English classes, ‘the French [students] speak French directly [straight away]’ (Louis, 2015). These interchanges in English while sharing a meal or shopping indicate how the participants had a depth of appreciation for each other and this, in turn, allowed each member to feel more comfortable revealing different parts of themselves.
I have argued in this chapter that group devised theatre provides a conductive environment and framework for language acquisition. It contains many, if not most, of the elements found in classroom learning, while providing additional elements that the classroom tends to lack, or perhaps more fairly stated, that its conventions deem unimportant. Group devised theatre offers space for collaborative learning and for individuals to navigate an identity both inside and outside of the process. In Catherine Wallace’s words, offering learners ‘a potentially powerful identity outside the classroom as well as within it’ (2003: 200). Following Rancière’s claim that, ‘Universal teaching belongs to families’ (1991: 103), I put forward the idea that group devised theatre and creative collaboration can provide a form of supportive and caring community of language learning practice. This, in turn, creates a receptive environment for emotional engagement that is needed for the learner to grow into a new language. Indeed, as suggested by the linguist David Block, it can support the development of identity framed by, ‘ongoing narratives, individually performed, interpreted and projected in dress, bodily movement action and language formation itself’ (2007: 32).

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11 Wallace sees methodologies such as communicative language teaching and task-based learning as ‘domesticating’, instructing learners to conform to dominant cultures without questioning or given any agency to alter dominant discourses (2003:200).
Chapter Eight

Messing It Up As We Go Along

... what is essential is invisible to the eye.

The Fox to the Little Prince
in Antoine de Saint-Exupery’s tale (1991: 68)

In the previous chapters in Part Two, I included instances, captured in vignettes, that represented important moments in the language development for the individuals and the ensemble. Here, I add to the initial readings of these instances and also draw on other, less immediately relevant, parts of the ‘Performing Languages’ research project. This is to qualify any claims I have made about the insights and discoveries that I have highlighted. It is also to acknowledge that the additional language learning experience cannot be delineated in one ideal moment. In this chapter, I present a fuller picture of the additional language development that took place during the project. This view takes into consideration that learning can be forgotten, unravelled or merely unimpressive to either the observer or the learner themselves, which, I propose, is essential to understanding the common experience of an additional language learner as one of uncertainty and messiness.

In the next section, ‘Allowing for Uncertainty’, I describe ‘the usefulness of mess’ (Hughes et al., 2011) to give a more complete representation of the research of the devised theatre process and addition language development which took place in the ‘Performing Languages’ project. In the following section, ‘Mastery of Mess’, I present how the notion of ‘mess’ has validity as a method for research in this area in comparison to more mainstream assessments of language learning. The following and concluding section, ‘Doing the Thing You’re Doing When You’re Not Doing the Thing You’re Doing’, revisits some of the
moments discussed in the previous chapters, along with instances that sit awkwardly in the research.

Before continuing this chapter on the application or usefulness of the notion of mess to language learning, I relate an anecdote from my personal language acquisition experience. It backgrounds my own bias or perspective as a teacher-facilitator and indicates the ephemeral nature and unpredictable occurrence of moments that demonstrate apparent progress in language development.

One evening, maybe a decade and a half ago, I sat watching television in the living room of my apartment in Spain. I was watching a film in English. I could do this as there was a DUAL system in place which allowed the viewer to choose to watch an original language version or one dubbed in Spanish if broadcast in the DUAL system. At that time, Spanish television had lengthy advertisement breaks which could last for 20 minutes or more. This meant that the viewer could avoid watching the adverts and the ad breaks were sometimes spent preparing a meal, popping out to nearby shops and if someone remained in the room, ‘zapping’ (channel hopping).

Zapping, though, also meant that the DUAL system would revert to the default broadcast: the dubbed version. This must have taken place as it was maybe half an hour into the next part of the film before something was said that I did not understand. It was not mumbled or garbled dialogue, but an entire phrasing that flummoxed me. There was an instance of confusion followed at once by the comprehension that I had been listening to the film in Spanish without realising it and without conscious effort. The feeling was such that I remember the elation to this day, unexpected as it was.
This instance of my Spanish language development could be taken as a moment of epiphany and a staging post of mastery in bringing the target language fully under my control, evidencing Bandura's notion of the mastery experience discussed in the introduction chapter. To a certain extent, this is how I felt, and the moment was memorable enough to demonstrate its importance for me, yet it does not capture the entirety of my experience with Spanish. It denotes nothing of the uneven, unbalanced, non-linear development that would be a truer picture; it was a zenith that could be counterpointed by an array of nadirs. This was merely the most memorable of many moments of realisation that I knew more than I thought and of course it was surrounded by many other moments when I would comprehend much less and feel more like the person, previously mentioned in chapter two, who said, 'So I cried, not for the food, but because I was unable to express myself in English' (Garrett, 2006: 5). Anecdotes containing instances of similar deep frustration and disappointment exist for most language learners, though, understandably, are infrequently written about as researchers, like myself, tend toward recording the positive and concrete instances of our methods producing results. What is missed, then, is the mundanity and repetition, the graft and slog of additional language development for adults. This is what makes up the brunt of the experience and what constitutes the indefinability and messiness of the process; perhaps, as indicated in the title of this chapter, additional language development can be understood as continuously messing it up as we go along.

**Allowing for Uncertainty**

When I began my research, the notion of ‘unfinishedness’ came to the fore, as outlined in the literature review chapter in part one. This idea has subtly altered over the course of the research to become more aligned with ‘uncertainty’ and ‘messiness’. This is not to say that the initial idea does not have a relation to the conceptual framework I work
with in this chapter, and the systems of understanding put forward by Complexity Approach theorists stress the importance of unfinishedness. However, ‘unfinalizability’, to use Bakhtin’s synonym, connotes something more linear with an ultimate point to be reached, which does not map as well onto the reality of language learning as ‘mess’. Therefore, I argue that an understanding of mess in relation to language development means that language learners are not regarded as, ‘incomplete and deficient’ (Larsen-Freeman, 2017: 18).

Yet ‘mess’ as a concept is disturbing. It connotes slackness and disorder giving the impression of negligence and lies contrary to the researcher and writer’s obligation to clarity. What I mean, though, by using mess as a method applied to SLA is not in the sense of unfathomability, but as one that depicts an understanding of language development conceptually distinct from the linear, building block-like notions championed by conventional language learning institutions. Development is not immune to regression and, counterintuitively, progress sometimes comes amid loss. By loss, I mean various forms of loss such as ‘at a loss’, ‘a loss of what you already learnt’, or even losing your own language. Mess, for this thesis, is a setting where language development encompasses both failure and success simultaneously, recognising that they are both momentary imposters on a complex canvas.

The notion of mess has proved useful to various fields and my thesis addresses three of these: Applied Theatre, SLA and the field of research. In Applied Theatre, several writers have discussed the related concepts of ‘mess’, ‘uncertainty’ and ‘incompleteness’, such as James Thompson concerning ‘bewilderment’ and ‘difficultness’, Joe Winston on ‘uncertainty’ and Catherine McNamara, Jenny Kidd, and Jenny Hughes with ‘mess’. Thompson has explored this idea through his concepts of ‘bewilderment’ (2003) which informs his later notion of ‘difficultness’, defined as ‘incompleteness: an avoidance of neat
Addressing the wider educational field, Winston has argued for ‘the values of uncertainty’ (2010: 5). He points out that when the ‘certainties’ are examined beyond the rhetorical assertions, ‘the hubris at the heart of their visions’ is revealed in the ‘rhetoric of educational policy makers’, further stressing that ‘their certainties reveal themselves as vacuous’ (Winston, 2010: 5). Among his proposals for ‘underlying principles to inform our pedagogy’ (2010: 53), Winston endorses an approximation of ‘negative capability’ – a phrase from the poet, Keats – where one is ‘capable of being in uncertainties, mysteries, doubts, without any irritable reaching after fact or reason’ (Keats qtd. in Winston, 2010: 54), which, as he observes, sharply contrasts with mainstream, contemporary educational practice. McNamara, Kidd, and Hughes’s contribution is included in the following section.

A sense of unfinishedness in additional language development is embraced by theorists engaged with Complexity Theory (for example, Larsen-Freeman, 2006b, 2011, 2017; Kramsch, 2011; Ortega and Han, 2017). Indeed, Larsen-Freeman has stressed this in various formulations informing us that: ‘development is never complete’ (2011: 58); ‘There is no end and there is no state’ (2006a: 189); and ‘Language and its learning have no endpoints. Both are unbounded’ (2017: 27). In fact, Larsen-Freeman posits that the very notion of a target end-state is theoretically untenable, arguing that ‘when we entertain a view of language as a dynamic complex adaptive system [...] we recognize that every use of language changes its resources, and the changed resources are then available for use in the next speech event’ (2006a: 194–5). These changes in language development are subject to unexpected routes, ‘structuring and structured by its environment’ (Kramsch, 2011: 11). Furthermore, as Kramsch points out, the environment:

[...] means not only the geographical space and the social situation in which learning takes place and communication unfolds, but also memories of past

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1 Larsen-Freeman is speaking here of ‘potential’.
interactions, expectations of future ones, imagined exchanges and fantasy worlds (2011: 11).

These types of instances appeared during the ‘Performing Languages’ project and selected examples are discussed in the context of ‘mess’ later in this chapter. Some of these have been discussed earlier, such as when the group were not actively engaged in creating theatre during breaks, or when we were ‘outside’ the ensemble devising environment. Along with these instances, there were the occasions when theatre activity was taking place that I did not directly observe. An example of this was when Louis and Valérie created their ‘fantasy world’ of puppetry in the target language at home when further developing and rehearsing the *Puppets and Prometheus* scene. Also, beyond ‘the geographical space’ for learning was the establishment of a Facebook group that the students created on an *ad hoc* basis which facilitated both the creative process outside of the workshop and encouraged the use of informal writing in the target language. There were, also, times when it appeared that nothing was happening within the ensemble devising environment, which prior to this project I may have dismissed as irrelevant or unfavourable evidence of failure in my theatre or language teaching practice. However, using sociologist John Law’s thinking on this subject, these instances and others that I have already discussed can be reassessed within the context of the messier panorama of language learning. Doing this, I can tend to, what Law regards as, the real negligence of research which is the omission of the grey or, perhaps, as useful insights are revealed, ‘rainbow’ areas. Law’s explanation of observing social phenomenon can help us to understand this application of mess to language development:

Maybe we were dealing with a slippery phenomenon, one that changed its shape, and was fuzzy around the edges. Maybe we were dealing with something that wasn’t definite. That didn’t have a single form. A fluid object. Or even one

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2 The idea of calling grey areas ‘rainbow’ areas was one suggested to me by a former student.
that was ephemeral in any given form, flipping from one configuration to another, dancing like a flame. (2007: 5)

The analysis and discussion of instances from the ‘Performing Languages’ research project in the rest of this chapter, in terms of the notion of mess, gives an understanding of language learning as a shape-shifting, fractious, fluid and blurry undertaking. The next section suggests embracing messiness in language development in contrast to conventional, textbook-based pedagogy and challenges the clear-cut definitions made in such systems.

Mastery of Mess

It might seem incompatible, paradoxical even, to discuss the benefits for self-efficacy, motivation and investment, given a proposed context of uncertainty. Yet, this section describes how the creation of theatre is compatible to this, and that conventional notions of surety and concrete objectives have their own open-endedness. I examine how the ensemble devising process served as a foil for making meaning in this way. This is in agreement with Nicholson’s proposal that ‘the complexity and messiness of theatre-making can produce new patterns of knowledge, unexpected insights as well as creative moments of unknowingness and confusion’ (2011: 9–10). By applying this understanding to additional language development, conventional notions of mastery and control in SLA can be replaced by a sense of unfinshedness and acceptance of messiness. This does not mean that objectives are abandoned or that learners cannot achieve proficiency in an additional language – far from it. Furthermore, it must be noted that, I am not recommending that learning be instilled with uncertainty, somehow destabilising the learning process; rather it is the contrary: I see the ensemble devising process as a practice that encompasses the messy realities of learning which encourages the emergence and development of language.

Here, I return to the notion of emergence that I discussed in chapter six, ‘The Individual in the Collective’. Its importance to the Complexity Approach was noted and it
also has an affinity with the concept of mess. Emergence, with the sense of something not yet being fully formed, or, indeed, being constantly in the process of being formed and re-formed provides a perspective that captures the sense of language learning which is not immediately clear and apparent. Larsen-Freeman offers the analogy of a flock of birds which is ‘a new, higher order pattern created from the interaction of individual birds in interaction with their environment’ that cannot be explained in terms of specific and discrete elements (2017: 15). These patterns and shapes of language emerge ‘without direction from external factors and without a plan of the order embedded in any individual component’ (Mitchell qtd. in Larsen-Freeman 2017, 15). This, coincidentally, aligns with the closing scene from the performance, *The Flocking Dance* scene, which was developed from a theatre exercise. The exercise begins with each participant creating a series of four or five gestures that are linked together as a ‘movement’. Then in the spirit of a flock of birds the performers position themselves in a pyramid system with one person initially leading. Without having to learn the ‘migration of gesture’ (Noland and Ness, 2008: x), those behind the leader follow the leader in recreating the series of gestures.\(^3\) These may be close representations or merely loose impressions depending on the size, shape and visibility of the movements. After a sequence has run at least once, someone from the group of performers offers to take the lead by moving forward and ‘replacing’ them at the front of the flock, which is repeated by other fellow performers. Alternately, if a gesture, like a turn, shifts the ensemble meaning that the group aligns itself anew behind someone say at the side or back of the group, then this person takes the lead. From an improvisational exercise, a coherent ‘piece’ can be created in a brief amount of time. It need not be rehearsed and, anyway, can never truly be replicated in quite the same way. I now present a vignette of *The Flocking Dance* scene.

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\(^3\) Here, Noland follows Adorno in that she interprets gestures *migrating* and creating, ‘unexpected combinations, new valences, and alternative cultural meanings and experiences’ (2008: x).
Flocking

Stage lights dim

Silhouettes on the stage

falling back and stepping up

An individual arm outstretched,

echoed by the arms of the collective

the group sing along

together

Swaying and turning

and in the gentle to-ing and fro-ing

(the group held lights which accentuated this)

a sense of tenderness or cariño

as they fade away

off stage

lights

I include this vignette as it represents an understanding of the project in several ways, for example, the individual experiencing being part of the ensemble, collectively creating. Here, the group artistically demonstrated the sensation of moving together in a form of ‘groupness’. We see the individual working within the collective. We also see the group responding and supporting the temporary lead – in the exercise you have an idea of what the leader is doing but rather than copying exactly you give your approximation of it, echoing, imitating, but also ‘owning’ it, cultivating the emergence of expression and, by extension, language.

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4 Cariño is a Spanish word that is difficult to fully translate and is found somewhere between care, tenderness and caress; an endearment, fondness and kindliness.
The scene also serves to foreground this chapter’s argument of understanding that what was happening, following Law’s terms above, was indefinite, had multiple forms, and, was a ‘fluid object’. As flocking stands as a metaphor for complexity theory, it can also do the same for the potentialities of creativity, which Larsen-Freeman sees as a way to emancipate the language learner (2012b: 304). In *The Flocking Dance* scene, this is found in the gesture altering each time to develop into something new within the confines of the understood, yet slightly differently, accommodating non-conformity, where ‘the act of playing the game has a way of changing the rules’ (James Gleick qtd. in Larsen-Freeman, 2012b: 304). These alterations are similar to the use of language in social interactions and exchanges where interlocutors ‘realign’ themselves repeatedly. The interactions can be clear enough, yet the complexities behind decisions of when to speak, or when not, and the reasons for doing so are hidden and difficult to pin down with any exactitude.

In another way, *The Flocking Dance* scene stands in counterpoint with the *Un, deux, trois, Soleil!* scene to represent the ‘Performing Languages’ project. The scenes had similarities in the sense of flocking in the closing scene and the students emerging from the audience in the lecture hall seats, both without, in Larsen-Freeman’s terms, any ‘plan of order’ nor ‘direction from external factors’, yet, somehow working together as a collective. There is also a comparable element of overt physicality as language learners communicating and interacting. Yet, they also contrasted: scrambling gave way to flow, protest became acceptance. Again, this reflects the incertitudes and contradictions of the language learning process and the difficulties that arise in designating moments to reflect this experience.\(^5\)

Returning to the first point, the individual working in the collective where the participants’ gestures were sometimes only ‘approximations’ has parallels with a learner

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\(^{5}\) Robert Burns refers to capturing moments as, ‘You seize the flower, its bloom is shed’ (Tam O’Shanter).
formulating something in an additional language. Building competence and stronger self-efficacy can only come by developing resilience in uncertain circumstances. As self-efficacy needs the acknowledgement and allowance of mistakes, making errors, while recognising them, is an integral part of additional language development. Once recognised as such, the conceptualisation of these moments as ‘failures’, meaning ‘inability to do something’, dissolves. Errors or missteps are recognised as such, yet, are also interpreted as forming the landscape of an unfamiliar linguistic atlas. I maintain that it is when you are relaxed in uncertainty that allows a developing speaker to be more assured and self-efficacious.

Uncertainty, though, can cause anxiety, which Stephen Krashen has identified as one of the affective filters that can mean a decreased ability to acquire the target language (Krashen, 1982; Higgs and Krashen, 1983). In fact, uncertainty and anxiety would be most people’s emotional state when acquiring a new language, if, as Vivian Cook suggests, ‘learning an L2 [second language] is not just the adding of rooms to your house by building an extension at the back: it is the rebuilding of all the internal walls’ (2001: 408). Given this ominous undertaking, it is understandable that learners are attracted to assurances and regulations. Indeed, notions of mastery and control inform the mainstream theories of language learning with even outmoded and disproved concepts, such as universal grammar, being deeply ingrained in the practice of language teaching (Larsen-Freeman, 2012a; Larsen-Freeman and Anderson, 2013). This is made manifest in accreditation given by English as a Foreign Language examining boards and their assessment of language ability that promise ‘a clear path to improve language skills’ (Cambridge Assessment website, n.d.) while professing their influence on educational policy (Cambridge Assessment brochure, 2017: 3).

These notions of mastery and control are also enshrined in perhaps the most influential document in the field of language teaching and learning in Europe, ‘The

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6 ‘Cambridge Assessment is the brand name of the University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate’ (Cambridge Assessment website, n.d.)
Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) for Languages: Learning, teaching, assessment’ (Council of Europe, 2011), which sets standards for European language programmes (Schmenk, 2004). To standardise language assessment these institutions require measurable units which ‘seek to offer criteria that do not clash with subjective, political, cultural or ideological views of the various EU members (curriculum designers, language teachers, textbook authors, etc.)’ (Schmenk, 2004: 9). The measurable units allow official recognition and grant or exclude a form of validity to learners, teachers and institutions (Council of Europe, 2011). With these amulets of linguistic credibility many things can be bestowed on the bearer: entry into the realms of higher education in a foreign land; a position in a high-paying global corporation; a visa to a life in a new country. Therefore, many additional language learners will have learnt to measure their ability in an additional language in terms of the CEFR, or a similar framework. Indeed, I have done so myself, for example, when giving indications of student language levels in this thesis. So, from the perspective of mutual official recognition, it is laudable, that such a framework for measurability and comparability exists and has clear parameters.

With this in mind, blurry (and strange and scary) concepts like unfinishedness, uncertainty and mess might be less immediately appealing than the concrete nature of official approval and the ‘can do project’ (Council of Europe, 2011). The naming of the project in this way builds on one aspect of the CEFR which is the ‘can-do statements’. Using these statements as a gauge, learners can assess their level in the framework which ranges from A1 to C2. An example of one of these statements would be at A1 level: ‘Can produce simple mainly isolated phrases about people and places’ (Council of Europe, 2011: 58). While the statements are only one aspect of the overall framework, their prominence has meant that they have come to represent the entire CEFR scheme (Heyworth, 2004). Yet, when

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7 For assessments (and indictments of varying degree) of the implications of this framework see: Bausch, Karl-Richard; Christ, Herbert; Königs, Frank; Krumm, 2003; Schmenk, 2004; Huhta, 2012:3–5.
reaching the more proficient levels, the ‘can-do statements’ are not so clear cut. Here, the
detail that was so exact at the lower levels becomes less so and more blurry (Huhta, 2012).

This has a correlation with how the participants of the project felt about their ability
in English. Although already proficient and fluent, they still perceived themselves as
‘lacking’ in some way and, therefore, the building (and maintaining) of self-efficacy for
advanced adult learners is just as important as for those beginning their additional language
development. Complexity Approach advocates would also dispute any claims that the ‘can
do’ statements are able to provide a clearly demarcated conceptualisation of language
development. For example, Larsen-Freeman views ‘language as a complex adaptive system’
(2017: 18). Further to this, Kramsch also explains how ‘[l]anguage learning is neither
cumulative nor additive: when you add one piece, the rest changes and the whole thing
needs to be resignified and restructured’ (2011: 12). This stresses the elusive nature of
language in development. Viewed this way, at best, we can only capture an act of language
in movement, in a blur, as the complex system of language means there are no distinct
boundaries or configurations. According to the Complexity Theory Approach, language is
dynamic rather than static. It exists in the flow or flux between elements of language rather
than in ‘measurable units’ from which standpoint learners are regarded ‘as moving linearly
between a state of non-knowledge to a state of knowledge slowly approximating the native
speaker’ (Kramsch, 2011: 11). From this perspective, when we discuss language development,
we must widen the scope of what that is, beyond components such as grammar and
vocabulary, even beyond merely the perspective of individual differences in learners, which
has already been the subject of much investigation (Robinson, 2002; Dörnyei and Skehan,

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8 J. Charles Alderson, citing David Little’s analysis (Little, 2007), also tells us that ‘the methodologies
being used are unclear or suspect’ seeming not to take into account SLA research, and claims that the
‘project is flawed in that it draws almost entirely from the Cambridge Learner Corpus, which is a
As James Lantolf and Steven Thorne have identified, Sociocultural Theory maintains that ‘the individual emerges from social action and as such is always fundamentally a social being’ (2007: 213). While learners’ motivation and investment, along with their cognitive and social identities, are important, these elements must be considered within ‘the whole ecology of learning’ (Kramsch, 2011: 12). Kramsch sees this as incorporating ‘the learner in interaction with current others (teacher, textbook, fellow learners, native speakers), with absent or with past others (through texts), with his/her perceptions of present and past others, of past and present selves, and with whole discourses about the language, its speakers, its writers and the ideologies and worldviews they vehiculate’ (2011: 12–13).

Kramsch also views the language learning process as undetermined explaining that ‘[a]n ecological approach to language education does not seek dialectical unity, or bounded analyses of discrete events, but on the contrary, open-endedness and unfinalizability’ (2009b: 247 italics in original). This ‘ecological approach’ is very much akin to that of Complexity Theory approach put forward by Larsen-Freeman, Kramsch herself, and others (Kramsch, 2009b).

If we are to view the ‘whole ecology’ though we would do well to heed Law’s assertion that, ‘[a]ll that is being said is that matters are relational: what is being made and gathered is in a mediated relation with whatever is absent, manifesting a part while Othering most of it’ (Law, 2004: 146). Therefore, it is important to include the commonly omitted representations of seeming lack of progress and, to use Law’s phrase, ‘whatever is absent’. This helps to form a more representative picture of both the devising and language learning processes where, although, these processes are constantly dynamic, it is not always manifestly so. It also means that we must look at ‘all the unclassifiable bits and pieces that seem to take up so much time’ (Law, 2004: 106). This interfaces with the concept of a

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9 ‘Complexity Theory fosters an ecological perspective: Rather than seeking a dialectical unity, it recognizes an open-endedness and unfinalizability’ (paraphrasing Kramsch, 2009, 247 Larsen-Freeman, 2017: 31).
‘practised methodology’ proposed by McNamara, Kidd, and Hughes, which endeavours to find ‘usefulness’ in ‘the negative, confounding, discarded or ignored moments of practice that do not readily ‘fit’ into a preconceived, intentional schema of research’ (2011: 191).

Descriptions of such moments in the devising process of the ‘Performing Languages’ project, when it appeared that nothing was happening, or participants did not seem to be engaging with either the creative process, follow in the next section. Such instances culminated in me having to reconsider or reframe my own theoretical and practical knowledge; it was not just the complex nature of language development or the devising process that were messy, but also those difficult moments when explicit learning was ‘absent’ or instances when ‘outside’ influences duly became part of the whole devising and language learning process.

These elements add difficult terrain and topology to the more straight-forward roads and lanes that were my initial research inquiry. This is ‘the principle of decomposition’, using McNamara, Kidd, and Hughes’s term, which describes moments in practice and research ‘when encounters with the silences, disruptions or contradictions in experiences of participants confound, delay, surprise or obstruct the play of discursive process and creative activity of research’ (2011: 207). They see this, along with the principles of artistry and improvisation, as forming a ‘practised method’ (Hughes et al., 2011: 188 italics in original). This encourages me to offer insights from difficult, slippery or absent parts of the project in this thesis that I might have omitted to accompany and afford a deeper understanding of the ‘moments of change’ that have been discussed in previous chapters and, in this way, see a ‘mastery’ of mess.

**Doing the Thing You’re Doing When You’re Not Doing the Thing You’re Doing**

This section is split between two subsections. The first one again looks at the moments from the ‘Performing Languages’ project that I analysed and discussed in the
previous chapters, only this time I apply the notion of ‘mess’, so a more complex conception and understanding can be realised. The second section takes, if not random (I specifically choose these instances) then notional, instances that sit awkwardly in the research and do not allow my practice to rest at ease.

The elision of disparate influences and ideas that can sometimes contradict or confuse is perplexing, though a possible way to do this has been put forward by Sally Mackey (2016). She has suggested conceiving the disparate voices and actions within applied theatre practice through the metaphor of ‘polyphonic conversations’ (Mackey, 2016: 487), embracing ‘an ecumenical pluralism of people and concepts’ (Mackey, 2016: 489). This endeavour emanates from Hughes, Kidd, and McNamara’s challenge for practitioners to ‘implement reflexive and critical research methods’ in response to ‘commitments to […] an emancipatory politics of practice’ (2011: 186). Mackey suggests the concept of polyphonic conversations serves to conflate ‘a constant, ongoing, fluid, mobile conversation among practice, theory, reflection and action’ (2016: 488). For her, ‘The four conceits are interdependent, often simultaneous and non-hierarchical. A polyphonous conversation implies overlapping and concurrent voices’ (Mackey, 2016: 488).

Mackey further posits that this can mean one of the conceits takes priority or is ‘heard’ more at different points and that these ‘varied conjunctions are entirely appropriate in a process of polyphonic conversation’ (2016: 489). She also identifies three opportunities to add to the discussion on practical research (Mackey, 2016: 487), which situates the ‘Performing Languages’ project as particularly apt for interpretation as a polyphonic conversation. These aspects I have already addressed to some extent in the previous chapters. A ‘focus of the research enquiry [on] other people, engaged in arts practice’ (Mackey, 2016: 487) was seen in the participants of the Ensemble Firefly creating a performance. The ensemble’s collective creative practice sometimes stemming from a piece
presented by an individual and developed as an ensemble or a more improvised creation correlates with ‘research processes are shared with many voices contributing in co-creation processes with concomitant questions around ‘authorship” (Mackey, 2016: 487). Mackey also identifies that ‘with many inputting to the research journeys, there are negotiations of power and hierarchies of knowledge’ (2016: 487). This was seen in the earlier discussions on the negotiation of leadership, with the examination of the role of the ‘ignorant facilitator’ and the individuals (with multiple identities) in the collective.

In the following sections, the concept of polyphonic conversations is helpful to understand my practice in the ‘Performing Languages’ project, but I would also like to use the notion to highlight the complexities that need to be recognised in additional language development, discussed in the previous section. What I aim to do next is to draw various perspectives into a polyphonic conversation: the ‘moments of change’ or apparent epiphanies with those of disorientation or in Thompson’s terminology, ‘bewilderment’, the tangible with the ephemeral.

**Doing the Thing You’re Doing**

If we look at the moments that I draw on in the previous chapters, using the lens of mess, these instances take on a different hue. I have already identified certain findings that support several arguments that I make. This includes taking moments that I considered apt or pertinent to demonstrate the growing self-efficacy in SLA of the project participants. As the discussion in the previous sections and chapters has argued however, the position of the language learner is never static, even in each moment there can be a discrepancy in the view of themselves or the language learning process. This process, like ensemble devising, is a messy, never fully finished business. If we return to look at these instances from a perspective of ‘mess’, a fuller and more complex understanding can be made.
My first example was the post-performance workshops, where participants led activities we used in the devising process with the audience after the final performances. As I explained, I was unable to take part in or observe these workshops – I was ‘absent’ from the practice – and, therefore, I relied entirely on the responses of the participants and their perception of events. Mackey’s highlighting of the question of ‘authorship’ of research is pertinent here. She points out, ‘The researcher ‘authors’ the research ideas; the participants might not be co-authors, perhaps, but certainly they comprehensively inhabit the research findings. Knowledge production is therefore shared – and complex’ (Mackey, 2016: 486). In this instance, the ensemble members were the co-producers with the workshop participants of ‘shared knowledge production’ in the use of applied theatre practice. As I was not explicitly part of the event, I participated in this extension of the research only by proxy; the participants told me about what went well and what did not, yet, the workshops were still a mini-case study that were unseen by me.

A similar issue is highlighted in the ancillary undertakings throughout the project when rehearsals would take place at home or an individual writing a treatment for a scene in their own time. It could also be, from a language development perspective, when a participant practised a phrase, showed self-efficacy or adopted a new posture when speaking the target language acquired during the project, yet, used in another context or environment. This is a quandary raised by working alongside other systems, approaches and exposures with the same aim in mind of learning a language. If the learner is concurrently experiencing teaching at a university, is involved in an extra-curricular project, or is watching films and reading, for example, in the target language, there will be substantial overlap; distinguishing what theatre activities gave to the students, that other learning/educative or experiential activity/processes did not, can be challenged or is decorated with caveats. How can the researcher truly tell? How can even the learner tell when the learning experience overlaps?
Akin to this, is the experience of group devised theatre where ‘experiences in the rehearsal room are difficult to articulate and require translation, or even reduction, through terms or concepts that may, in some devising situations, not translate back again into practice’ (Parsons, 2010: 110). This can be seen in things intricately related to the process, yet happen outside the rehearsal room or in the even messier peripheries discussed in following section where I attempt to use the notion of mess to provide the ‘theoretical constructs configured to aid critical analysis of this highly organic, often intellectually elusive, practice’ (Parsons, 2010: 110). In fact, Heddon and Milling suggest that the practice of devising is ‘continually forgotten’ with documentation proving less than adequate as ‘narrative does not accumulate an explanation of how work was made’ (2006: 23). This is further complicated by the ‘constant folding and faulting of influence and inspiration that is practice and production and documentation’ (Pearson qtd. in Heddon and Milling, 2006: 24), which in turn problematizes any findings that emanate from using group devised theatre for SLA. However, notwithstanding this, complexity is to be embraced because, as I have demonstrated earlier, discrete insights and findings can be made while acknowledging that they may not encompass the entirety of the process. This conflates with the understanding of language learning from the perspective of the Complexity Approach.

Something similar can be said in respect to the theme of identity and the cases of Julie, Federica and Aliya discussed in the previous chapter, ‘Voicing Identity’ and the, sometimes, conflicting features of multilingualism and multi-identities highlighted by the process and performance of the three scenes of which they were the protagonists, Julieism, BASTA!!!, and The Shades of Language. The sometimes chaotic sensations mentioned in the previous chapter, ‘Voicing Identity’, may denote the ‘site of struggle’ (Norton and McKinney, 2011: 74) for those identities yet perhaps those struggles are part of the forming of a future self, conducted through dramatic performance. In these scenes, a personal and perhaps intra-personal ‘conversation’ can be seen akin to the effect of the environment in
Kramsch’s ‘expectations of future ones, imagined exchanges and fantasy worlds’, mentioned above. Thought of in this way, by allowing identities a focused or constrained form of expression (in this case in the form of a script and performance), language learners can explore future potentialities, as Norton and Toohey explain, ‘anticipating that they will acquire a wider range of symbolic and material resources, which will in turn enhance their conception of themselves and their desires for the future’ (2003: 69). Capturing this fleetingness of identities in conversation, and, even, the imaginings of future selves in the performances, did show how the participants saw their identities working together, yet, I can only surmise that resilience and potential future self-efficacy was built through the creative process and then practised in everyday interactions and exchanges.

... When You’re Not Doing the Thing You’re Doing

Often in educational settings, while a student is learning, it is also important that they are seen to be learning. In turn, in researching learning, it follows that this kind of learning can be tracked and fully documented. This, though, overestimates the importance of ‘class time’ as much language development actually takes place beyond the actual classroom (van Lier, 1988; Hellebrandt and van Lier, 1990; Lightbown and Spada, 2006; Ortega and Han, 2017). As Larsen-Freeman identifies: ‘Unlike other school subjects, languages can be readily learned outside of classrooms, and furthermore, the proficiency that can come with learning a language in the world is often seen as the standard of mastery for the subject in the classroom’ (2008: 163). This is demonstrable in that if a student leaves a classroom in a country, especially where the target language is spoken, then they are exposed to that language in multifarious manners. Media, the internet, computer and video games, and watching the television (as mentioned in the previous chapter) can be influential. So too can everyday interactions involving the practice of everyday life from conversations with friends and colleagues, giving directions in the street, seeing a band or a
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play, a transaction in a corner shop or meetings in the workplace. In this regard, the classroom time would do well to succeed in being as influential and cram in as much as what might lie beyond its boundaries. In a system where the classroom is the hub of all learning, if we follow Rancière and Freire’s arguments about a ‘master explicator’ and the ‘banking’ notion of knowledge, then the teacher-facilitator is positioned to interfere, to prod and cajole, to correct or challenge and fill an ‘absence’ in a learner’s knowledge. Yet, it might be argued that what are regarded as absences, which are many, are also places where learning takes place, though this will go unrecorded or monitored and ofttimes unnoticed. This is a conundrum for practitioners and researchers, yet it is how Law argues that the realities of social research must be perceived to make sense of the whole. He explains:

As we seek to know the world not everything can be brought to presence. However much we want to be comprehensive, to know something fully, to document or represent it, we will fail. This is not a matter of technical inadequacy. (There are always, of course, technical inadequacies). Rather it is because bringing to presence is necessarily incomplete because if things are made present (for instance representations) then at the same time things are also being made absent. Necessarily. The two go together. It cannot be otherwise. Presence implies absence. (Law, 2007: 7)

Christopher Bannerman poses many of the same problems and obstacles in reporting theatre and arts practice that Law finds in research (Bannerman et al., 2006; Bannerman and McLaughlin, 2009). Taking Bannerman’s lead, we might ask how can we capture and claim as valid ‘the role of the unconscious, intuitive processes that are key features of creative work’, especially when this can include ‘displacement activities designed to activate the unconscious’ reported by artists such as sorting out a diary or even ‘taking a nap’ (2009: 68). The difficulty of capturing the importance of creativity, that was not made manifest, is an area I explore later in this section. First, I consider the ‘absences’ occurring in the

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10 Of course, it can be possible to avoid such interactions, self-serve checkouts and home delivery being only a couple of instances of automated interaction that negates the need for inter-human communication. This is another kind of absence.
workshop sessions of the ‘Performing Languages’ project, where, as a practitioner, I was not present, along with ‘the negative, confounding, discarded or ignored moments of practice’ in the research, proposed by McNamara, Kidd, and Hughes above.

I begin with discussing some of the working practice of the group and what might be termed or seen as undisciplined or unproductive behaviour within the rehearsal room and both the positive and negative effects this may have on the creative process and, in turn, language development. Before that I return to Law, discussing his concept of mess, which highlights the co-existing aspects of research where something like Mackey’s ‘polyphonic conversations’ can be identified and somehow form the more complete picture in the seeming absence of any conversation at all. Law explains it as:

[…] a particular and very matter-of-fact problem experienced by many natural and social scientists in the course of their research. This is the paradoxical experience that, on the one hand, and at least some of the time, reality seems to be overwhelming and quite dazzling. And then, on the other hand, the contrary experience that there is not much of interest going on: that somehow or other, at some stages in research, the world has gone silent. These contrary but related experiences are, I suggest, a key to the character of the method. (2004: 104–105)

There were certainly instances during the project when it appeared that it had gone silent. This might be in the seeming lack of ‘enterprise’ in the devising process or actual silence between participants when nobody was speaking or overtly communicating. I now look at moments, or, in a sense, where moments were non-descript or ‘absent’ from the project.

The following vignette contains an excerpt from my field notes journal. It is a personal reflection and short detailing of one of the shorter sessions that occurred weekly on a Monday evening. This session was towards the end of the project and contains what were my frustrations and annoyance with the process and progress of the project. The piece denotes the sensations that can cause the ‘stultifying master’ to take the ascendancy to gain
control of what may be the uncontrollable. It is not a tirade by any means, yet it recalls sensations and occasions that surfaced intermittently during the project. I present it here as it represents the lesser discussed ‘downsides’ of creative activity where nothing seems to go right and routes lead to creative and disillusioning cul-de-sacs. Aligned with that, the notes touch on the occasional mundanity of creative work, where there will be periods when the practice of theatre-making relies on the graft of participants. It also contains a glimpse of what may be seen as a peripheral event – the assessing of a potential venue for the final performance – to the devising or learning process per se yet at the same time integral to the maintenance of the ensemble’s momentum.

### Monday, 16th session

A bit listless this session.

*Group members turn up at separate times so a bit disjointed. I ask Julie (she was first there) and then Chloe to do their pieces and both seem lethargic about it all. When Federica arrives I ask them to start to storyboard the Disco scene which works for Julie and Federica and Chloe suggests some music (John Butler Trio) and then Louis and Valérie arrive and they have some musical suggestions too (Circle songs by Bobby McFerrin – could deffo work).

Then we went up to see the potential venues. The group were excited about the possibilities too.

The session petered out once we’d returned.*

At first, I saw these field notes as an imperceptive piece of writing. I felt a pang of regret that I had been too ready to dismiss a workshop session rather than capture more of what was happening. Now, I view the events briefly mentioned here (and other, similar instances that occurred throughout the project) as perhaps capturing part of a polyphonic conversation, even if it was one where things went unsaid. One voice in the conversation was my own. At the time as the facilitator-teacher, the responsibility or onus I felt remained
with me and that the lack of ‘progress’ or the lull was due to a lack of stimulation that I should provide; I had not offered enough resources or judged well the level of creativity or theatrical expertise of the ensemble. This also translated into the sense that, as a researcher, what I was capturing was the inadvisability or ineffectiveness of the devising process for language learning; I was capturing the messy sensation of doubt – in my abilities and my professionality. It appeared I was incapable or unable to make sense of what was happening. However, I now think that something interesting and important happened.

What I realised was, that I was just letting the participants be. Letting them learn or develop the target language, allowing the creative process to take its course. I was actively being ‘silent’ in this conversation in the sense that I was not taking the lead or finding a way to avoid an absence where it seemed no progress was being made or creating something to fill the silence with activity. This allowing of space and time for silence is unusual in language teaching, as Kramsch points out: ‘As teachers of language we have been trained to hate silence. We like lively classes, we want to see the students participate, speak up, take the floor, contribute actively to class discussion.’ (2009a: 209). Piazzoli also refers to Kramsch’s point and directs us to Peter Lutzker writing on silence in drama for language learning, which he calls attunement (2007). Attunement, according to Piazzoli, is where ‘the role of silence [is] not seen as a deficit but as a richness’ (2018: 43). James Thompson has identified that choosing not to speak may be the preferred and appropriate state to be in for individuals or communities (2011: 68). While Thompson, here, refers to the need for silence to mediate the impact of traumatic events, the notion still stands in the sense that the dynamic nature of language learning does not always come accompanied by the sound of speech and perhaps the target language is developing in this ‘rewarding place’. By not resorting to trying to fill an ‘absence’, the ensemble members were given time and space to make their own mistakes or, perhaps better said, their own discoveries. Regarding my position as teacher-facilitator, Schön says:
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The practitioner allows himself to experience surprise, puzzlement, or confusion in a situation which he finds uncertain or unique. He reflects on the phenomenon before him, and on the prior understandings which have been implicit in his behaviour. He carries out an experiment which serves to generate both a new understanding of the phenomenon and a change in the situation. (1983: 68)

In this instance the uncertainty was my own and the unique situation was not moving to ‘resolve' matters. In their own way, the teacher-practitioner should adapt to comfortably dwell in this uncertainty, as I have suggested the language learner to do, to allow the necessary space for language learning to gestate if we follow Piazzoli’s metaphor that 'the silent phase that precedes speech is pregnant with expectation’ (2018: 21) even if there appears to be nothing happening.

The same could be argued for creative acts. Yet, what if the creative act does not bear fruit? Or, extending Piazzoli’s metaphor, is a phantom pregnancy? In the previous chapter, ‘The Individual in the Collective’, I discussed the first creative burst that became the Puppets and Prometheus scene. But what if that creative burst had not come? There may have been countless cusps of breakthrough or ideas that went amiss, lulls before the spark of inspiration. It is difficult to account for moments of potential that did not reach fruition. Similarly, I understand the moment of realisation of my Spanish progress, which I recounted at the beginning of this chapter, as just one of many ‘nearly noticeable' moments in my language development. Bannerman points out that:

Acknowledging creative contributions more specifically may be complex, as any account of the range of multiple processes and relationships, both formal and informal, that constitute art-making must recognise both carefully constructed plans and rehearsal

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11 The connection between creation and Prometheus here was entirely co-incidental yet has resonance as Prometheus is a figure who represents struggle and venture and risks overreaching with unforeseen outcomes, along with the etymological debate around his name including ‘forethought’ and ‘thief’ – perhaps subconsciously forming an idea only to snatch it away.
timetables, as well as random synchronicities and serendipitous events. Attempts to capture or to re-present the creative process are arguably always limited to the creation of another symbolic document that only partially conveys the original, in large part as the edges of the creative process are blurred by the frequently significant contributions that arise at times when the artist is not ostensibly ‘working’. These might be the insights, reflections and analyses that can take place at any time of the day or night, or interactions with performers that may be subtle or even seem inconsequential at the time. (2009: 68)

In the previous chapters, to a certain extent, I have tried to capture ‘moments of change’ or ideal moments that illustrate where, for example, the development of language was seen. What needs to be considered, however, are the moments when a facilitator or researcher might assume the work is not happening and be aware that there’s always something going on. These absences must be understood as indecipherable elements of a holistic undertaking that act to hold together or form the links between things or moments that we can establish (even if those moments can be uncertain too). This means, that it can be difficult for the researcher to identify or make a case. There are no tangible effects or anecdotal evidence to draw on. As Law describes, ‘we were trying to study something that was turning out to be a moving target. Actually a shape-shifting target too’ (2007: 4). In fact, by trying to capture moments where I saw potential changes in confidence, even over a certain time period, upon reflection, I was missing a wider picture or perhaps one that was akin to anamorphosis.\textsuperscript{12}

Patience and trust in the ensemble and the methodology of group devised theatre means that when the ensemble comes upon a stumbling block, this, in itself, can be a learning moment and needs to be understood to be an intrinsic part of the creative process, as unnerving and unsightly as they are. This is very different from ‘the linear nature of

\textsuperscript{12} A distorted projection or drawing of anything, so made that when viewed from a particular point, or by reflection from a suitable mirror, it appears regular and properly proportioned; a deformation (O.E.D.). An example would be the skull in the painting The Ambassadors by Holbein.
textbooks and the sequential order of items on the syllabus’ (Kramsch, 2011: 12) where we might just turn the page. The sense of unproductiveness is a sensation that recurred at various points during the project. It can be difficult initially for, as Parsons discovered in the devising process she researched, ‘[i]t is interesting that even though progress was evident, it was not matched by a feeling of progress’ (2010: 86). In the moment, the feeling can be one of frustration. Yet, perhaps the ability to cope with these moments are reflected in the learner’s experience with acquiring another language and somehow constitutes part of the building of resilience as a collective which for the individual, as I proposed in the previous chapter, was part of gaining stronger self-efficacy.

In this chapter, I have attempted to take the notion of ‘mess’ and apply it to both the creative process and the language development that were part of the ‘Performing Languages’ research project. This was to add different hues to the picture of the creative, learning and research process. While acknowledging the importance of moments that were included in previous chapters, I also highlighted areas of research and practice that are not readily discussed and which I had initially discarded, yet, prompted by readings of Law, Mackey, and McNamara, Kidd, and Hughes, I came to revisit and attempt to understand in a larger context. What can be proposed is that from revisiting these moments is perhaps not a clear, crisp notion of what learning has taken place or an encapsulation of knowledge gained. Instead, there is a better feeling or understanding of the dynamic, living, development of communication between the ensemble – the ‘making’ of groupness, the creative process and the development of the target language. These features can be understood as ‘voices’ that are involved in a polyphonic conversation. This includes the visible and evident, such as moments of performance and also other parts of the conversation that cannot be made out or are simply silent. In this chapter, I have not tried to decipher the messages entirely, but to give a representation or perhaps sensation more in keeping with the realities of research, group devised theatre, and SLA. I also attempted to
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account for what was not or could not be represented from the research. I suggest that learning and creativity exists as much during these absences and while we might not be able to directly point at them, an acceptance of ‘absence’ – perhaps an extension of unfinishedness – is a factor that is not to be ‘ignored’.
Conclusion

Introduction

This chapter begins with a summary of the main findings and general conclusions to the research questions based on the findings of the case study presented in this thesis. This is followed by an assessment of the strengths and limitations of this thesis along with a consideration of how the research may have been done differently. This chapter concludes with recommendations for future research into the use of group devised theatre by drama practitioners for additional language development.

Enquiry, Approach and Findings

This thesis posed the question of how collaboratively created theatre (and its emphasis on overt physicality), along with voice and breath work activities, influences self-efficacy in additional language development. It also considered how being part of a devising ensemble compared to, and contrasted with, the learning of languages through lectures and seminars in a university environment. A case study approach was used for my research which encompassed the methodologies of group devised theatre, participatory action research, and voice work.

In the pilot study, discussed in in chapter two, ‘Let Me Hear Your Body Talk’, most of the participants felt they had attained better awareness of both their own body language and non-verbal communication when interacting with others. Regarding voice work, the participants reported the technical aspects of vocal production as beneficial in addressing their concerns about articulation and rhythm in speaking English. The participants also found that by using voice work techniques they felt their voices were more resonant and could produce better volume. The use of breath work, a fundamental part of voice work, was noted as having beneficial effects, both during the workshops and outside them,
demonstrating its transferability. For example, when the participants employed the techniques in stressful times at work, they reported experiencing that their anxiety was reduced. However, it was noted by one of the ten participants that too much attention to the breathing technique affected concentration and, therefore, the ability to engage fully in the conversation.

In the subsequent main research project, ‘Performing Languages’, the engagements and exchanges that accrued between participants engendered a sense of groupness and trust which encouraged self-efficacy and confidence. The project demonstrated that being supported by a collective – through encouraging exchanges with supportive peers – was likely to aid the individual to be stronger and more resilient in their self-efficacy than being reliant on the approval of one person in an uneven power structure. This was initiated by theatre activities and exercises such as Name Circle and Mapping, then consolidated through the playfulness and, with that, the graft involved in the development of scenes which engendered a sense of friendship. This friendship provided a background of trust and openness creating a fertile ground for self-efficacy to grow. This was evidenced in the analysis and discussion of the Un, deux, trois, Soleil! scene which was indicative of the participants establishing their ‘voice’ within the institution, albeit not directly challenging it, and emerged as more confident speakers.

While there was a supportive collective and collaborative ownership, personal autonomy was notable in the structure and direction of the devising workshops and, especially, in the rehearsals and breaks. Individual self-efficacy and ‘ownership’ was demonstrated, for example, in Julie writing her own piece, Julieism, and in the creation and development of other scenes through the target language. This was also seen in the reworking of the monologues or scene treatments – from individual to collective responsibility – which demonstrated ‘bonds of mutual dependence’ (Ritter 1980, 29). Here,
the participants’ ‘storytelling’ had a major influence on their mutual language development in tandem with the forming of an artistic identity and voice.

More spontaneous, but also demonstrative of a strengthening self-efficacy in English, was the ensemble working together on improvisation. With individual members of the ensemble contributing to devising pieces for the final performance there was an increased investment in the process, with the material being ‘owned’ by both the group and the individual. The development and performance of the *Un, deux, trois, Soleil!* scene is evidence of this. Rather than being reliant on the teacher-facilitator to initiate the creative process or choose the theme or focus, this was led by various members of the ensemble. This demonstration of an egalitarian way of working was also shown in the analysis of the post-performance workshops, which the project participants led. Here, their self-efficacy in English was accompanied by their growing confidence in facilitating theatre activities. This was, at least, a momentary instance where the participants verified their equality and the educational relationship of teacher-facilitator and participant was reconfigured. It was acknowledged that there were times during the project when there was a need for my ‘expertise’ (in theatre and English), and my position in leading the project to make administrative arrangements with the university. Yet, by encouraging the ensemble to take a collective lead, the individual participants welcomed the greater opportunity this gave them to express themselves exploring topics that interested them and issues that concerned them. This demonstrates that the experience of creating the performance and the learning that took place contributed to their increased confidence and self-efficacy in using and communicating in the target language English beyond the project.

My work contributes practically and theoretically to the literatures on theatre and drama for SLA that have been established by theatre practitioner-researchers such as Schewe, Winston, Stinson, Piazzoli, Maley, and O’Neill (Schewe and Shaw, 1993; Maley and
Duff, 1994; O’Neill, 1995; Maley, 2000; Schewe, 2002; Stinson and Piazzoli, 2013; Winston and Stinson, 2014; Crutchfield and Schewe, 2017; Piazzoli, 2018). It affirms the effectiveness of sequenced activities in workshops that are found in process drama, further demonstrating the viability and effectiveness of an integrated approach to the use of drama in language development settings, while also further establishing the emerging long-form approach of group devised theatre for SLA.

The research also has a strong bearing on the alternative approaches to SLA. It informs the theories of the Identity Approach providing field experience of the implementation of the theory into practice in terms of the sense of investment and power of relations that ensemble devising imbues. In regard to Complexity Theory, this research gives theoretical and practical support to the resolution that there is a need for a multi-faceted approach to SLA, furthering the case of the theory’s proponents for challenging the pervasive cognitive orientation of mainstream research and teaching in the SLA field.

A Reflection on the Research and its Limitations

A case study approach was appropriate as it allowed the research project to combine various compatible methodological approaches, which were supported by theoretical readings to robustly justify these choices. These choices were apt for: the research enquiry; the fieldwork to apply the theory to practice; and to produce substantial data and, duly, significant empirical findings. The research design meant that the fieldwork organisation, dates, interviews and observations ran efficiently while being flexible enough to accommodate changes, for example, in scheduling.

Limitations of the Study

There are a number of limitations to this study. One is that the research attempted to explore the notion of self-efficacy which is somewhat difficult to measure with precision and any degree of accuracy. Dealing with such a concept meant that each participant might
have interpreted the notion of self-efficacy differently and, of course, the sense of self-efficacy can be volatile. The participants’ understanding and perception of self-efficacy may have been influenced by their cultural background, education, and personal and social experiences. In this sense, it is not possible to make generalised claims from such a small-sized sample as the findings are specific to the context of the individual participants. However, as an emerging approach, this research should be seen as a valid contribution to knowledge, providing findings to combine with other investigations in progress towards a wider wave of research.

As the case study was limited to the participants of the project – fewer than first anticipated – this meant that the observations and the limited set of interviews with individual perspectives on the research enquiry were essential and, in fact, more valuable to me than a larger set of data. As the research was specific to the members of the ensemble I did not undertake a quantitative approach to the enquiry that, in other contexts and with larger samples or multiple case studies, might have also generated important insights.

Importantly, participants were interviewed five to seven days after the final performances had taken place, rather than immediately after the workshops or final performances, and this had given them enough time to process their experience. This perhaps enabled them to clarify their experience and offer more accurate insight into their engagement. However, while it was explicitly stressed that the participants should have no qualms with expressing any criticisms or negative responses to the project, there is the possibility that they could have stressed the positives rather than expressing anything they perceived as detrimental, especially in any direct interactions with me.

Finally, a limitation of the study was the time frame of the research project. While the length and intensity of the project was substantial, taking place over several months, the research project would have benefitted from an increased longitudinal time frame. This
would have allowed for the possibility of viewing the effects of the devising methodology on self-efficacy over a more extensive time period.

Once More, from the Top: Considerations if the Project Were to Be Repeated

These possible limitations aside, ‘Performing Languages’ project serves as a sound and robust model for future projects and I see it as being adaptable to other related contexts and settings. If the research project were to be repeated, an increased period of research and practice possibly offering more flexibility so that the potentialities of ensemble devising for SLA can emerge. This also means that, for example, the use of voice work can be incorporated more readily and, if necessary, more gradually, navigating the challenges of incorporation seen in the ‘Performing Languages’ project.

Creating a larger ensemble would certainly be a consideration if the process were to be repeated. A wider scope of individuals with their own traits and characteristics would offer a larger sample of experiences. Also, while focusing on one case study led to a deeper consideration of the practice in the case of this case study, perhaps researching several similar projects with the same research enquiry would increase the diversity of practice available to the research. This could allow me to research other projects, participants and practitioners solely as an observer.

Indeed, having to combine the facilitator and researcher roles proved to be challenging at times, especially during the devising process. The data-gathering might have benefitted from an ‘independent’ observer during the project. This would have provided additional insight into the practice and the process. A counter-point is that as the trust that was developed within the ensemble was integral to the practice over the course of the project meaning an intervention from outside the group may have disturbed the openness and willingness to discuss mutual experience and difficulties with understanding the dynamics of interaction within the ensemble.
This may have been resolved somewhat by the use of video for reviewing the workshops. A visual record would have been a valuable reflective device – both for the participants and me. Critical analysis and responses from the participants and myself after re-viewing moments from the workshops may also have provided valuable data along with a reflective element to the devising process. In particular, this would have been beneficial for analysing non-verbal activity in terms of the participants’ expressiveness and also in terms of the power dynamics within the ensemble. The reasons for not using video have been discussed in the ‘Methodology’ chapter, yet, once the group had developed a stronger rapport and felt more comfortable in the devising process, I could have introduced at least some form of audio-visual recording. This could have been confined to the rehearsal room and to specific instances with participants still able to veto filming or any footage that made them feel uncomfortable.

Given that the student-participants’ interviews were conducted in a language that was not their mother tongue, my role as facilitator-researcher was occasionally at odds with my role as interviewer in the sense of the power dynamics that may have affected responses from the participants. In some instances, despite the high level of English competency of the participants, the complex nature of the notion of self-efficacy and self-evaluation of ‘progress’ in English may not have been readily understood or expressed. This could have been overcome by organising an interpreter to attend the interviews or, indeed, having someone that did not participate in the project do the interviewing, enabling student-participants to express themselves better, perhaps resulting in a more accurate analysis. This, again though, would have meant bringing in a new person to ‘analyse’ or ‘interpret’ the participants and may have disturbed ensemble’s sense of trust we had been developing throughout the project. The context of the research, where the target language was used as the working language for communication, somewhat legitimises the use of English for
interviewing, meaning that the participants felt a validation of their self-efficacy in that they were trusted to express themselves in the target language.

Implications of the Research for the Field

It is difficult to prescribe a group devised process as, inherently, it will always be different from project to project; decisions and circumstances give the process its shape and, therefore, it tends to be unstandardised. This, though, works well in combining ensemble devising not only with SLA per se, but also language development in a variety of circumstances and environments, and abilities or levels. Group devised theatre's adaptability could be used to address compatibility problems, which Helga Tschurtschenthaler has identified, for any kind of drama within the time-frame offered by school timetables and the spaces available to work in (2013: 51).

Manfred Schewe has categorised 'devised theatre' as a 'large-scale form' (2013: 14) as it stages a production (2013: 12). He points out that ‘a product-oriented project [...] is very time consuming and often stretches out over several weeks or months. It demands high motivation and enormous dedication from the participants and can only be realised as an extra-curricular activity’ (Schewe, 2013: 12). While the 'Performing Languages' project could be described in such a way, the adaptability of devised theatre means that it need not conform to expectations of large-scale forms; the process and product can be of any length and can be tailored to the ambition and various abilities of the participants and/or the facilitator. If the large-scale form is adopted, group devised theatre can be seen complimentary to more conventional learning approaches. This might assume something of the shape of a 'community of practice' working 'inside' or parallel to official institutes as a participant-led endeavour with teacher and facilitator as 'expert' advisors.

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1 For adults this might be universities or language school classes.
Group Devised Theatre for ‘Second Language Acquisition’

Using Law’s concept of ‘mess’ allowed an approach that accommodated ‘dealing with something that wasn’t definite’ (2007: 5). Encouraging both the language learner and teacher alike to acknowledge, even incorporate, this messiness as part of their additional language development has the potential to improve their self-efficacy in the target language. Furthermore, viewing research in this way gives a deeper and more complex understanding of the additional language development and the ensemble devising that took place during the project. It accommodates the awkwardness and the ‘absences’ from the research while still acknowledging that some form of clarity is possible. This includes aspects of the project that challenged how I would define the devising process and language education and what should be included in the research findings. Using the concept of ‘mess’ also encouraged the notion that assessing proficiency and control in additional language development is fickle and fragile and we should adopt a more accommodating, theoretical understanding which could be through a (positive) sense of unfinishedness and acceptance of messiness. This fluid and flexible sense of constant development - an unfixedness – is something group devised theatre embraces and should be incorporated into additional language learning.

Using the Research as a Practitioner-Researcher

Through the research process, I found that ‘mess’ could be embraced as part of my practice and, furthermore, as a research method to get a fuller understanding of the process, including parts of the research I might have once over-looked, recognising the elusiveness of capturing the entirety of learners putting their language skills in practice.

I plan the continuation and expansion on the research done for this thesis, researching the use of group devised theatre and voice work for second language acquisition. I aim to extend this work in a multi-national project where several group devised theatre projects are run with additional language learners in separate locations,
while maintaining interaction and collaboration between the different groups in both the devising process(es) and performance(s). Initially, this will be a UK-German project with collaboration with Kiel University, Germany. There is further interest and potential involvement from The University of Rostock, Germany, the University of Padua, Italy and the University of Grenoble, France. Expected research outputs will include theatrical performances with ensuing audience outreach and interaction, conference papers and several journal article submissions.

**Further Research: The Usefulness of Group Devised Theatre**

SLA through group devised theatre is an under-investigated field and the research in this thesis suggests several key areas in need of further examination. As I have discussed above, finding ways in which group devised theatre can be compatible with, or complimentary to, other approaches would help establish it as a viable method for additional language development for proficient adult learners, and other groups. Also needing further investigation is how ensemble devising’s egalitarian ethos can benefit language learners and alter the problematic student/teacher or native/non-native dichotomies that are still prevalent in SLA teaching practice. As I have established, group devised theatre applied to additional language development provides a supportive framework for the individual learner within a collective to have stronger self-efficacy. This, too, would benefit from more research.

Including my contribution to the research on physicality and gesture in the chapter ‘Let Me Hear Your Body Talk’, the role of the body in additional language learning has attracted interest recently, for example, by Piazzoli and Lapaire (Lapaire, 2012; Piazzoli, 2018), and I would advocate for this to continue. Group devised theatre’s emphasis on physicality provides rich material for research in this area and this would be certainly a potent line of research to follow. The investigation of breath and voice work for SLA, that
was initiated in the ‘Experiencing the Word’ project is also an area ripe for investigation. Whether this is done in conjunction with a group devised theatre project, or not, I believe it would provide valuable insight into an area intrinsically important to language learning.

There are also further aspects of a group devised theatre project with the aim of additional language development that hold potential, which did not fully materialise in the ‘Performing Languages’ project. Participants that would rather not take to the stage, or directly engage in the drama work, can still be part of the ensemble devising and language developing process by taking responsibility for ‘back-stage’ parts, such as technical support and sound or lighting design. Also, there are opportunities to be part of ‘the group’ in other aspects of putting on a performance like promotion and audience development where in the ‘Performing Languages’ project, for example, Julie designed a poster and the programme cover for the performance.

This thesis has begun to establish research into the area of group devised theatre for additional language development. More documentation of practice and research is needed in further developing the ideas put forward in this thesis about how the approach of group devised theatre can be beneficial to language learners and to investigate the other facets of ensemble devising that offer so much potential in relation to additional language development.
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Group Devised Theatre for 'Second Language Acquisition'


Group Devised Theatre for 'Second Language Acquisition'


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Group Devised Theatre for 'Second Language Acquisition'


Appendices

Appendix 1 ‘Performing Languages’ Project

Participant Information Sheet and Consent Form

You are being invited to take part in a research study as part of a student research project conducted as part of the requirements to obtain a Professional Doctorate in Applied Theatre at the University of Manchester in the U.K. After reading the description of the project, participants will be asked if they are willing to participate in the project.

Before you decide, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Please ask if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Take time to decide whether or not you wish to take part. Thank you for reading this.

Who will conduct the research?

Garret Scally
School of Arts, Languages and Cultures
University of Manchester, U.K.

Title of the Research

‘Performing Languages’: An English through Devised Theatre and Drama Project

A free theatre workshop series for English language acquisition

What is the aim of the research?

The researcher is working on a thesis project to further establish and explore the connection between applied theatre practice and additional language learning and acquisition. The researcher is investigating how participants devising theatre (collaboratively creating original theatre pieces) and voice work exercises affects confidence and motivation in additional language acquisition.

Why have I been chosen?

You have been chosen as you have identified yourself as an English language learning adult.

What would I be asked to do if I took part?

You will participate in various theatre activities and the role this plays in communication, specifically in additional language learning. The participants will discuss the possible affects that these activities have on their English language acquisition.
The participants will engage in activities that explore both non-verbal communication and the use of the 'voice' (including the rhythm, articulation and modulation of the spoken word and accompanying gestures). There will be discussion of the theatrical activities used for this purpose and verbal reflection on any possible effects on participants’ language skills.

During the research, the researcher will use questionnaires, interviews, and observations to collect data. He will inform you of the research findings during and after the study. There may be some video footage and photography of the sessions which may be used for the purpose of the research. Video clips may be used for demonstration purposes at conferences and training events.

**What happens to the data collected?**

The collected data will be analysed to examine the possible effects of the workshop sessions on language learning.

**How is confidentiality maintained?**

Video, audio and notes connected to the project will be stored on an encrypted computer/laptop at the residence of the principal researcher and on the grounds of the University of Manchester. This data will be kept on an encrypted laptop and destroyed after 5 years.

**What happens if I do not want to take part or if I change my mind?**

It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you do decide to take part, you will be given this information sheet to keep and be asked to sign a consent form. If you decide to take part, you are still free to withdraw at any time without giving a reason and without detriment to yourself.

**Will I be paid for participating in the research?**

No.

**What is the duration of the research?**

The participants will join a theatre workshop series. The duration of the project will be approximately 2-3 hours a week, meeting for 3-4 months. You may also be asked to take part in one 30-minute interview/discussion before the workshops begin and one 30-60 minute interview at the end, and one questionnaire. Here, I will ask you questions about what effect the workshop sessions may have had on your language skills.

**Where will the research be conducted?**

The workshops will take place at the University of Mulhouse, France and at The University of Manchester, UK. The space will be empty save for chairs for participants. The exact location of the workshop series has been decided to provide the most convenient location for the potential participants.
Will the outcomes of the research be published?

Results from the research project may be published in peer-reviewed journals in theatre and drama, and language learning.

Criminal Records Check (if applicable)

N/A

Who has reviewed the research project?

The project has been reviewed by the School of Arts, Languages and Cultures Research Ethics Panel.

Contact for further information

The researcher may be contacted by e-mail at garret.scally@postgrad.manchester.ac.uk

What if something goes wrong?

If there are any issues regarding this research that you would prefer not to discuss with members of the research team, please contact the Research Practice and Governance Co-ordinator by either writing to 'The Research Practice and Governance Co-ordinator, Research Office, Christie Building, The University of Manchester, Oxford Road, Manchester M13 9PL', by emailing: Research-Governance@manchester.ac.uk, or by telephoning 0161 275 7583 or 275 8093.

If a participant wants to make a formal complaint about the conduct of the research they should contact the Head of the Research Office, Christie Building, University of Manchester, Oxford Road, Manchester, M13 9PL.
**NovaTris/‘Performing Languages’ Project**

**CONSENT FORM**

If you are happy to participate, please complete and sign the consent form below. **Please initial box.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1. I confirm that I have read the attached information sheet on the above project and have had the opportunity to consider the information and ask questions and had these answered satisfactorily.</th>
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<tr>
<th>2. I understand that my participation in the study is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving a reason and without detriment to any treatment/service.</th>
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<tr>
<th>3. I understand that the interviews and workshops may be audio- and video-recorded</th>
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<th>4. I agree to the use of quotes</th>
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<tr>
<th>5. I agree that any data collected may be passed as anonymous data to other researchers (please note: not the video recordings)</th>
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</table>
I agree to take part in the above project.

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<tr>
<th>Name of participant</th>
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<th>Name of person taking consent</th>
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I agree to the audio taping and filming of research interviews, the creation process, and any theatrical performance during the research project.

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<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Researcher</th>
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Appendix 2

General Risk Assessment Form

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<th>Date: (1)</th>
<th>Assessed by: (2)</th>
<th>Checked by: (3)</th>
<th>Location: (4)</th>
<th>Assessment ref no (5)</th>
<th>Review date: (6)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>17.11.2014</td>
<td>Garret Scally</td>
<td>James Thompson</td>
<td>University of Mulhouse, France</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>01.06.2015</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

‘Task / premises: (7)’

‘Performing Languages’: An English through Devised Theatre and Drama Project

A workshop series for English language acquisition. The duration of the project will be 2 hours a week, meeting in the evenings for 3-4 months. Various non-strenuous physically-based activities geared towards creating theatrical pieces and the role this plays in communication, specifically in additional language learning. The space has windows and access to natural light and will be empty (tables and chairs are available). There are some built-in storage cupboards in the room.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity (8)</th>
<th>Hazard (9)</th>
<th>Who might be harmed and how (10)</th>
<th>Existing measures to control risk (11)</th>
<th>Risk rating (12)</th>
<th>Result (13)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Entering, exiting and using the space.</td>
<td>Slips and trips</td>
<td>Facilitator, participants and visitors may be injured if they trip over objects or slip on spillages</td>
<td>General good housekeeping is carried out. All areas are well lit including stairs. There are no trailing leads or cables. Work areas are kept clear, e.g. no boxes left in walkways, workshop area is left cleaned each evening.</td>
<td>Low</td>
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<tr>
<td>Activity (8)</td>
<td>Hazard (9)</td>
<td>Who might be harmed and how (10)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Physical Activities during workshops. Movement around the room</td>
<td>Slight possibility of minor muscular strains due to the physical nature of the exercises. Slips and trips.</td>
<td>Facilitator, participants and visitors</td>
<td>There will be activities to warm up the participants' bodies gradually and safely and participants will be made aware of the requirements of each workshop session, always with the option of non-participation in any/all of the activities in a particular session. The researcher is an experienced theatre training practitioner with 15 years of experience. The internal flooring is in good condition Lighting is bright enough to allow safe access and exit.</td>
<td>Mediu m</td>
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<td>Activity (8)</td>
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<td>Who might be harmed and how (10)</td>
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</table>
| To implement emergency procedures – evacuation in case of fire or other significant incident. | Personal injury | Facilitator, participants and visitors | There are no changes in floor level or type of flooring that need to be highlighted.  
There are no trailing electrical leads/cables.  
Procedures are in place to deal with spillages, e.g. water, blood from cuts.  
Escape routes well signed and kept clear at all times. Evacuation plans are tested from time to time and updated as necessary.  
Exit door in the room is: unobstructed; kept unlocked; and easy to open from the inside.  
Fire-fighting equipment is in place close to the room | Low | A |
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<th>Who might be harmed and how (10)</th>
<th>Existing measures to control risk (11)</th>
<th>Risk rating (12)</th>
<th>Result (13)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To maintain safe and healthy working conditions. Workplace (ventilation and heating)</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Facilitator, participants and visitors</td>
<td>Fire evacuation procedures clearly displayed. I am aware of the evacuation drill, including arrangements for any vulnerable adults or children. Toilets, washing facilities and drinking water provided. The room has natural ventilation. A reasonable room temperature be maintained during use of the classroom. Measures in place, for example blinds, to protect from glare and heat from the sun.</td>
<td>Low</td>
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<tr>
<td>Electrical equipment and services</td>
<td>Burns, electric shock, etc.</td>
<td>Facilitator, participants and visitors</td>
<td>Fixed electrical switches and plug sockets are in good repair All plugs and cables are in good repair.</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>A</td>
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<tr>
<td>Activity (8)</td>
<td>Hazard (9)</td>
<td>Who might be harmed and how (10)</td>
<td>Existing measures to control risk (11)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Furniture and Fixtures</td>
<td>Minor injury</td>
<td>Facilitator, participants and visitors</td>
<td>Permanent fixtures in good condition and securely fastened, e.g. cupboards, display boards, shelving. Furniture in good repair and suitable for the size of the user, whether adult or child. Portable equipment stable.</td>
<td>Low</td>
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Appendix 3

Excerpts from Interviews

Federica

(Starts at 13:17 mins)

Garret: How did ... did the project help you with your English?
Federica: Well a lot. I mean, practising is always good.
Garret: Somebody said to me once, they said “practice makes permanent it doesn’t make perfect” [laughs].
Federica: That’s true. That’s true [Francesca and Garret laugh]
Garret: Because it’s true that you can keep on practising something, but it could be wrong.
Federica: Yeah, yeah obviously, but you were there to correct us. If it was totally wrong …
Garret: But did we ... did I do a lot of correcting?
Federica: No, not at all but I don’t think that if it wasn’t even English that you would have said, “okay, fine!” [Francesca and Garret laugh]
Garret: I’d have gone ... “oh yeah ...” [makes thumbs up gesture]
Federica: Exactly, exactly. So ... yeah well, it was good for practising. I learnt some technical words about the world of theatre which was interesting.
Garret: Okay
Federica: About the stage directions and so on.
Garret: Oh, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah. Yeah, we did that that.
Federica: Not only from the English point of view but from the dramatic one it was interesting experience
Garret: In what way did it change your English then, I mean obviously you practised it more, I mean, one of my aims with this was quite explicitly to look at how it ... er ... maybe the autonomy and the ... the idea that you’re creating a project ...
Federica: Yeah, exactly.
Garret: ... how can that lend to making you feel more confident with your English?
Federica: There you go ...
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Garret: Did it?

Federica: There you go, it's what you just say. The creation. The fact that you ... you had to think in English and produce something concrete in English ... it was ... that's what made the difference, I think. Because, I practise English with my flat-mate obviously because he's British but we just talk to each other, we don't produce art together, so er ... it was different ... because also if I think of my future, if I wanted to do something with English which will probably happen then it's going to be a great opportunity to have done this because I already feel more confident now about ... yeah, inventing something making up something out of nothing like a theatre project.

Garret: Yeah, which it could be ... it could be ... it could be any kind of project, I suppose.

Federica: Exactly, exactly.

Garret: It could be any ... You know like a music project or er ...

Federica: Exactly. And you can try ...

Garret: And actually, do it in that language. Until you've actually done it you can say "I should be able to" but until you've done it.

Federica: It's made you more confident not only from the linguistic point of view but also from the personal ... the personal one.

Garret: But would that have been the same if it had been ... say erm ... a writing project or er ... or like Louis and er ...er ... Valérie did a film project. Would that have been a similar kind of experience for you?

Federica: [Pause. Intake of breath] Maybe similar not totally different but on the other side to perform in front of an audience in English ...

Garret: But that's a necessary element for you to actually have the performance because there's quite a lot of work done with theatre and drama in ... it's just in the classroom and there's no end product. Errr ... I mean on a motivational side ... on a product ... on a pressure kind of thing. I mean, what would you say to that?

Federica: Well, I think if you know you have to perform what you're creating then you have the aim of what you're doing

Garret: [both laugh] Right. Okay.

Federica: ... and you know that you're doing it and it's interesting but on the other side ... you know, okay this is ... this is my goal, this is where I want to get, what I'm producing. It's interesting to write in English to ...
to produce something. Like I can write my diary in English; that’s something I’ve done.

Garret: Okay.

Federica: So that’s the point. Simply. While creating something with a group and knowing that you … you need to give it a purpose then … things change.

Aliya

(Starts at 8:41)

[Discussing the Sin Gesto activity]

Aliya: I like when we had to speak with people [inaudible] when we did a game in which we were speaking about identity, who am I, like this. Do you remember? When we had to speak for one minute and the the other person has to listen to us. Do you remember?

Garret: Yeah, I know [Aliya laughs] I’m just writing in the book [both laughing]

Garret: You mean the, the without the gesture where they just had to concentrate. You sat down, and you talked …

Aliya: Yeah, yeah. I like it.

Garret: Okay. Why did you like that?

Aliya: Because it was a moment in which I was a [sound of truck passing by momentarily; Aliya raises her voice] knowing people. And you know, I knew a little bit Nadine, we knew each other – we start knowing each other because we hadn’t … we hadn’t the possibility, the opportunity to speak, to know each other during the workshop and … during the project”

Garret: Okay, so so so you don’t think you got to know each other so much [interrupted]

Aliya: We hadn’t very opportunity to …

Garret: Are you saying you and Nadine or you and everybody else?

Aliya: Maybe er … Nadine and me.

Garret: Okay

Aliya: But now we know each other … more than before so …

Garret: I mean, that that that comes with doing anything together, I suppose …

Aliya: Yeah, yes.
Garret: ... in many ways but, that specific thing, yeah? Just ...

Aliya: [U-hmm]

Garret: ... even just one minute?

Aliya: Yeah, I like this because I knew her so ...

Garret: So maybe, maybe ... would that have been helpful if we'd done that with everybody?

Aliya: Maybe, yes, I think, because I think erm ... that ... maybe we had to know ... to know each other better and er ... more because we had not the opportunity to know each other ... deeply maybe, so ...

Garret: Okay. Yeah, I mean, i-i-it would have been ... when we did the names ...

Aliya: [says something inaudible]

Garret: ... would that have been something similar, no?

Aliya: Yes. Yes.

Garret: So, do you ... maybe that would be better earlier on

Aliya: Yeah, maybe at the beginning.

Garret: Okay

Aliya: Yes, I think ...

Garret: Do you not think it's too intimate at the beginning?

[pause]

Garret: You know there's a, there's a ... obviously I'm making my judgments on this ... and I think if you do that immediately people go, “whoa!” ...

Aliya: Yeah, yeah.

Garret: ... that's too intimate, you know?

Aliya: Yeah, it's not wrong what you say, so yeah ...

Garret: It's a funny thing, I'm not too shh[ure], this is when you have to get the response from people about how they feel. Obviously, some people don't. I mean, for example, me ... normally I'm quite open. I just [both start laughing] [inaudible -‘tell’] anybody anything

Aliya: [Aliya laughing] Maybe ...

Garret: But some other people need ... you know ... a few months to kind of make ... feel that they're comfortable to be able to do this
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Aliya: Maybe you ... maybe you can ask them. Maybe you had to ask us; “Do you want to do presentation now, at the middle, at the end?”

Garret: But then if people don’t know the exercise ...

Aliya: Well, yeah.

Garret: ... they say [Aliya laughing] “Well, I don’t know. What exercise are you going to make me do?”

[both laughing]

Aliya: Yeah ... Yeah, maybe. Not very at the beginning ...

Garret: But earlier on.

Aliya: In the middle. In the middle.

Garret: But it was in the middle, no?

Aliya: Yeah, it was.

[both laugh loudly]

Garret: So, it was fine, yeah?

Aliya: Yeah, it was fine, yeah.

Garret: Right, repeat that ... nah, I’m only ...

Garret: So, no, but that’s interesting that maybe you can bring it forward or try to ... you see one of the things I didn’t want to happen was that ... was it to be ‘forced’. That people had to be friends, or anything like that.

Aliya: [Hm-mmm]

Garret: ‘Cos it’s a funny thing, I mean, you can, you can do a lot of good work in a group, but you don’t necessarily have to be good friends. I mean if this was going to be a group that went on for a longer period of time, which, which I’ll talk about ...

Aliya: We don’t have to be best friends but ... friends, maybe.

Garret: But at least intimate, no?

Aliya: Not very intimate but friends, I mean.

Garret: I mean, that’s an interesting ... 

Aliya: Because we spend ... er ... a lot of time together.

Garret: That’s true.
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Aliya: Weekends ... [Aliya laughs]
Garret: [Garret laughs too] Yeah. That’s true.
Aliya: I mean ...
Garret: Okay.
Aliya: I think that-er if we had, we had not the project we couldn’t be able to know each other, you know?
Garret: You, you don’t think you would have mixed?
Aliya: No, like er ...
Garret: Is that because you, you’re just in different classes or ... ?
Aliya: I think because we are in different classes, so ... like Valérie and Louis, without the project I have ... mmm ... I will have never the opportunity to meet them, to know them, you know. ‘Cause we are in different schools, so. Nadine and Constance too.
Garret: Yeah, that’s true, yeah. And they’re teachers as well. How did that work, by the way?
Aliya: I liked it.
Garret: It wasn’t a complication ...?
Aliya: Nah, it was good. It was good.
Garret: Do you think it should be more of that?
Aliya: Like what?
Garret: Teachers being involved in [interrupted ‘in projects with the students’]
Aliya: Yeah, I like it. I think it is a good idea. I like it to know Nadine and Constance. [suddenly excited] And when I was, was with them I didn’t see them like teachers – just like normal people.

[Aliya begins to laugh loudly; Garret joins in]

Louis

(Starts at 27.27 mins)

Garret: So, what was your motivation in doing the project then? Just to ... to get the chance to ...er ... to do some theatre or ...

Louis: I mean both. Doing some theatres, speaking English both at the same time is quite good. And I er-er-er I mean I kind of missed theatre or
although I wouldn’t have started something without having any idea what it ... what it’s became. I felt like it could be fun doing it with you and it was, so ...

Garret: No, no. It was great fun. I enjoyed it immensely. I mean, ah ... the four, the four days we worked on those two weekends were quite long days ... and quite hard. I didn’t, I practically didn’t have any breaks apart from the lunch time ... which I don’t know if it was a good idea or a bad idea, but I think people didn’t feel it or they would have said can we have a break erm ... just because of the nature. It was a lot of fun. I mean, there was work, it was a lot of work yet there was a lot of ... I mean ... enjoying, a huge enjoyment of what we were doing.

Louis: Yeah, I also liked a lot of the fact that you let us free of devising what we wanted to devise, and create what we wanted to create. It was quite new, I didn’t, in the circus I created things of course, but in theatre not really. Most of the time was improv and then let it go because it was meant as an exercise not, not nothing to create. Or ... I don’t know ... work as a group but then theatre was not the central thing. It was, it was circus, circus all the time mainly, basically so it was new to me and very pleaseant [sic] as well.

Garret: Erm. In that regard how did you, did you find it quite autonomous. Obviously, I was there, and I was coming with “this is what we’ll do today” for most of it or at least when we got to really devising and trying to work the rehearsals. I mean, that was my, ended up being my job. How did it, did it feel like it was student-led or did it still feel quite led by me?

Louis: Erm ...

Garret: Did it feel like we were a troupe and we could bring any element to it? You know we were an ensemble.

Louis: I felt like ... er ... it was the right balance for me.

Garret: Okay.

Louis: So, you worked out most of the schedules and, “okay, we should work this scene together because we’re all together on the weekend and then on Monday ... er ... he’s, he’s not there or she’s not there and we can’t work all the scenes and all stuff like this. That was really nice. But you do it 'cause it’s not the pleaseant [sic] part. [Garret chuckles]. [Louis laughing] Not at all.

[both laughing]
Garret: That's the bit where you're head, your head is falling going [inaudible] ... “what's wrong with you?”, “I'm going to be sick tomorrow between four and eight”, “What?! ... are you coming tomorrow?” “Oh yeah, maybe”. You know what that's like and you see me go “[Garret shrugs shoulders] That's not helping”

[both laughing]

Garret: But it's good, good in a way. I mean, I really wanted it to be your group.

Louis: Yeah, I felt like ...

Garret: Did it feel like ...?

Louis: Yeah, for the real creating of the scenes you gave us the things we needed with the exercises and the workshops before and then you let us do what we wanted to do and just guide us when we had no ideas or bring new ideas and let us free of choosing and keeping and changing what we want. That was really nice.”
Appendix 4

Outline of Final Performance

As audience enter, a picture of a dinosaur puppet on a slide at the back of the stage with the message: "If you can't see George's eyes, come closer."

The house lights go down.

There is the sound of kerfuffle from various parts of the auditorium as some members of the audience move from their seats, some along the rows, some over the seats in front of them, but all making their way towards the stage. There, a figure can be made out and then heard shouting “1,2,3, Soleil!” at the same time as turning on a torch and shining it towards the audience.

After a couple of turns, the torch holder catches someone in the light and sends them back to their original place. We are in the middle of someone else's game, perhaps part of it now. Others are caught and must go back yet others encroach, closing in on their target. And eventually, the wall is touched and the game ends and the play begins.

Scene 2: The Shades of Language

The torch holder comes downstage and talks directly to the audience. Serenely, she speaks of the shades of language while other actors dance and move around her sometimes echoing, sometimes pre-empting her words. There is the making of friends, the loss of home; sheer delight in extended limbs and collapses to the floor from disappointment. The other performers begin to swirl around the stage and the torch holder, reflecting the confusion that is heard in her words then suddenly they stop.

The players file slowly offstage, some stage left, some stage right.

Scene 3 - Shadows

A performer enters, while immediately upstage another performer walks synchronised to the movements of the closer performer, as if they were a shadow. They are met centre-stage by another character, them self 'shadowed'. We find out that the ‘real’ characters are philosophers. The first is deep in thought, though with their head in the clouds; the second more concerned that they are late for the flight that will take them to an important conference to talk about the first philosopher's latest book. The mention of the urgency of time only causes the first philosopher to ponder the meaning of time as a concept. The second philosopher slaps the first to get her attention, this only provokes a response of questioning the need for violence when there is so much beauty in the world.

Suddenly, the ‘real’ characters freeze; the ‘shadows’ break away from their ‘owners’. The Shadows each complain about how much they hate their respective Owner: one because of their rushing and harrying, the other because of their unfocussed thinking. They arrive at the notion that they should swap Owners and try on the other for size. Once they do, however, the Owners realise it and this causes existential philosophising from both Owners and the shadows struggle to keep up with their new Owners' movements and seeming alteration in character. Realising the potential calamity, the
shadows switch back and it seems to the Owners that there has been a momentary glitch in the space-time continuum. It has, however, given inspiration for a greater understanding of existence and the philosophers rush off momentarily leaving their shadows behind.

Scene 4 – Basta!!!

Performers enter miming instruments and mimicking their sounds. At first, they play in harmony, but the music soon descends into cacophony. Another performer enters, calls out “Basta!!! [Stop!!!]” and speaks in relation to how each instrument represents each of the languages she speaks. German like the Tuba makes no sense; Arabic, her parents’ tongue should sound like the harp, but it is like bad saxophone. The speaker dances offstage with the ‘instruments’ dancing alongside her.

Scene 5 - Neo-Julieism

Julie is an all-knowing, self-absorbed and pretentious university professor giving a lecture. The professor character advocates the theory of ‘Julieism’. It is also the name of the heavy tome she carries and the only book on the reading list for the ‘Julieism’ course the professor is giving. However, she is challenged by one of the students attending the lecture (speaking from the audience). She is shocked by the temerity of the confrontation and is initially dismissive yet, as the student continues to question her, the professor’s pretentious façade begins to crumble, and self-doubt cause an indignant outburst followed by her storming off stage.

Scene 6 - Puppets and Prometheus

In darkness, a voice-over, Hollywood-blockbuster style:

“When the Gods were young, when mankind were but babes in arms, innocent, fire-less.

When the Titans had been conquered by the Olympians – order was established. But there was a problem. The problem was Prometheus. Prometheus and his ideas. You may have heard the stories before but not the real one. This is the true story …”

Lights up. Spots on two hand puppets. One the dinosaur puppet from the opening slide representing Zeus, a dour and conservative character; the other is an owl representing Prometheus’ friend, who is very excitable and bubbly. The puppeteers also voice the puppets. Prometheus’ friend enthusiastically tells Zeus of his and Prometheus’ plan to give light/fire to humankind. Zeus refuses this citing his distain for humanity and them being unprepared for this new power. Zeus also cites the pair’s previous experiment bringing fire to Mars: “Flourishing planet, plenty of animals and plants, perfect atmosphere … I had a lot of friends there … And then, Prometheus…”. Prometheus’ friend ignores Zeus’ objections, arguing that it is boring on Earth and what they need is a party. Zeus growing more indignant recalls the previous party and the aftermath – it was the Big Bang. Prometheus’ friend tries to ingratiate them self with Zeus, making a ‘cute’ face. Before Prometheus’ friend can work his ‘magic’, Zeus suddenly asks why Prometheus is not there and inquires of his whereabouts. Film
comes on showing the Earth aflame. But all is not lost to the gods – “oh well, we have plenty of planets”. The exit singing along to “We Didn’t Start the Fire” by Billy Joel.

Scene 7 - Disco Lights

A group of female friends dance at a disco. On the dancefloor, the women are approached by a drunken male who tries to use corny lines to chat them up. The women laugh at him and dismiss him, and he eventually leaves the dancefloor, however one of the group feels that the night has been spoiled and she tells everyone she wants to go home. This leads to an argument and she leaves on her own. Inside and outside the club are represented by a split stage with the performers in each separate place alternately freezing depending on where the action is taking place. Outside the woman who wanted to leave is cornered by the man from the dancefloor. He becomes more aggressive, the tension building as the “switching” gets faster between the outside and inside scenes. The confrontation outside becomes physical but it is broken up by the arrival of one of the friends going outside to smoke. The man goes back inside. Clearly upset, the woman who wanted to leave answers to her friend’s concern that, “I’m fine. It’s nothing”.

Scene 8 - Who are you?

A single performer speaks directly to the audience, asking them, “Who are you?”. He asks further questions: “What is the colour of your girlfriend’s eyes? What is the colour of the eyes of the last person you kissed? What is the colour of the eyes of the person sitting next to you?”. He then speaks of the feeling of rock-climbing and physically represents the feeling of freedom it gives him in small and precise moments though his fingers, then limbs, then torso. He slowly moves into a handstand. He asks once more, inverted, “Who are you?”.

Scene 9 - Who is an artist?

The performer remains in a handstand. Two new performers enter; one begins to sing “Gravity”, the other begins to live sketch the scene, the audience being able to see the work in progress. Another performer enters and begins to “sculpt” the performer doing the handstand, using her hands to move him while not actually physically touching the “subject”. A narrator enters and dances about the ‘arts’ taking place ruminating on the emergence of art and its vulnerable initial stages yet also its resilience. The separate performers morph into rows, forming a flock.

Scene 10 - The Flocking Dance

The lights go out and each of the ensemble holds a light. The group begin to sing a cappella. Like a flock of birds, the performers dance as an ensemble with one person initially leading making distinct yet connected gestures. Those behind the leader recreate them. After a sequence runs, someone ‘replaces’ the leader at the front of the ‘flock’. After a series of movements, the ensemble make their way along the aisles and out of the performance space mirroring the opening of the performance.
Building an ensemble

This was the second session and introduced various elements of the intended devising process and the sense of creating an ensemble. It began with breath and voice work, then moved on to physicality and then the combination of both in regard to SLA.

1) **Breathing Awareness:**
   a) size of lungs
   b) breathe in for 8, hold for 8; release for 8

2) **Vocal warm-ups:**
   a) unwind the spine
   b) Face muscles – raisin/grape; jaw – chew one way then back, massage the jaw
   c) Lips – brrrrrrrrr, etc.
   d) Tongue – out / in
   e) Yawn

3) **Crazy Eights / Ochos Locos**
   Shake right hand 8 times. Shake left hand 8 times. Shake right foot 8 times. Shake left foot 8 times. Continue the order but with 7 shakes then 6, 5, 4, 3, 2, 1. A great energy burst activity.

4) **Alphabet warm-up** - Language focus: Numbers and body parts
   Warm up parts of the body by writing the alphabet with them in the air. Start with nose, then left & right elbows, hips, left & right feet. You can also use this activity to spell words. Have the class divided in two and ask each group to give the other group a word to spell.

5) **Digits** - Language focus: Numbers, Letters, Words, Sentences
   Get into a tight circle. Everyone in the circle looks down at the ground and closes their eyes. Someone will count off the number one. Then someone else will count off the number two. No-one knows who will speak the next number. If two people speak out at the same time, then the group must start again at one. It is common to try and count to ten/twenty. Usually there is such rejoicing when twenty is counted that the activity is over. Variations: Go through the letters of the alphabet, count downwards. Do a Word at a Time story with the same rules. Sing the lyrics of a song.

6) **People Knot** - Language focus: Prepositions of movement and direction e.g. up, down, over, between.
   Players stand in a circle, shoulder to shoulder. Placing their hands into the centre each player takes hold of the hands of the other players. It is important that players understand that they should not join hands with the player immediately beside them or join both hands with only one player. Without letting go of the hands they hold, players attempt to untie the human knot. They should speak to each other to unravel with up and down and round and under and over. Have several attempts.

7) **Clumps and Body-Part Partners** - Language focus: Numbers and body parts
   When the leader calls out a number and a part of the body, everyone must get in a group of the same size as the number connecting those body parts, e.g. 'three elbows'
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Same as clumps but you call out "2 Knees" and the participants become knee partners and must remember who they were with. Repeat with toes, finger, elbow then ask group to find knee and finger partner at the same time or some similar combination. Encourages awareness of the body and facilitates random groupings.

8) **Zip Zap Zoom** Language focus: Both regular and irregular verbs. Instead of Zip, Zap, Zoom use a verb’s present simple tense for Zip, past simple tense for Zap and past participle for Zoom. For example: Go, Went, Gone; Sing, Sang, Sung

In a circle one of the participants points to another participant to one side of them and says 'zip'. That player turns to the next player in the circle, points to them and says 'zip'. Thus the 'zip' zips around the circle in one direction. At any time a receiving player can say 'zap' to the person pointing at them. When they do the player that said 'zip' and was pointing at them must change direction of the pointing. This means that they must quickly turn around, point and say 'zip' to the person that just pointed at them. Now the 'zip' can zip around the circle, but changing direction every time there is a 'zap'. Lastly the person that receives the 'zip' may elect to yell 'zoom' and point at someone anywhere in the circle. That player then restarts the 'zip' going in the direction of their choice. The group must really pay attention for this to work.

**Drama conventions introduction: Session Three – concrete mime**

1) **Bananas of the World Unite!!!** - Participatory song to learn verbs

Form bananas; Peel bananas; Shake bananas; Chop bananas; Slice bananas; Slop-py bananas; Poop bananas!; Bend bananas; Go bananas!; Bananas split!; Form a ball; Bounce the ball; Kick the ball; Caress the ball; Form a wall; Break the wall; Go AWOL (creep around)

2) **The New York Game (New York, Lemonade)**

(The Chant)
Here we come!
Where you from?
New York.
What’s your trade?
Lemonade.
Give us some!
Here we come!

In alternate rounds, each group on opposite sides of the room walk towards each other miming a profession that they have all decided on (in secret). They approach the other side and return to their side while the opposition try and guess the profession. If the opposition guess, then they can run at those approaching or receding and try and tag them before they get back to their own wall. Those tagged join the team that have tagged them. Repeat formula.

3) **Donkey** - Language focus: Nouns

In a circle, when pointed at, the participant forms the centre of a concrete mime. Those at the sides complete the image mirroring each other. Palm Tree: Hands up and extended out. Sides are coconuts - elbows up into armpit. Flamingo: Hands up with hands forming a beak; sides as if wings - standing on one leg facing inwards flapping hands down by hips. Elephant: Wrap one arm round other and hold your nose – other
arm makes a trunk, sides form ears – two arms to side. Donkey: All three must stay perfectly still. Participants are encouraged to invent their own mimes.

4) Shapes
Forming shapes in groups of 2/3/4/5/6/7, for example, Circle, Square, Triangle, the number 8, the letter ‘R’, circle inside a square, a spiral, a beating heart.

5) Concrete Mime
Groups of 7-10 create:

An Irish fry-up;
A stir-fry in a wok;
A fork with spaghetti;
An empty bus;
Brooklyn Bridge

A working sofa-bed
A working Swiss Army knife

Steam engine going through a tunnel
A ship sailing through a draw bridge

A building falling down
Fairground ride

An emotion – we did Love

Session Six - Improv I

1) Sheep and Shepherds
Two circles, Shepherds on the outside who guard their sheep vigilantly as the sheep in the inside circle always think the grass is greener on the other side and are always looking to escape to the shepherd who has no sheep. If the sheep tries to escape the shepherd just needs to tap the sheep and it will return.

2) Find People
Using mime find others who had the same breakfast as you/watched the same last film as you/shares the same hobby (you can then change your hobby)/ sang the same song you last sang.

3) Simultaneous Pair Improvs
   a) “Two by Three by Bradford”
Divide the group into pairs and ask the members of each group to name themselves either A or B. Ask them to count to three as a pair with A saying ‘i’, B saying ‘2’, A saying ‘3’, B saying ‘i’, A saying ‘2’, B saying ‘3’ etc.
Now ask the As in each group to come up with a sound and movement that will replace ‘i’. The pair will continue counting with each partner substituting the sound and movement for the number ‘i’. Then ask the Bs in each group to come up with a sound and movement that will replace ‘2’. The pair will continue counting with each partner substituting As sound and movement for the number ‘i’, and Bs sound and
movement for the number '2'. Then ask A to come up with another sound and
movement, this time for the number '3'. By now, there should be no numbers heard,
only the unique sounds and movements that have been substituted for each number.

b) Establish a relationship only using numbers
c) Establish where the pair are by using Gibberish
d) Create a conversation A-Z, starting each line with the next letter of the
alphabet

Once the circle is formed one player goes into the circle and starts to mime a simple
activity. Once the activity has been established one of the players from the circle jumps
in and asks "what are you doing?" The player doing the mime responds with some
activity other than the one they are doing. If they are mowing the lawn they might say
'riding a bike.' The player that asked the question starts the activity that was answered
(i.e., riding a bike) and waits to be asked what she is doing. This continues until all
have tried the exercise.

5) Gift
Preparation: Using the blackboard, get your group to make an exhaustive list of gifts
received or given. To help, ask them to think of gift giving occasions. When do people
give and receive? Valentine, birthday, anniversary, wedding, Christmas, etc. Get
individuals to make their own lists, say of five things. Make it interesting: the five best
ever gifts you have been given. The five things you would give your worst enemy, the
five biggest gifts they’ve been given and the five smallest gifts they have given etc what
has given most/least happiness.
When they have finished with their own lists compile a master list on the board.
Organise the group in a circle or horseshoe with chairs.
Explain that you want each person to imagine a gift and one by one to enter the centre
of the circle or the open end of the horseshoe and collect their gift. They should pick it
up and return with it to their seat and in doing so describe to the rest of the group the
weight and size of what they have got. When they get to their seat they may interact
with their gift.
The object of the game is for the rest of the group to identify the gift through the
mime.
There are several options on how to lead this activity. One is to allow the mime to take
place in silence and at the end ask the question “what is it?” Another is asking
controlled and repetitive questions during the mime such as is it heavy, what shape is
it? Is it big or small? Is it slippery? Is it alive? Etc. Another alternative is to allow people
to volunteer answers during the mime but this can be chaotic and not give the
performer the opportunity to finish what they have thought of.
Stress that players should not immediately interact with their gift. i.e. if the gift is a
fishing rod they should take it to their seat and assemble it before launching a cast.

6) Propvisation
The group sit in a circle around a prop (e.g. wire clothes hanger). Participants take
turns to use the object in different ways. Be patient as sometimes there are lulls in
creativity.
Theatre devising - The Fabric Session

The 1.5-hour workshop session on the use of devising for language acquisition focused primarily on non-verbal communication followed by a 30-minute discussion of any non-verbal communication and kinaesthetic learning, to examine this specific creative process and to evaluate how overt physicality affects actors/speakers. The workshop itself is adapted from the work of the Taiwanese theatre company Tainan Jen (shown to me by Helen White - co-founder and a faculty member of the C.U.N.Y. Applied Theatre M.A. programme) and was created originally to examine intercultural collaborative creation. Now, it is geared more towards creating a heightened awareness of physicality regarding language acquisition and incorporates notions of collaboration, negotiation and exploration. It has a creative improvisational and playful aspect and various performances are produced from the workshop at the end of the session. Also explored is the related idea of the use of ‘space’ when ‘performing’ language.

Workshop Activities
At the beginning of the workshop, participants were asked to be especially aware of themselves, the others in the group and the space they were in. This was specifically in relation to developing a heightened awareness of the role of physicality in communication.

1) **Listening without Gesture – Poker Face**
Participants were asked to listen to their partner for one minute without any physical or verbal response (no nodding, affirmations or typical reactions). ‘A’ and ‘B’ chose who to go first by who had the longest eyelashes – this causes participants to look at each other’s physical aspects more closely. Short discussion of the exercise. Example question: Which role did you prefer – listener or speaker?

2) **Walk in The Space**
Participants were asked to walk in the space and when they saw a space to try and ‘fill it’ while being aware of you, the others and the space.

3) **Sense and Stop**
As the group walk around the space, one of the members, of their own volition, chooses a moment to pause. Once the other participants sense or see that the first person or the others have paused then they should pause too. Once the entire group is motionless, the group can start to move again (this can be initiated by the first person to pause or another member of the group). This process is then repeated with various participants taking the initiative.

4) **Enemy/Defender**
During one of the pauses, each person secretly (and silently!) chooses someone to be their ‘enemy’. It could be the person standing next to you or the farthest away. Choose someone besides yourself! Then each person picks a ‘defender’. You don’t pick yourself and you don’t pick your enemy. Once the group begins to move again everyone immediately tries to get in a position where their defender is between them and their enemy.

*Note on the game’s name: as it is a potentially troublesome notion, you can use different concepts instead of enemy and defender, for example, apples and oranges or positive and negative magnets (allowing for some scientific leeway!)

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5) Yes/No Experiment
The group stands in a circle and without speaking or making gestures that are too blatant say ‘No’ to the whole of the group for a controlled period of time. The group then repeats the process, this time saying ‘Yes’.
Short discussion of the exercise. Example question: With which response did you feel most comfortable?*
*Participants should feel that neither response is the correct one, though generally a ‘yes’ attitude aids collaborative creation.

6) Steal the Space - "Yes, I’m in the middle!"
This is played in a large circle with one person in the middle. Those in the circle look around at the rest of the participants and try to make eye contact. They then make an affirmative gesture, usually a nod. If both participants make an affirmative gesture they exchange places. Meanwhile, the person who is in the middle tries to fill one of the spaces that are vacant. If the person ‘steals’ a space, then the participant who was moving towards the space becomes the person in the middle. An important point here is that instead of the cries of exasperation at having lost a spot, the new person in the middle should welcome the opportunity with a shout of: “Yes, I’m in the middle”*. This, combined with the willingness of people to change positions, giving affirmative gestures, serves to encourage the importance of positivity and the benefits of saying "yes", even if the situation is not apparently favourable.
*For the purpose of the workshop, participants were asked to show their ‘elation’ non-verbally.

7) Shape with a Rope
Groups are asked to create shapes in silence (e.g. a circle, a square, a triangle and a star) using a piece of rope joined together at both ends. We formed two groups of seven and each member of that group was given a number. When a number was called out that person became the ‘leader’. The leader initiated how the shape would be formed.
The activity served as a point where the participants worked together non-verbally and where that were offering and accepting ideas, attempting to aid the leader create their idea. Also, in challenging each other’s conceptions, in their offers of new ideas, participants create a chain reaction of creativity providing new perspectives to each other.

8) Fabric and Play
Participants in groups of 3–7 are given a piece of fabric and asked to play and create. They should try to come up with as many ideas as possible – once an idea has been established, the group should move on to the next rather than ‘playing out’ a scene. The longer the process goes on groups tend to create ideas in a less energetic manner, though this can be coached.
The group then chose and show the 4/5 favourite creations to the other groups. In both the rope and fabric exercises, the importance of finding a balance between having strong ideas and exerting a controlling and dominating influence over other members of the group should be noted. Along with this, all members of the group should be encouraged to contribute.
The smaller groups are now given time to create a short scene from the ideas that they have created. The group can be allowed to use a limited number of words.
The groups show each other their scenes.
To initiate the various scenes: “Actors, are you ready? Audience are you ready? Let’s give them a 1,2,3 Action!”

For applause, you may want to use a more visually expressive variant of clapping used by deaf audiences. Instead of clapping your palms together, you raise their hands straight up with outstretched fingers and twist your wrists.
## Appendix 6
### Participant Details

All the names of the participants have been anonymised. All the participants were intermediate/upper-intermediate learners or native speakers meaning there was a proficient level of English with regard to comprehension and fluency.

### Aliya

Aliya’s family were originally from Morocco where Aliya was born and had moved to Italy where Aliya was raised. She was in her second year of undergraduate in Applied Languages English-Italian (and Translation) at the university. Aliya had an upper-intermediate level of English (B2) and while she spoke well she was reticent to speak aloud in the group initially, while having a friendly demeanour, and her linguistic background was clearly evident on various aspects of her accent. She could also speak French (B2), German (A2), and she considered Arabic and Italian as her mother tongues. Aliya was a member of a theatre club when she was in primary school and also in the first year of middle school. She participated in the annual drama plays organized by her school in first and second grades. She found the physical aspects of performing difficult and demanding and struggled in understanding blocking and stagecraft.

### Chloe

Chloe lived in Basel in Switzerland and travelled by train to the university for her studies in English. She was fluent in German (though spoke no Swiss-German) and while she spoke with her Filipino mother only in English and she had a C1-2 level, speaking in English she was noticeable quiet, and she was reticent to speak in public and to people she did not know. She had some experience in theatre having acted in a few, short scripted scenes in an English class at the university. She had to be encouraged to move when on stage and vocal delivery and movement was stilted. Chloe found it surprising that when I stressed the importance of rehearsal.

### Constance

Constance was born and raised in Scotland and taught English at the university of Mulhouse and also in Strasbourg while writing her PhD thesis. She was in her late-20s. Constance was fluent in French and Danish (her mother is from Denmark). Constance provided another ‘native’ voice and accent during the project. She had been involved in many theatre performances as an actor and understood the use of blocking and stagecraft.

### Federica

Federica was an Erasmus student from Italy and was 20-years-old. She was happy to engage with people she did not know and readily and enthusiastically participated in activities. Previously, she had been involved in several theatre productions in Italy, playing the classics. She played piano and was a confident singer. Her English was a B2
level and she was quite precise with her choice of words, making sure she clearly enunciated them.

**Julie**

Julie was 20-years-old and studied English at the university. She was initially withdrawn and spoke little at the beginning of workshops. Julie was able to sketch and draw to a remarkably high standard – she contributed the artwork for the posters and programme we made for the performance. Julie’s had a heavy French accent which, to some degree, contributed to her self-conscious and denigrating opinion of her English. She was, though, an articulate speaker on stage and was a strong improviser, while she struggled with the physical aspects of performance.

**Louis**

The only male apart from me to participant in the project. Louis was from the Besançon in the historic and cultural region of Franche-Comté in eastern France. He was 21-years-old and was studying Chemistry. He spoke German (C1-C2 level) and was beginning to learn Spanish. His English was fluent though with a strong French accent which influenced the mis-pronunciation of certain words. He had experience of theatre in international summer camps with young people from France, Germany and Poland and with three directors (who Louis said used three different theatre techniques/styles: comedia del arte, classical and symbolical/"black box" theatre). While working, the participants spoke their own language while other people translated. The final show was multilingual. Louis was in a circus school for two years. This was mostly technical practice (theatre, dance, acrobatics, and general physical conditioning), though not so much experience with creating shows or being on stage. He also did circus two summer camps where the creative process took place over one week followed by a one week-long tour with five to seven shows.

**Nadine**

Nadine was 32 and is from Austria but resides in Mulhouse. She is a tutor of German and English language teacher at the Université de Haute-Alsace. She spoke German, English, French, Italian fluently. She had theatre experience in school/university and in teaching languages using theatre and drama.

**Valérie**

Valérie was 20-years-old and studied Chemistry at the university. She was very active in taking part in extra-curricular projects and engaged in many activities including rock-climbing and she was an avid photographer. Valérie had the lowest level of English of the participants with a B1 level and was conscious of this, felling the need to have other members of the group validated what she said. Theatrically, Valérie was strong on the improvisational aspects of performance, especially in regard to physicality. She had some limited experience of theatre and was taking part in a separate theatre project that was being run concurrently with the ‘Performing Languages’ project.